SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

An Exploration of the Experiences of Career Change Teachers in Ireland:

Motivations for Changing Career and the Factors that Influence their Attrition

from the Teaching Profession.

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OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN MÁ NUAD

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To my beautiful daughter Sadhbh, who arrived in the midst of this and has been by my side

ever since.

She Believed She Could, So She Did!

June 2020, 8-week-old Sadhbh assisting with the editing of interview transcripts

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

ACT	Alternatively Certified Teachers
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CAO	Central Applications Office
CID	Contract of Indefinite Duration
CCT	Career Change Teacher
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCU	Dublin City University
DE	Department of Education (October 2020 – present)
DES	Department of Education & Science (pre-May 2010)
	Department of Education & Skills (May 2010 – October 2020)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EU	European Union
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HDAPE	Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education
H.Dip	Higher Diploma
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
INTO	Irish National Teacher's Organisation
IOTI	Institutes of Technology Ireland
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IUA	Irish Universities Association
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LPT	Lower Paid Teacher
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NQ	Newly Qualified
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NUI	National University of Ireland
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSP	Online Survey Participant
PAC	Postgraduate Applications Office
PE	Physical Education
PhD	Philosophiae Doctor (Doctor of Philosophy)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PME	Professional Master of Education
SCT	Second Career Teacher
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland
TY	Transition Year
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCC	University College Cork
UL	University of Limerick

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explored the experiences of career change teachers (CCTs) in Irish primary and post-primary schools. Their motivations for changing career, expectations of teaching as a career and the challenges encountered during their career change were examined. The theme of identity and its role in CCTs' motivations to change career and subsequently leave the profession was central to this study. Stryker's (1968) theory of identity, in particular, the multiple identities which a person holds, formed the basis for this study's theoretical framework, complemented by Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning.

This research used a convergent parallel mixed methods design, with a sample of 112 participants. Data was gathered through the use of an online survey, completed by 107 participants and fifteen semi-structured interviews, ten of whom had also completed the online survey. The quantitative data from the online questionnaire provided descriptive statistics of the backgrounds of participants and an overview of their routes into teaching and experience of changing career. The qualitative data from the questionnaire and interviews were coded using thematic analysis and provided a deeper insight into CCTs' experiences of changing career to teaching, the reasons for their attrition and the role of professional identity through all stages.

The main motivations identified by CCTs for changing career included a long-held desire to become a teacher, the influence of family members who were also teachers, crucial life events, positive prior teaching and learning experiences, loss of employment and interest in their previous job and other more extrinsic motivations. Developing a new professional identity as a CCT was influenced by personal factors and relationships with colleagues and pupils. The reasons for attrition provided by CCTs were lack of job security, the school context, professional registration issues and a lack of teacher identity.

Job security and a positive school environment which acknowledges and values the backgrounds, experiences and skills of CCTs each support the development of a CCTs' teacher identity and contribute to their retention in the profession.

This research study provides a deeper understanding of the motivations, skills and experience that CCTs bring to teaching and the factors that contribute to their attrition. This knowledge will assist in the recruitment of this diverse cohort of teachers and alleviate the teacher shortage in Ireland, particularly at post-primary level.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Historically the teaching profession has always enjoyed a high level of status within Irish culture and society. However, the attractiveness of the profession has deteriorated dramatically in the last few decades, particularly following the economic recession in 2008. During this period, a number of budgetary measures were imposed on public sector employees, such as revised salary scales, increased taxation and reduced pension entitlements, which are still in place to this day. Described as the 'perfect storm' by Looney (2012), the onset of further education and curriculum reforms following the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report (Perkins, et al. 2009), increased the level of accountability and to some degree the pressure felt by Irish teachers in their role, raising the question 'why choose teaching as a career?' This study will examine this question, with particular focus on those choosing teaching as a career change. It will also explore what factors influence attrition from the teaching profession among these career change teachers.

1.2 Research Rationale

The origins of this study were set in motion during 2008, when as a primary school teacher I accepted the offer of a part-time tutor job with a third level teacher education institution, in a bid to boost my decreased pay check. In this role, I met with many teacher education students on the Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education (HDAPE) programme, a postgraduate level 8 degree. This programme was eighteen months in duration and conducted mostly online with some onsite days with tutors, school placement and attendance at the Gaeltacht[1].

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[1] An area in Ireland where the Irish language is the main spoken language

This particular HDAPE programme provided an opportunity for those wishing to change career to teaching to complete their teacher education without permanently leaving their previous job and relinquishing their salary. Many students on this programme were also working in schools as substitute teachers and were again able to complete their teacher education programme without losing their income. This became much more significant when the establishment of the Teaching Council in 2006 brought forth a regulation of standards and qualifications within the profession, and acted as a catalyst for many non-qualified substitute teachers to gain their teaching qualification.

It has always been a source of interest to me as to why an accountant, nurse, photographer or lawyer would opt to leave their job/career and choose teaching as a new career. During my interactions with these students, I had always wondered what their reasons for changing career to teaching were. As a first-career primary school teacher, I surmised that the general public's perception of teaching as an easy job, with short hours and long holidays had been an influential factor in their motivation and decision to change career. My interest in the area of professional identity among teachers arose from the module I undertook as part of my master's degree, led by Dr Rose Dolan, "*Teaching about Teaching: From Teacher-to-Teacher Educator*" (Maynooth University 2017). During that module, I came to an appreciation of the multiple identities that one person may hold, as I identified myself as not only Irish or a teacher, but also a daughter, a sister, a friend, a teacher educator (and more recently a parent). The impact of these identities on my personal and professional dealings with others within the school environment was eye-opening for me and was not something I had previously given any prior consideration to. I again questioned the motivations of those changing career to teaching and if their multiple personal and professional identities impacted the development of their new identity as a teacher.

In 2017, I was tutoring a class of third level students in the subject area of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of their Professional Master of Education (PME) course and a conversation about career change began with one student who had previously worked as a psychologist. He recalled how he had worked as an unqualified substitute teacher in the early 2000s but had opted to study psychology at third level. After ten years working in that field, he decided to change career and qualify as a teacher, as it had always been at the back of his mind to pursue a career in teaching. When we had our conversation, he was weeks away from completing his final exams, yet he had decided that teaching was not for him. Based on his teaching placements, he believed that the profession had changed dramatically since he had worked as a substitute teacher. He felt that the amount of paperwork and accountability imposed on teachers was taking away from the enjoyment of teaching and he was considering returning to his previous profession as a psychologist or changing to another new job/career.

This conversation piqued my curiosity as to why someone might change career to teaching and then subsequently leave again, despite investing huge time and money in a career change. As I began my doctoral studies in Maynooth University, I began to read and reflect on attrition in the teaching profession and decided to focus my research on this area, specifically among career change teachers (CCTs). The teaching profession in Ireland is comprised of teachers from various different backgrounds, including CCTs, and each hold a specific identity or indeed multiple identities including their teacher identity. The aim of this research study is to outline the motivations for choosing teaching as a career change among CCTs and identify the factors that contribute to their attrition from teaching. It will inform those who work with CCTs, both during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and as colleagues in a school setting in providing a better understanding of the challenges faced by CCTs in

their new career and in developing their teacher identity. It will also identify the necessary supports to ensure the retention of CCTs in the teaching profession.

1.3 What is a CCT?

The participants in this research study are career change teachers (CCTs) who have qualified as primary or post-primary teachers but have also worked in another career before qualifying as teachers. However, some participants also initially qualified as teachers, changed career to another job/profession and then returned to teaching again. For the purpose of this study, the term career change teacher (CCT) will be used to describe those who have changed career to become teachers. There are multiple terms used in other research studies to describe CCTs. Although second-career teachers (SCTs) is a term used frequently in the literature (Chambers 2002; Haggard, Slostad and Wintertin 2006; Nielsen 2016), other terms include mid-career entrants (Marinell and Johnson 2014), non-traditional entrants (Lee and Lamport 2011), alternatively certified teachers (ACTs) (Ng and Peter 2010), career changers (Wilson and Deaney 2010) and career switchers (Mayotte 2003).

1.4 Guiding Concepts and Theoretical Commitments

As this study focuses on the experiences of CCTs in Irish primary and post-primary schools, the concepts of career change and identity underpin this study. Career development is a life-long process and change within one's career is the norm (Ahn, Dik and Hornback 2017). A career for life is no longer a long-term aspiration and one's life experiences are more relevant than the job positions one has held (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). This is particularly true for CCTs as they bring an accumulation of personal and professional experiences and skills to their new career. A career change is defined by Carless and Arnup (2011) as a transition from

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one work position to another in a different field that is largely unrelated to previous work skills or responsibilities. However, they do acknowledge that to change career, a significant financial and human investment will be involved as one retrains or gains a new qualification as a teacher and steps back from a previous job and income to do so. Bauer, Thomas and Sim (2017) believe that the global teaching profession is interested in mature-age career changers to alleviate teacher supply and demand issues. As Ireland is currently in the midst of a teacher supply crisis, escalated further by the Covid-19 pandemic, the recruitment of career changers with specialist skills and experience in curriculum subject areas would certainly assist in preventing second-level schools dropping subjects due to teacher shortages (The Irish Times 2018b).

The possibility of using skills from a previous career in a different setting could act as an important motivation for changing career for many CCTs (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003). Similarly, the need for career satisfaction and career variety also play a role in career mobility (McGinley 2018). Ahn, Dik and Hornback (2017) advocate a sense of calling as an antecedent leading to a career change and this sense of calling links to a person's identity and in turn affects how a person perceives, enjoys and interacts with their occupation (Berg, Grant and Johnson 2010). Stryker's (1968) theory of identity and, in particular, the multiple identities which a person holds, formed the basis for this study's theoretical framework. The role of multiple identities, both personal and professional, held by CCTs was also examined in relation to the development of their new identity as a teacher.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

From the early 1900's within the social sciences, the concept of identity was inextricably

linked to self-concept and a good knowledge of oneself. George Herbert Mead classified by Stets and Serpe (2016) as the dominant figure in sociological social-psychological investigation of self and identity, introduced the concept of the self as 'I' and 'Me' and symbolic interactionism. Although an obvious admirer of Mead's work, Stryker (2008) argues that Mead's ideas are flawed and offer more of a perspective rather than a theory of identity, as he fails to acknowledge that the self is not purely singular and may have more than one identity.

Stryker (1968) argues that the self is composed of a collection of identities, and these are based on the different roles that a person occupies. The concept of identity salience is also pertinent to Stryker's (1968) theory of identity as he defines identity salience as the probability that a given identity could be invoked by a variety of situations, or the probability of a given identity being invoked in a given situation. Either way, a rank order of probabilities defines the hierarchy of salience, and this hierarchy of salience becomes important in the prediction of behaviour. The relevance and salience of identities within a CCT's new teaching career and the role of identity salience in the decision to leave the teaching profession were also of particular interest to me during this research study.

While Stryker's (1968) theory of identity is the overarching player in determining the study's theoretical and methodological frameworks, Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning must also be acknowledged as influential in this study. Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice suggests that people can be categorised into six personality types; Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional, and that each personality type has a set of attitudes and skills

for coping with environmental problems and tasks. Holland (1997) also suggests that different personality types are matched with specific environmental models. For example, teaching is classified into the social personality type, which is best suited to a social environmental model. In addition to this, Holland (1997) believes that over the course of a person's life, their vocational personality type is influenced by a series of person-environment interactions, and in particular family plays a significant influence in an individual's personality type. Examining this theory through the lens of identity, the question arises as to whether the identity of teacher was always part of the participant's personality or developed as a result of social interactions within the family or previous work experiences.

Building from that, Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning proposes that learning is a social activity as the learner engages in a community of practice, interacting with others and the wider world. This is particularly relevant for CCTs beginning a new career in the teaching profession and that most of their learning is specific to the school context (Anderson, Rede and Simon 1996). As newcomers to the teaching profession, CCTs inevitably participate in a community of practice with other teachers. A community of practice is defined by Wenger (2011, 1) as a group "of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." This community of practice has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest and members of a community of practice are practitioners. As members pursue their interest in the domain, they engage in joint or shared activities and discussion, collaborate and share information, resources, experiences and work together to solve problems.

Subsequently, as teachers master their teaching skill and knowledge over the years, they move towards full participation in that community, termed *'legitimate peripheral participation'*

(Lave and Wenger 1991). However, alongside learning within a community of practice, Lave and Wenger also acknowledge that there are other influences on a person's learning, some of which can begin in the family situation at a very young age. The presence of teachers within the family situation allows children to grow up listening to discussions about school and teaching and absorb the essence of the knowledge and practice in a form of apprenticeship before ever embarking on a teaching career. Again, bearing in mind the multiple identities held by CCTs as they change career, the question of identity salience comes to the fore and its influence on CCTs in establishing full participation within their new community of practice.

Stets and Serpe (2016, 4) reason that "understanding how identities are maintained requires a lens at both the micro level, with an eye toward the processes involved in identity verification, and at the macro level with a focus on the ties and networks of others that support or undermine the identities within and across situations." This statement holds particular relevance for the CCTs participating in this study as the development of their identity as a teacher will be explored through their life story at a micro level within their own personality and family influences and then at a macro level within their previous work environments and networks, and subsequently in the school environment as new teachers.

1.6 Research Purpose and Design

As stated in Section 1.2, the aim of this research study is to outline the motivations for choosing teaching as a career change among CCTs and identify the factors that contribute to their attrition from teaching. This research project examined the experiences of CCTs in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland and thus, adopted a convergent parallel mixed method design (Creswell 2014) situated firmly within the constructivist paradigm. Changing

career is a challenging process for many individuals and, as outlined by Fisher (2005), a constructivist psychological perspective encourages individuals to understand their own experiences and relate those experiences not only to their own values and the 'bigger picture', but also to other people's experiences, which will then allow them to understand their place in their new career.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Identify the motivations of CCTs to join the teaching profession.

- Examine the expectations of CCTs about teaching prior to working as a teacher.

- Investigate the experiences of CCTs in establishing a teacher identity.

- Identify the reasons for attrition of CCTs from the teaching profession.

- Highlight the necessary supports and advice CCTs believe would assist or improve the professional transition and experience in the initial phase of a teaching career.

These research objectives were addressed by the following research questions:

- What are the main factors identified among CCTs in Ireland which influence their decision to join the teaching profession?

- What are the main challenges identified by CCTs in transitioning to a new career as a teacher?

- What factors support the development of a teacher identity among CCTs?

- What are the main personal and/or professional factors identified among CCTs in Ireland which impact their attrition from the teaching profession?

- What role does professional identity as a CCT play in the decision to leave the profession?

To best understand the experiences of participants, this study incorporated the use of an online survey, semi-structured interviews, researcher-written narratives, and photos and images supplied by interviewees. Influenced by narrative research approaches, I encouraged interview participants to share their stories and to speak in their own ways (Riessman 2008). This allowed participants to tell their personal stories and consider the influential factors which led to a change in career and their retention in or attrition from the teaching profession.

The data collected through the online survey and the in-depth, personal interviews, identified CCTs' motivations for changing career to teaching, the perceptions and expectations of teaching as a career that they held before qualifying as teachers. The challenges encountered by CCTs in changing career to teaching and the factors that influenced the development of their teacher professional identities were also examined. Finally the influential factors which lead to their departure from the profession or assisted in their retention in the profession were identified. During the thematic analysis of the data, a biographical account (Riessman 2008) of each participant was produced, in the form of a researcher-written narrative, which produced a brief life-history account of the participants' journeys to teaching. These narratives allowed me to document and examine the factors from childhood and adulthood, which, influenced participants' decisions to choose teaching as a new career.

This research study will provide a greater understanding of the motivations for CCTs and identify how prospective career changers could be encouraged to choose teaching as a new career. It will also identify the factors which influence attrition among CCTs in Ireland and identify the necessary supports and advice CCTs believe would assist or improve the professional experience of transitioning to teaching as a new career.

1.7 Thesis Outline

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2; Teacher Education in Ireland: A Contextual Overview is presented as a contextual chapter. Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the process of changing career to teaching and the options available to CCTs to enrol on an initial teacher education course in Ireland. The chapter also provides an outline of the present routes for CCTs to qualify as a primary or post-primary teacher in Ireland.

Chapter 3, the Literature Review, reviews the literature regarding the motivations of CCTs, the perceptions and expectations held by CCTs of teaching and what CCTs bring to the teaching profession. This chapter also explores teacher attrition and its influential factors, including workload, school culture and teacher resilience. The topics of professional identity and developing a professional identity as a teacher are also reviewed as the theme of identity is a central aspect of this research study.

Chapter 4, the Methodology chapter, outlines the research paradigm, the theoretical framework underpinning the research project, and the qualitative approach adopted for the study. Details of sampling, data collection methods and data analysis are also outlined in this chapter. Finally, the ethical considerations of the study and the reliability, validity and limitations of the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter, presents and discusses the findings from the collected data. The extensive findings are presented in five separate themes and are discussed in relation to other literature in this area.

These themes include:

1.   Motivations for Changing Career,

2.   Perceptions and Expectations of Teaching as a New Career,

3.   The Challenges in Transitioning to a New Career as a Teacher,

4.   The Development of Teacher Identity and its Influential Factors,

5.   Attrition and Retention of CCTs

The final chapter, Chapter 6, Conclusions and Recommendations, highlights key conclusions and recommendations for the implementation of support structures for CCTs transitioning from a previous job/career to the teaching profession.

CHAPTER 2
TEACHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND: A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Over the last two centuries the teaching profession in Ireland has remained quite homogenous, which is unsurprising given the religious influences that have dominated education and teacher education in Ireland for this period. CCTs bring an element of diversity to the profession, simply because they have previously worked in a different setting to teaching and bring a variety of added knowledge and skills to their role as a teacher. However, changing career to teaching is not an easy process and often requires a personal and financial sacrifice on the part of the CCT. For many years, changing career to teaching required CCTs to complete a full course of teacher education, regardless of their prior qualifications. There are now different options available to CCTs to qualify as teachers and several participants in this study undertook different routes to gain their qualification as a teacher, depending on their own individual situation and the requirements they needed to enrol on a teacher education course. This chapter will provide contextual information for the reader on the process to qualify as a teacher in Ireland.

The first section of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the development of teacher education in Ireland, specifically focusing on ITE. It is by no means a complete history of teacher education in Ireland but focuses on some of the more influential factors which have led to the teacher education system in Ireland today. The second part of the chapter will outline the current system of teacher education in Ireland and the different paths offered to those seeking to become a qualified primary or post-primary teacher in Ireland.

2.2 A Brief Background of Primary Teacher Education in Ireland

The establishment of the National Board for Education and the National School System in 1831 (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017) to provide state-sponsored education for all children, prompted a steady increase in the establishment of primary schools in the years that followed. In turn, this prompted a necessity for suitably qualified teachers and in 1834 the first Model School was opened in Upper Merrion Street in Dublin, to provide teacher education. However, it was only toward the end of the 19th century that teacher education evolved properly in Ireland. St Patrick's College, Drumcondra was opened in 1875 by the Catholic Church for the education of male primary teachers, followed in 1877 by a college[2] in Baggot St, Dublin for female primary teachers, which later transferred to Blackrock in Dublin as Carysfort College. In 1898 the Sisters of Mercy opened Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, and by the turn of the 20th century, seven denominational teacher education colleges were in operation for primary school teachers (Walsh 2012). This programme to qualify as a primary school teacher in Ireland included the study of education and a teaching practice element of 12 weeks over a two-year course of study.

2.3 A Brief Background of Post-Primary Teacher Education in Ireland

A reform of post-primary or secondary school teacher education had begun towards the end of the 19th century. O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty (2017) explain that while not providing formal 'study of education' courses, Trinity College commenced examinations for graduates in the 'history of education' and the 'practice of education' in 1878. Other colleges followed suit and in 1896 the Ursuline Convent in Waterford introduced a teacher education course for female secondary school teachers to prepare them for the Cambridge Teacher's Certificate. In 1900, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction developed courses to qualify

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[2] Term used to describe an institute of third-level education, smaller than a university. Many of the teacher education courses at the time were offered in a college facility.

teachers of science for secondary schools and Ireland's first college of physical education was also established this year (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017).

In 1905 a report on Intermediate Education (Dale and Stephens report[3]) recommended a formal system of teacher education for intermediate teachers, which would be a postgraduate course of study and include the study of Mental and Moral Sciences and the Theory and History of Education along with a period of teaching practice and classroom observation (Dolan and Kenny 2014). This one-year consecutive postgraduate course later termed the Higher Diploma (H.Dip) in Education, continued as the preparation of secondary school teachers from 1912 up to very recent times.

2.4 Teacher Education in Ireland during the 20th Century

The period after 1960 was significant for teacher education in Ireland (Coolahan 2004). Over the course of a decade, O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty (2017) cite that several reports such as the *Investment in Education Report* (1966), the *Commission on Higher Education Report* (1967) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) *Report on Teacher Education* (1970) highlighted an urgent need for reform. The introduction of free secondary school education in 1967 along with the introduction of the free transport scheme ensured a dramatic increase in the number of students attending full-time second level education. As a result, teacher education in Ireland was further developed and reformed (Walsh 2012; O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017).

The teacher education colleges were re-modelled and upgraded and became known as colleges of education and the previously used term 'teacher training' was replaced with

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[3] Report of Messrs. Dale and Stephens, Intermediate Education in Ireland, (Cd. 2546) 1905

teacher education. During the 1960's the H.Dip programme for secondary school teachers gained a poor reputation and in 1967 the Minister for Education stated that it may not continue as a course of teacher preparation (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017). Subsequently, the H.Dip was restructured to a full-time, one-year course including university time and practical teaching time and remained as an option for degree graduates to qualify as

Further developments during the 1970's prompted all university education departments to revitalise their postgraduate programmes and a one-year course was introduced for university graduates to qualify as primary school teachers. These courses were run intermittently whenever there was a shortage of primary teachers, but the provision of these postgraduate courses provided career changers with an opportunity to qualify as a teacher in a shorter period. As a result, the student population in teacher education colleges became more diverse as "mature" students (not school leavers) began enrolling on these courses (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017). These "mature students" could be likened to the cohort of CCTs who participated in this study.

The introduction of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) honours degree in 1974 was a notable landmark as primary teachers were now awarded a degree following their course of study and the three largest teacher education colleges became recognised colleges of the National University of Ireland. For most students[4] the B.Ed was a three-year programme but for those in Froebel College of Education and St Mary's Marino which was affiliated with Trinity College, an additional fourth year was added to the B.Ed programme to achieve an honours degree (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017). While changing career to post-primary teaching required a further year of study on the H.Dip programme, the options for career

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[4] Those attending St Patrick's College of Education, Mary Immaculate College and Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort

changers to qualify as primary teachers were to enrol on a three or four year full-time B.Ed programme or enrol onto a one-year postgraduate teacher education programme also known as the H. Dip (HDAPE).

2.5 Developments in Teacher Education during the 21st Century

However, possibly one of the most significant developments in the past two decades has been the introduction of Hibernia College to the teacher education discourse and the commencement of a professional online teacher education course for postgraduate students. Coolahan (2003) outlines that even though the number of students on teacher education programmes had increased almost three-fold during the 1990s Ireland was still experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers. In October 2002, the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) conducted a survey which found that almost 40,000 (10%) primary school pupils were not being taught by a qualified primary teacher and there was in fact a shortfall of 1600 teachers to fill these positions (Coolahan 2003). Identifying a system which would alleviate this shortfall, Sean Rowland, a former primary school teacher with a Masters in Educational Administration and a Philosophiae Doctor or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Curriculum Instruction and Administration established Hibernia College in 2000. This institute for teacher education was accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in 2003 and took in the first cohort of student teachers that same year.

Its arrival onto the teacher education stage in Ireland changed the format of teacher education dramatically as it provided postgraduate candidates with an attractive opportunity to change career by gaining a teaching qualification online within eighteen months. Due to the nature of the course and timing of lectures, students in Hibernia College were also afforded the opportunity to gain their teaching qualification while still working. This facility was most

beneficial to those unqualified teachers in schools at that time, but also to those who wished to change career to teaching yet could not afford to attend a full-time teacher education programme to acquire their new qualification.

According to their 2015 report, the Teaching Council (2015, 6) cited Hibernia College as "the largest provider of newly qualified (NQ) primary teachers in the State" and further explain, that in recent years up to 50% of NQ primary teachers have been graduates of consecutive (postgraduate) programmes, more than half of whom are graduates of Hibernia College. One explanation for this statistic would be that as a private college, Hibernia are not under any obligation to adhere to restricted entrant numbers as other state-funded teacher education colleges are. However, it must be noted that in providing a consecutive teacher education programme and increasing the number of postgraduate teachers emerging into the profession, some from other professions, it could be argued that Hibernia College was fundamental in introducing some much-needed diversity into the teaching profession of Ireland.

An additional development which contributed to the diversification of the teaching profession in Ireland was the recognition of teaching qualifications among teachers qualified abroad. While teachers who had trained in other member states of the European Union (EU) were granted provisional recognition, subject to completion of an appropriate Irish language qualification, from September 1st 2000, teachers who had qualified outside of the EU were also eligible for provisional recognition to teach in mainstream classes in primary schools (DES 2000). This allowed many graduate teachers who had completed their teacher education abroad the opportunity to return to Ireland to teach, increasing the number of available teachers in Ireland at the time.

Ireland's performance in PISA 2009 (Perkins, et al. 2009), and the subsequent Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES 2011c) launched by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2011, highlighted that teacher preparation was further in need of attention (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty 2017). In 2011, it was also announced that the concurrent (undergraduate) teacher education programmes would be extended to a four-year B.Ed degree and the consecutive (postgraduate) teacher education programmes would be extended to two years, awarding graduates with a PME. The *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland* (DES 2012) also known as the Sahlberg Report recommended the restructuring of the teacher education colleges so that teacher education programmes would be facilitated in university settings. This led to the establishment of six centres of excellence which amalgamated the existing colleges of education.

These institutes of teacher education for both primary and post-primary teacher education are now facilitated at Dublin City University (DCU), Trinity College, National University of Ireland (NUI) Maynooth, University of Limerick (UL) University College Cork (UCC) and NUI Galway. In 2011, the Teaching Council published the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (The Teaching Council 2017), which clearly laid out the implementation of the reconceptualised programmes of ITE in Ireland and provided clarity for those providing such programmes. Since 2014, all B.Ed programmes are four years in duration and all postgraduate teacher education programmes are two years in duration. This restructuring of teacher education in Ireland possibly impacted those CCTs wishing to undertake a postgraduate programme the most, as the longer course duration not only imposed a greater time sacrifice, but also a greater financial sacrifice to acquire their teaching qualification.

2.6 Initial Teacher Education in 2021: How Do I Become a Teacher?

To change career to teaching in Ireland, one must obtain a new qualification as a primary or post-primary teacher. While for some CCTs, this may be a straightforward process of obtaining a new postgraduate degree after two years, for others it may involve several years and further qualifications to achieve their goal. At present there are two routes in Ireland to qualify as a teacher, a concurrent (undergraduate) programme following the Leaving Certificate or a consecutive (postgraduate) programme following an undergraduate degree. The Leaving Certificate examinations are state-run exams at the end of post-primary education and the grades and points achieved in these exams will determine what third level courses are available to Leaving Certificate students.

2.6.1 An Overview of the Leaving Certificate Points System in Ireland

At the end of students' final year in post-primary school, they generally sit seven or more Leaving Certificate state examinations. The grades awarded in the best six of these exam results are converted into points and the accumulation of the points in the six subjects are used to allocate students a place on a third level course of their choice through the Central Applications Office (CAO) system. Prior to 2017, the maximum number of points that could be awarded was 600 points. Table 2.1 displays the grades a student could achieve in the Leaving Certificate examination.

Percentage mark achieved in exam	Grade equivalent	Percentage mark achieved in exam	Grade equivalent
≥90% to 100%	*A1*	≥55% and <60%	*C3*
≥85% and <90%	*A2*	≥50% and <55%	*D1*
≥80% and <85%	*B1*	≥45% and <50%	*D2*
≥75% and <80%	*B2*	≥40% and <45%	*D3*
≥70% and <75%	*B3*	≥25% and <40%	*E*
≥65% and <70%	*C1*	≥10% and <25%	*F*
≥60% and <65%	*C2*	≥0% and <10%	*NG (no grade)*

Table 2.1: Leaving Certificate Examination Percentages and Grades pre-2017

The points awarded for each grade in the Leaving Certificate prior to 2017 are outlined in

Image 2.1 below.

Leaving Certificate grade	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
A1	100	60
A2	90	50
B1	85	45
B2	80	40
B3	75	35
C1	70	30
C2	65	25
C3	60	20
D1	55	15
D2	50	10
D3	45	5

Image 2.1: Leaving Certificate Grade System Prior to 2017
(Faulkner, Hannigan and Fitzmaurice 2014)

In 2017, the points system was revised to include broader grades, ease pressure on students,

and encourage better engagement with Leaving Certificate subjects. This revision would also

bring the state exams in Ireland more in line with other international school-leaving

examinations (IUA and IOTI 2015). Image 2.2 outlines the new system of points awarded and the new grades. The new scale has eight grades ranking the highest grade as 1 and the lowest as 8. The grades at higher level are prefixed with a H and the grades at ordinary level are prefixed with an O.

NEW GRADES	% MARKS
H1 / O1	90-100
H2 / O2	80<90
H3 / O3	70<80
H4 / O4	60<70
H5 / O5	50<60
H6 / O6	40<50
H7 / O7	30<40
H8 / O8	0<30

**Image 2.2: Revised Leaving Certificate grading scale introduced in 2017
(IUA and IOTI 2015)**

The revised points scale is displayed in Image 2.3 below.

Higher		Ordinary	
GRADE	POINTS	GRADE	POINTS
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0
		O8	0

Image 2.3: Common Points Scale Introduced in 2017 (IUA and IOT 2015)

2.6.2 Access to Primary School Teaching as a Third Level Course

Upon completion of the Leaving Certificate exams, applicants for primary school teaching apply through the CAO system for a place on a concurrent programme in either of the following four institutes of education: DCU Institute of Education, Marino Institute of Education, Maynooth University (Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education) and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Places on these teacher education programmes are dependent on the number of points acquired in the Leaving Certificate, which was explained in Section 2.6.1. The number of points required to secure a place on one of the primary teacher education programmes in September 2021 ranged from 508-564 points (CAO 2021). However, as outlined on the DCU website (2021a), entry requirements in each of the institutions offering a primary teacher education programme include a minimum H4 (60-69%) grade in Irish and a minimum H7 (30-39%) or O4 (60-69%) grade in both Maths and English in the Leaving Certificate. For applicants from Northern Ireland, six subjects must be presented, at least three at General Certificate of Education (GCE) level, with the remaining at GCE AS or General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. The requirements are as follows:

- a Grade C in GCE A Level Irish,

- a Grade C at GCSE Level in both English and English Literature or Grade B at GCSE Level in either English or English Literature,

- a Grade D at GCSE Level in Additional Mathematics or a Grade C at GCSE Level in Mathematics,

- a GCE A Level C in two other subjects,

- a GSCE C in one other subject.

Mature applicants must also fulfil the minimum academic requirements, followed by a general interview, and a competitive oral Irish examination (DCU 2020). The B.Ed. course is a full-time four-year course which includes school placements and two fortnightly placements in the Gaeltacht.

For those who choose to qualify as a primary school teacher through the consecutive programme, places are awarded on the basis of qualifications which include a minimum H2.2 Honours Bachelor degree[55] and the required minimum H4 (60-69%) grade in Irish and a minimum H7 (30-39%) or O4 (60-69%) grade in both Maths and English in the Leaving Certificate, an interview and an oral examination in Irish (Department of Education 2020). This PME programme for primary school teaching is full-time two-year programmes, which like the B.Ed programme, includes school placements and two fortnightly placements in the Gaeltacht. This PME programme is also facilitated in each of the four institutes of education; in DCU Institute of Education, Marino Institute of Education, Maynooth University (Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education) and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Hibernia College also offer a PME in primary teaching and applications for a place on this PME programme are made directly to Hibernia College.

2.6.3 Access to Post-Primary School Teaching as a Third Level Course

There are also two routes to qualifying as a post-primary teacher. There are a number of different concurrent post-primary teacher education programmes available through the CAO in a variety of third level institutions around Ireland (CAO 2022). These courses are four year, level 8 degree programmes and students can choose to study specific subjects alongside

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[5] A H2.2 honours degree is a second-class honours grade 2 or a 2:2 degree (50-59%)

teacher education and qualify as a post-primary teacher in those chosen subjects.

An alternative route for prospective post-primary teachers is to undertake an undergraduate degree followed by a PME programme to qualify as a post-primary teacher. This is a route chosen by many CCTs as they may already have an undergraduate degree completed. A number of different universities and institutes offer this PME programme to qualify as a post-primary teacher. These ITE programmes are full-time, two year courses and will also include school placements. Applications for the PME (post-primary) programme are submitted through the universities directly or through the Postgraduate Applications Office (PAC) if applying to any of the four NUI universities, NUI Maynooth, NUI Galway, NUI Cork or NUI Dublin and applicants should hold a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 8 primary degree in compliance with the Teaching Council's Curricular Subject Requirements (DCU 2021b). Hibernia College also offers the PME programme in post-primary education and applications for a place on this PME programme are made directly to Hibernia College.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the development and evolution of teacher education in Ireland and the issues of unqualified teachers teaching primary and post-primary students in Irish schools, a problem which unfortunately still exists today. Although the profession of teaching has often been viewed as an attractive career prospect, with suitable work hours and holidays, the issue of teacher shortage has been consistently highlighted in the media over the last number of years. The recent onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has created more challenges for the education sector. In Oct 2021, Katherine Donnelly reported in the Irish Independent on the results of a survey conducted by the TUI, which suggested that 75% of the 109 schools surveyed had no application for an advertised post in the previous six months. The subjects

facing most difficulty to fill teaching positions are the practical subjects such as home economics, engineering, metalwork, and woodwork as well as the language subjects such as English, French and Irish (Donnelly 2021).

Acquiring teachers to teach these subjects has been an ongoing issue in Ireland over the last number of years and many schools have been forced to drop these subjects or fill the positions with teachers who do not have any teaching qualification (The Irish Times 2018b). Individuals with industry experience and skills in such subject areas would be an ideal cohort to recruit to these positions if the profession of teaching offered enough of an incentive to individuals to change career and redeploy their previous knowledge and skills gained in another career/job. It could be argued that CCTs in particular would be ideal candidates to recruit to the teaching profession as they introduce an element of diversity to the profession, bringing the skills and experience of their previous career into their teaching career and offering different perspectives and learning experiences to students.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

While the topic of CCTs has sparked interest among researchers internationally, it remains an area that is under-researched within the Irish context and it was difficult to find any Irish literature in this area. In addition to this, there is limited data gathered to identify the number of CCTs that make up the teaching population of Ireland. Statistics gathered by the Teaching Council record only the number of teachers registered according to gender and route of registration. Similarly, statistics gathered by the HEA are also of a general nature, for example data can be obtained through the HEA website on the number of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments onto (1) 'teacher training with subject specialisation' and (2) 'teacher training without subject specialisation' (HEA 2021). It can therefore, only be assumed that the 'teacher training with subject specialism' refers to post-primary teaching, while the term 'teacher training without subject specialism' refers to primary teaching as these terms are not specifically clarified by the HEA.

It is also possible that these statistics of enrolments on a postgraduate PME programme include student teachers with previous degrees and years of work experience alongside those who have just completed an undergraduate degree programme following the Leaving Certificate. Statistics of enrolments onto an undergraduate B.Ed programme will include applicants through the CAO system and those who may wish to change career to teaching after years in the workforce without a previous undergraduate qualification. However, as a result, it is difficult to quantify the number of CCTs that enrol on teacher education courses each year or indeed the number of CCTs included in the general teaching population of

Ireland.

To bridge this gap in the literature, this study sought to examine the experiences of CCTs in Ireland and to explore their motivations for changing career to teaching. Their expectations of teaching and the development of a new professional identity as a teacher were also explored along with the factors which have contributed to the attrition of CCTs from the profession. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a review of the literature was conducted to gain an insight into the experiences of CCTs in the international educational context which could also be relevant to the Irish context. However it must be noted that there is also a gap in the literature on the topic of CCTs over the last decade. Therefore much of the literature reviewed is predominately situated in the years 2000-2012 with a small number of more recent studies up to 2019 included. This research study aims to add to the more recent literature in providing current knowledge on the experiences of CCTs in Ireland.

This earlier literature was selected for review as it provides significant knowledge on the motivations of CCTs and the challenges they encounter in their transition to teaching as a new career. The study's theoretical framework guided the literature review in selecting the themes for discussion. Through the lens of Holland's (1991) theory of vocational choice, the literature was reviewed to identify the themes of motivations for changing career to teaching and the influences of personality, identity and family in that decision. Similarly the theme of identity and the fact that one's identity is not singular, but contains multiple facets (Stryker 1968) was examined to explore how CCTs construct a new professional identity as a teacher.

The themes discussed in the literature review; the motivations for changing career, the expectations and/or unexpected challenges of teaching as a new career and developing a

professional identity as a CCT, are recurring themes in numerous international studies throughout the years and provide a deeper understanding of this particular cohort of teachers within the teaching profession. Furthermore, these themes mirror those that emerged during the analysis of the data of this study and provide an understanding of the experiences of Irish CCTs in relation to other international studies. The theme of attrition among teachers is widely researched and is also included in this study's literature review. However, attrition among CCTs is a theme which has been identified as a significant gap in the literature. As a result, this study and its findings address the gap in the Irish literature regarding the experiences of CCTs in the Irish teaching profession and in particular their reasons for attrition.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.3 there are many different terms used in the literature to describe CCTs, but for the purposes of this study and throughout this chapter the abbreviation CCT (career change teacher) will be used, even though the literature being discussed may use a different term. This chapter will discuss the valuable experience and skills that CCTs bring to the teaching profession and explore CCTs' motivations for changing career along with the expectations held by CCTs before qualifying as a teacher. The area of professional identity and developing a new identity as a teacher, which is particularly relevant to this study is also reviewed in the literature. Finally, the topic of teacher attrition and the factors that contribute to teacher attrition will be examined, again among the international literature as there is a significant gap in Irish literature in this area.

3.2 What CCTs Bring to the Teaching Profession

CCTs bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience to the teaching profession and offer the possibility to improve the quality of education offered in schools (Rife, et al. 1988;

Etherington 2009; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Wilson and Deaney 2010; Lee and Lamport 2011; Hunter-Johnson 2015). Varadharajan, Carter, et al. (2016) outline that the main attributes that CCTs bring to teaching are passion and enthusiasm, life-real world experience, a commitment to teaching and maturity and wisdom. Consequently, many international certification programmes for CCTs are adapted in duration; both in recognition of the skills and experience CCTs bring to the profession, but also to fast track the qualification of these teachers to address a teacher shortage. As outlined by Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen (2008) it is considered that the experiences of CCTs in their previous training, employment and life in general, would allow them to transfer their acquired competencies and knowledge easily to teaching. Bearing in mind the teacher supply issues in Ireland at present, the recruitment of highly qualified professionals from other fields would not only alleviate teacher shortages but also enhance diversity and innovation within the teaching profession.

Recruitment of CCTs with previous life and work experience would also support pupils in schools to bridge the gap between the real world and the classroom (Chambers 2002). Many CCTs believe that their age and experience have provided them with several skills that can be easily transferred to the classroom and more specifically, they feel that their life experience directly influences their teaching and effectiveness within the classroom (Chambers 2002). This extensive work and life experience provides a different perspective particularly for the second level students they teach, who are preparing to enter the world of third level education and employment.

It is suggested that CCTs bring a glimpse of the real world into the classroom and indeed offer something unique to students that first-career teachers cannot (Lee 2011). Using their prior work and life experience, CCTs are more capable of adapting their pedagogies to help

students apply their knowledge to the real world by connecting the classroom to the outside world (Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008; Green 2015). Etherington (2009) outlines specifically the knowledge and skills that CCTs can share and practise in schools. These 'know-how competencies' termed by Mayotte (2003) include people management skills, organisational and IT skills, leadership skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, expert subject knowledge and content specific skills. The acquisition of these skills in a previous career allows for the term 'expert novices' to be attributed to CCTs (Troesch and Bauer 2020). Alongside the skills that CCTs bring to the profession, they also bring a maturity to the work environment that allows them to become immediate active participants of the school community, and in fact adopt a more objective rather than subjective role (Nielsen 2016). However, many studies caution that the accumulation of life skills and experiences by CCTs does not automatically lead to better teaching skills, and CCTs still need to acquire the pedagogical strategies to enable them to adapt their previous skills to the classroom (Freidus and Krasnow 1991; Mayotte 2003).

While most CCTs are quite self-aware and confident in the skill-set they bring to teaching (Rife, et al. 1988; Chambers 2002; Anthony and Ord 2008), some do not recognise the skills they previously acquired and how they may be transferred into a teaching role (Mayotte 2003). The recognition of these skills could be easily supported and encouraged through teacher education and induction programmes. It is during their ITE that CCTs should be encouraged to reflect on and link their previously learned skills to teaching, which will make them more effective and innovative teachers (Chambers 2002). Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) further this argument in suggesting that maintaining continuity between past and present is particularly important for CCTs to navigate the novice role of their new career. Although it might be assumed that a variety of life and work experience would be a positive

attribute for many CCTs to bring to schools and the profession, Lee (2011) outlines that the teacher education programmes do not always take into consideration that CCTs are different to traditional-age third level education students. This argument is furthered by Williams (2010) in stating that career change students believed that their previous skills and experience were not recognised or appreciated at university or while on practicum. Freidus and Krasnow (1991) suggest that teacher education programmes, like the CCTs themselves assume that the skill transfer will be automatic. Similar to the teacher education programmes, many schools also fail to recognise value or utilise fully the prior skills and experiences of CCTs (Marinell and Johnson 2014).

In her study of the experiences of CCTs and the (mis)recognitions of professional identity based in a south west region of the USA, Nielsen (2016) found that while all participants described their prior skills as advantageous in teaching, these prior skills and experiences were not always validated within the teaching field. One participant stated "first of all, what you've ever done in the past has no bearing in the education world. I have twenty years of management experience and I couldn't manage" (Nielsen 2016, 232). This account suggests that if a CCTs experience is not acquired in the education world, it is less relevant to the teaching profession. Similar findings were presented in a study by Watters and Diezmann (2015) exploring the challenges confronting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) professionals transitioning to a new career as teachers. Most of the fourteen participants in Watters and Diezmann's (2015, 186) study felt that their previous backgrounds were not acknowledged within their teaching career and one participant outlined that she felt they were "treated like students." This is a worrying attitude for the progression and professionalism of the teaching profession, as it not only challenges the identity of the individual but undermines their competency as teacher.

While it is clear from the research that CCTs possess a wealth of skill and experience from their previous jobs or careers (Lee 2011; Troesch and Bauer 2020), it is also suggested that this cohort of teachers could be instrumental in changing and enhancing the profession of teaching (Resta, Huling and Rainwater 2001; Richardson and Watt 2005). It is held by Chambers (2002) that CCTs are willing and able to actively participate in educational reform, a sentiment with which Hunter-Johnson (2015) agrees and a higher value needs to be placed on their previous experience and skills when recruiting CCTs (Anthony and Ord 2008). Furthermore, CCTs are capable of making a valuable contribution to school environments as they bring a strong sense of mission and purpose (Powers 2002). These new teachers bring a different viewpoint to schools and often provide an impartial voice to those who have been immersed in only the education world since their own schooling. Their self-awareness and confidence to adopt alternative pedagogies also enables them to engage in educational reform (Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008) and further enhance the profession.

In order to allow CCTs to make an important contribution to the profession, a greater understanding of the qualities that these entrants bring to teaching is necessary (Williams and Forgasz 2009). This understanding must begin during teacher education to encourage CCTs to use their previous skills and experiences in the workplace and solve realistic classroom and school challenges (Lee and Lamport 2011). With the necessary support during ITE and indeed during their initial years in the school environment, CCTs can maximise their success in their new career and add a welcome element of diversity to the profession. To facilitate the continued success of CCTs in the profession and promote their retention in the profession, Hunter-Johnson (2015) holds that it is also necessary to understand the motivations among CCTs for a career change. A greater understanding of the specific motivations underpinning a CCT's decision to choose teaching as a new career could also assist in promoting the

profession as a career change option and provide guidelines for recruitment strategies (Williams and Forgasz 2009).

3.3 What Motivates a Career Change?

Attitudes around jobs and careers have changed dramatically over the years, and although *'a job for life'* was important among past generations, it is no longer viewed as the ultimate career goal in this modern era. It is suggested that people not only change jobs, but on average change career between three and seven times in their lifetime (irishjobs.ie 2021). Most recently the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic may have influenced the decision for a career change among some individuals, as their employment situation was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic or they were forced into unemployment. In May 2020, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) released figures, gathered through the Labour Force Survey, which showed that almost half the population had their employment situation affected by the pandemic, as 14% of workers had lost employment and 33% had been temporarily laid off (CSO 2020).

While the last two years have brought about an unprecedented shift in employment situations, similar to the economic recession in 2008, the concept of career change is not a new phenomenon. It is not unusual for employees to consider a job or career change, either within the same field of employment or in a different field entirely and there are many factors which influence this decision. Loss of employment will most certainly act as a catalyst for many individuals to consider their career options (Carless and Arnup 2011) and it could be assumed that the perception among the general population is that a career in teaching would appear to provide more stability and security, as traditionally teaching was deemed as that *'job for life'* with stable employment and a secure pension (Freidus and Krasnow 1991).

However, to undertake a career change or acquire a new qualification requires not only energy but a significant financial and personal investment. In examining how the factors of personal and demographic characteristics, life-cycle transitions and work values influence career change, Kanchier and Unruh (1989) found that career changers highlighted the influence of a traumatic event which led to a self-appraisal and a change in their career values and goals. Job satisfaction was also found to play a role in influencing a career change and Kanchier and Unruh's (1989) study also suggested a relationship between occupational change and the transition periods of career changer's life cycles. While each of these factors are justifiable in their own right for any career changer, the question remains as to what factors in particular motivate CCTs to choose teaching as their new career.

3.3.1 The Attractiveness of Teaching as a Career Change

The profession of teaching has always attracted large numbers of applicants. This has remained the case despite the fact that educational developments within the Irish context over the last number of years have dissipated the perceived security and stability of teaching for many new teachers, particularly those at post-primary level. The economic recession in 2008 heralded a significant number of changes in pay and employment for teachers and the public sector in general. The introduction of the Pension Levy of approximately 7% alongside pay reductions for public servants over a number of years (Office of the Attorney General 2009) inspired an increase in early retirements within the teaching population. To add to an already challenging time for school managements, a subsequent moratorium on recruitment and promotions was implemented (DES 2009) and schools were unable to fill the posts and responsibilities held by those who had retired.

Further pay reductions and conditions were introduced over the next number of years and

included the placement of post-2011 entrants to teaching onto a salary scale point 10% lower than their pre-2011 colleagues (DES 2011a). The abolition of additional qualification allowances for post-2011 teachers (DES 2011b), and the addition of 33 working hours in post-primary schools and 36 additional working hours in primary schools following the Croke Park Agreement in 2010 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2010), altered the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. Despite the work of the teacher unions to alleviate the pay disparity within the profession, the accumulation of these above measures over the last 13 years has ensured that teaching is less financially attractive for new entrants as either first or second career teachers.

In his report to the DES, Peter Ward (2014) outlined that the lack of secure, full-time positions in the teaching profession also acts as a disincentive for those considering a career in teaching. He argued that there was a lack of morale within the profession and the lack of stable employment was no longer attracting the high calibre of candidates needed to respond to curricular needs and pupil demands. Although Ward's (2014) recommendations brought about a reduction in the required years for granting Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID)[6] from in excess of three years to in excess of two years continuous service (DES 2015a), the lack of secure employment and the differentiated pay scale still affects many new teachers. This continuing cause for concern was highlighted by several participants in this study and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

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[6] A person employed on a contract of indefinite duration means that the person "has an expectation that, subject to the normal date of retirement in the employment, she or he will be retained in the employment and will not be dismissed without there being any good reason such as misconduct or unfitness for their position, or other compelling or unavoidable circumstances. Any dismissal shall be achieved by the application of the agreed termination arrangements for the particular sector or the application of the relevant statute, as the case may be." (DES 2018)

3.4 CCTs' Motivations for Changing Career

The decision to change career path requires careful consideration and a career change to teaching is no different as it involves both a personal and financial investment for CCTs. This section reviews the literature regarding both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations cited by CCTs for changing career and highlights the predominant influential factors. The main intrinsic motivations for choosing teaching as a new career which will be discussed include; the long-held desire to become a teacher, the influence of family members and positive prior teaching experiences. The main extrinsic motivations examined include the desire for greater job security and a better work life balance.

Over the years the reasons and motivations for changing career to teaching have been widely captured in many research studies (Madfes 1990; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2006; Anthony and Ord 2008; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Lee and Lamport 2011; Apfel 2013; Bunn and Wake 2015; Varadharajan and Schuck 2017; Koç 2019; Price 2019). While many studies specify intrinsic and extrinsic motivations among CCTs (Richardson and Watt 2006; Watt and Richardson 2008; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Watt, et al. 2012), the decision to change career to teaching is often influenced by several factors and based on each individual CCT's personal circumstances. These factors can be external or internal as outlined by Koç (2019, 218), "external factors such as harsh working conditions, work stress and busy work were effective in the decisions of some participants whereas internal factors such as family responsibilities, spiritual satisfaction and human relations were effective in the decisions of some participants".

Crow, Levine and Nager (1990, 204) identified three important differences among CCTs when choosing teaching as a new career. These three groups were categorised as the

'Homecomers', the 'Converted' and the 'Unconverted' and these three terms will be referenced at different stages throughout the following chapters of this thesis. The 'Homecomers' are termed as such because entering a teacher education programme resembles a psychological homecoming. They always dreamed of becoming a teacher, but various factors delayed their entry to the profession. The 'Converted' group did not consider teaching as a career until some pivotal life event, e.g. the birth of a child or job loss forced them to re-evaluate their career plans. The Unconverted were categorised as the group with a vague interest in education, looking for a new challenge. Even though these students entered a teacher education programme they did not express a commitment to teaching as a career or they became quickly disenchanted with a teaching career and subsequently express an interest in moving into a different area of education such as educational reform.

Avoiding the terms of intrinsic or extrinsic, Bauer, Thomas and Sim (2017) hold that personal and social factors also play an influential role in the decision to change career to teaching. The social factors include, a changing economy, loss of employment or change of location, and the personal factors include dissatisfaction with one's previous job, the search for a new challenge, wanting to make a difference, the realisation of a long-standing desire to become a teacher, achieving a better work-life balance and pursuing a career to better suit their personality. However, changing perspectives on life, memories/experiences of school and greater use of specialist subject knowledge have also been cited as significant factors for a career change (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003). Therefore, it must also be taken into account that many CCTs have accumulated significant work-life experience and have the financial means to make the sacrifice and undertake the career switch. This financial cushion, or latitude defined by Castro and Bauml (2009) was identified in their study as one of four significant factors in choosing teaching as a career change, because participants had the

financial means and time availability to pursue the education necessary to change career to teaching.

Another factor presented was resource availability, such as teaching experience or the presence of family members and friends who were teachers and supported the decision. The presence of other teachers in a CCT's family allows the CCT to gain some insight into the role of a teacher and in turn influence the decision to choose teaching as a new career (Jarvis-Selinger, Pratt and Collins 2010). A financial cushion and emotional support from family and friends would undoubtedly assist in motivating CCTs to make a career switch at a later stage in life. Mature CCTs also possess a commitment and readiness to cope with the challenges of a career change, and have better access, availability, variety and ease of choosing a certification programme to qualify as a teacher (Castro and Bauml 2009). This maturity, prior work and life experience may serve CCTs well in coping with the challenges encountered in the school environment.

3.5 Intrinsic Motivations

This section will examine the intrinsic motivations among CCTs for changing career. These include a long-held desire to become a teacher, positive prior experiences of teaching both in a personal and professional capacity and the desire for a more meaningful career and to make a difference.

3.5.1 The Motivation of a Long-Held Desire to be a Teacher

A narrative research study conducted by Price (2019), explored the transition of 12 ex-military service personnel to the profession of teaching in the UK. During this study several participants identified a long-standing interest in teaching, pre-dating even their military

service. This supports previous research by Anthony and Ord (2008) who outlined that twenty eight CCTs (41%) in their study had previously considered teaching as a career but opted for a different first career. This is a recurring theme across the research in this area, that CCTs always held an interest in teaching as a profession, but for many reasons did not pursue it as a first career choice (Rife, et al. 1988; Madfes 1990; Chambers 2002; Richardson and Watt 2006). The reasons provided for shunning teaching as a first career were its poor salary and the lack of teaching jobs at that time (Madfes 1990), while social dissuasion also played a role for other CCTs (Richardson and Watt 2006).

However, it is also argued in the literature that CCTs perceive their personality to be well suited to teaching (Bauer, Thomas and Sim 2017), while many student teachers choose teaching as it is more compatible with their own personal interests and attributes (Rife, et al. 1998; Low, et al. (2017). For CCTs, this perception may be strengthened after working in a different job/career for a period of time. Serow (1993) cited in Lee and Lamport (2011) uses the term 'rectifiers' to describe those CCTs who have chosen a career path which is perhaps incompatible with their core beliefs and/or goals and seek to correct this by choosing a career which is more suited to their personality such as teaching This aligns with Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice that certain personalities are better suited to certain careers or jobs.

Fulfilling this long-held desire and returning to the school environment to become a teacher can feel like 'going home' for many CCTs and Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) categorise this cohort of CCTs as the 'Homecomers'. Teaching is something that the 'Homecomers' have always wanted to do, the career they always dreamed of. This long-held desire may also be supported by the additional presence of family members working as teachers and/or a

previous job which included elements of teaching or instruction (Hunter-Johnson 2015). Influential family members and/or previous work experiences relating to teaching would ensure that teaching as a possible career/job would remain in the mindsets of prospective CCTs (Castro and Bauml 2009). Although Lee (2011) argues that this motivating factor is more significant for younger first career teachers, it is clear that prior experiences of teaching in some form, also act as a significant motivating factor for CCTs when choosing teaching as a new career (Richardson and Watt 2005).

3.5.2 The Motivation of Prior Teaching Experiences

Alongside the long-held desire to become a teacher, many career changers choose teaching as a result of prior teaching experiences, either within their previous employment or within their personal life. A study conducted by Fielstra (1955), examining the influential factors in the decision to become a teacher found that one of the most influential factors was an inspirational teacher from participants' own schooling. Richards (1960) also agrees that past teachers exert a significant influence on the decision to choose teaching as a career. In her study of second-level student teachers' reasons for choosing teaching, Heinz (2013) found that 78% of 184 respondents confirmed they had an inspirational teacher and 80% outlined their learning experiences had been positive. We must remember that at some point every individual has been a student, which has provided the general public with an insight or perceived knowledge into the profession of teaching Watt, et al. (2012). This may also play an influential role in choosing teaching as a career change as similar insights or perceived knowledge into other professions is often unattainable. This perceived knowledge has been termed the 'apprenticeship of observation' by Lortie (1975) and describes the phenomenon whereby student teachers enrol on teacher education courses, having spent thousands of hours observing and evaluating teachers in action as pupils in primary and secondary education

(Borg 2004). In fact, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that this apprenticeship is the start of 'peripherality' and allows participants 'an opening' or access to gain an understanding through involvement. This apprenticeship of observation provides student teachers with a particular insight into the teaching profession, and despite the fact that this knowledge of teaching is garnered from a youthful perspective as a student it still provides individuals with "personal judgements concerning one's own teaching-related abilities" (Watt, et al. 2012, 804).

Alongside their own experiences of teaching while in school, it is reasonable to assume that many CCTs would have experience of teaching or instruction in their personal and professional lives. In its simplest form, this may have involved mentoring of new colleagues, or some form of training and instruction in the workplace, which would have further informed their assessment of their teaching ability. Fourteen out of the seventeen CCTs (82%) in a study conducted by Madfes (1990) stated that although teaching had been a previous career interest that they had not chosen initially, positive experiences of teaching responsibilities had allowed these CCTs to gain an insight into the role of a teacher and provided participants with the confidence to pursue a new career in teaching.

The enjoyment of working with children either as a parent, a sports coach or a youth activity leader is also cited as a motivation to begin a teaching career and was listed as a primary motivating factor among 64% of the 375 participants in a study conducted by Williams and Forgasz (2009). Similar reasons were cited by participants in the study conducted by Price (2019) as former military personnel recalled their experiences of going into schools and working with children as the reasons they were attracted to teaching as a new career. Another participant in that study also stated that it was his experience as a father which inspired him to consider

teaching, "seeing my child have those moments when it clicked or he's realised something and just seeing him grow in his education, it got me quite inspired to go into education myself" (Price 2019, 341). It is clear that many career switchers draw upon their experiences of assisting young peers, working with young people in youth groups or sports teams to assure themselves of their own teaching capabilities before pursuing teaching as a full-time career (Rife, et al. 1988; Richardson and Watt 2005). Anthony and Ord (2008) also cite personal utilitarian factors and prior experience of roles similar to teaching in promoting a confidence in CCTs about their ability to teach. Again this argument is echoed in other research studies (Richardson and Watt 2005; Watt, et al. 2012), as is the experience of parenthood as a motivating factor in choosing teaching as a new career.

As many mature CCTs are more likely to have children of their own (Troesch and Bauer 2020), there may be an assumption among many in this cohort that teaching is no more challenging than parenthood. Freidus and Krasnow (1991) argue that the role as a parent is not enough to garner an understanding of teaching. Yet despite this, mature teaching candidates utilise their experience of parenthood and raising children to instil a self-confidence in their ability to teach and assume that the transition to the profession of teaching may be more streamlined as a result. Indeed, Madfes (1990, 182) urges that there is a "need to understand the difference between parenting and teaching" and interestingly, Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003, 98) outlined that many respondents had "identified being a parent as their most recent experience" prior to undertaking a teacher education programme. It is acceptable that the experience of parenting provides CCTs with better coping strategies while undertaking a teaching course (Bunn and Wake 2015), and a more in-depth knowledge and empathy when dealing with young children and teenagers (Kaldi 2009) which may inspire CCTs to utilise these personally acquired skills in a professional capacity.

3.5.3 The Motivation of a Meaningful Career

It has been commonly cited that the need for a more fulfilling career is another strong reason for CCTs selecting teaching as a new career (Freidus and Krasnow 1991; Novak and Knowles 1992; Wilson and Deaney 2010). A desire to help young people and make a difference in their lives (Morgan, et al. 2010), combined with the opportunity to employ creativity and autonomy into their work can often provide a motivation to change to a teaching career (Chambers 2002). One term that features in much of the research is *'altruism'* and the desire to make a difference in the lives of young people, thus resulting in a greater sense of job fulfilment. Varadharajan and Schuck (2017) believe CCTs enter the teaching profession for altruistic and intrinsic reasons, drawn by a deep sense of commitment and purpose rather than extrinsic factors such as salary and job prospects. Watt, et al. (2012) caution, that although there needs to be more of a precise definition of altruism, it features as a strong motivation for career changers in many research studies. Use of the term altruism can be misleading and can often be used to define a sense of personal reward or job satisfaction that can be gained from teaching more so than making a difference in the lives of others.

In fact, Anthony and Ord (2008) believe that the reasons are more complex, multifaceted and emotionally charged than just wanting to make a difference in the lives of young people and Varadharajan and Schuck (2017) agree that CCTs join the teaching profession as it is a personal vocation and they want to make a social contribution. Despite this, the phrase *'wanting to make a difference'* echoes through much of the research as Lee (2011) outlined that the desire to do something meaningful was a strong motivator for all participants in his study. Similarly, Castro and Bauml (2009) noted that all of their participants expressed a desire to make a difference, also agreeing with findings in more recent studies by Lee and Lamport (2011), Apfel (2013) and Hunter-Johnson (2015). The desire to make a difference in

young people's educational lives provides a feeling of fulfilment for many CCTs, a feeling that they may not experience in another career field. As outlined by one CCT, "in teaching, I have the opportunity to touch the lives of people each day, I can't in sales" (Rife, et al. 1988, 70). Similar findings were presented by Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) among the 'Unconverted' group of CCTs, who although wanted to make a difference to education, did not believe that they would do so as teachers. It is worth questioning if the desire to make a difference in the lives of young people is based on a personal sentimentality as perhaps these CCTs are recalling their own educational experiences and the difference a past teacher made in their own young lives. This intrinsic motivation was also identified among the 'Time is Right' cohort in Bunn and Wake's (2015) study. Like the 'Homecomers' (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990), these participants initially chose a different career path, despite a long-held desire to be a teacher. However, these CCTs identified teachers as strong role models and wished to replicate this influence and make a difference in the lives of others.

Similar findings emerged from Chambers' (2002) study, as the desire to 'help young people' was cited by many career change respondents as a motivating factor. Her interviews with ten pre-service and in-service CCTs in Chicago highlighted that there was a desire to give back the benefits they received from their own teachers. It is clear from the research that past teachers play an influential role in CCTs' decision to pursue a teaching career. This influence has emerged as a consistent motivating factor for decades (Robertson, Keith and Page 1983). However, it must also be acknowledged that CCTs are also motivated by extrinsic factors and the long-held desire to become a teacher, positive prior teaching and learning experiences and the want for a more meaningful career are not the only motivations for choosing teaching as a new career.

3.6 Extrinsic Motivations

Another category of CCTs defined by Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) are the 'Converted', the cohort of CCTs who did not seriously consider teaching until a pivotal event or some other factor caused them to reconsider their career path. A change in personal or family circumstances such as a job loss, ill health or a traumatic event may inspire CCTs to change career and look to teaching as a job/career which will provide them with better security or a better lifestyle to suit their needs (Kanchier and Unruh 1989). The following section will discuss job dissatisfaction, loss of employment and a better work-life balance as motivating factors for CCTs.

3.6.1 The Motivation of Job Satisfaction

Dissatisfaction with one's current employment situation is frequently cited as a predominant motivating factor for career changers and this factor is no different for CCTs (Rife, et al. 1988; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2005; Varadharajan, Carter, et al. 2016). It has also been identified as a motivating factor among the 'Homecomers', the 'Converted' and the 'Unconverted' groups of CCTs by Crow, Levine and Nager (1990). Job dissatisfaction has been described by Anthony and Ord (2008, 365) as a *'push factor'* that provides momentum to consider teaching as a career, and they account that twenty-three of sixty-eight participants (34%) in their study reported "a lack of fulfilment, undesirable work conditions, being apart from family, not fitting into the corporate world, disillusionment and lack of challenge or scope for progression" as some of the reasons to change career. Other respondents highlighted that they felt isolated and lacked interaction with others in a previous work environment. A career in teaching would undoubtedly alleviate those feelings as a huge proportion of the teaching day involves interaction with others.

For the 'Converted' career changers, teaching provides greater personal satisfaction and reward as opposed to the target-driven, competitive and stressful jobs held previously (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990). Although motivated to enrol on a teacher education programme due to job dissatisfaction, the 'Unconverted' also become disenchanted with a teaching career and do not intend to teach long-term. However, Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) outline that they express an interest in other areas of education or in educational reform and possibly use the teacher education programme as a stepping stone to something else.

3.6.2 The Motivation of Job Stability

Alongside dissatisfaction with a previous career, the need for greater occupational stability and security can be at the forefront of the minds of CCTs whose personal circumstances may include raising a family and paying for a mortgage. Despite contradicting findings from Madfes (1990) that the lower salary and job availability of teaching acted as a de-motivating factor for choosing teaching as a first career, this 'pull factor' (Anthony and Ord 2008) of job security emerges as a strong reason for a career change to teaching in more recent research studies (Richardson and Watt 2006; Watt, et al. 2012; Wagner and Imanuel-Noy 2014). As outlined by one CCT, teaching was a way to ensure "a comfortable future for my wife and child" (Rife, et al. 1988, 71) and 35% of 375 career change students in Williams and Forgasz's (2009) research study in Victoria, Australia selected job security as an important consideration when selecting teaching as a new career.

The job security, availability of job opportunities and the reliability of income that teaching provides has proved an attractive incentive for both genders in teaching (Richardson and Watt 2005) and Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003, 103) found that the desire for job security was most evident among the group they identified as 'serial careerists'. Within this

group, these CCTs were willing to settle for a lower salary in favour of greater long-term job security in a job that was more sympathetic to family life. Bauer, Thomas and Sim (2017) identified three factors that motivate CCTs to choose teaching; a job with personal fulfilment and meaning, employment stability and a good balance with family life. The next section will explore an improved work-life balance as a motivating factor for CCTs to choose teaching as a new career.

3.6.3 The Motivation of a Better Work-Life Balance

The sense of flexibility and understanding of family life that teaching offers is another motivating factor for many career changers to choose teaching. Many CCTs may be juggling multiple roles and identities as employees, parents, spouses and perhaps carers to family members. Due to the nature of the school environment and the value that is placed on children and their wellbeing, several teaching parents outlined that the school environment offered a greater chance for flexibility to care for a sick child in comparison to working in industry and "teaching offered a chance to give priority to a stable family life while pursuing the career at the same time" (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003, 103). Choosing teaching as a new career suits family life as the school hours and holiday times coincide with the timetables of teachers' own children. Madfes (1990) furthers this argument suggesting that suitability to family life affects both male and female teachers as she found that both genders cited it as an attractive reason to change career to teaching.

It is clear that family circumstances and responsibilities play a significant role in opting for a career change to teaching among many CCTs, as the quality of family life that teaching can provide is influential in their decision (Richardson and Watt 2005; Watt and Richardson 2008). Over 60% of 375 participants in Williams and Forgasz's (2009) Australian study of the

motivations of career change students in teacher education cited family friendly hours as a strong motivation for choosing teaching. Similarly, in Bunn and Wake's study (2015) of the motivations of non-traditional teaching candidates, many participants cited that their previous jobs kept them from being with their family or pursuing personal interests and hobbies. In particular, one participant in that study explained how a teaching schedule was "a better fit with their family and personal lifestyles" and one that "closely resembles their children's school calendar" (Bunn and Wake 2015, 50). Another advantage of teaching listed by participants in Koç's (2019) study was the time teaching allowed for oneself. Although not mentioned in the literature, the suitability of teaching to family life also reduces child care costs and increases the opportunity for family time for CCTs during the school holidays, which may not have been feasible in a different career.

Throughout this section the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations held by CCTs for changing career to teaching were discussed. It is clear from the literature that several factors play a role in the decision for CCTs to change career. Intrinsic motivations such as long-held desire to become a teacher, prior teaching and learning experiences and the desire for a more meaningful career and to make a difference in the lives of others were outlined. The extrinsic motivations such as loss of employment, dissatisfaction with current employment, better job security and a healthier work and family-life balance have also featured in the literature as influential factors for CCTs choosing teaching as a new career path. Williams and Forgasz (2009) outline that CCTs are often perceived as making an important contribution to the teaching profession and an understanding of the qualities and motivations that they bring to teaching is essential. However, it is also essential that there is an understanding of their expectations of teaching and to ensure they are effectively supported in the transition to their new career.

3.7 Expectations of Teaching

This section will discuss the expectations that CCTs hold prior to assuming a teaching role and how these expectations match up with the realities of the classroom and school environment. Success in former employments and accrued life experience may prompt career changers to assume or expect that the transition to teaching will be straightforward. Prior occupational experiences influence a CCT's perception of their preparedness to teach (Anthony and Ord 2008) and indeed, Freidus and Krasnow (1991) maintain that CCTs come to the world of education as novices in the field but with experience and understanding of what it means to be a professional. However, the fact that CCTs carry expectations and baggage to teaching from their previous careers may not always be advantageous to them (Mayotte 2003). As a result of previous workplace and life experience, it is possible that their expectations and perceptions of teaching may differ significantly to those of a first career teacher entering the profession at a much younger age. However Koç (2019) argues that CCTs experience the same adaptation problems experienced by any beginner teacher despite their previous work experience.

Many potential teachers have a positive perception of their capability as a teacher, derived from the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975) referred to in Section 3.5.2. Most, if not all CCTs in Ireland will have come through the educational system of primary and secondary schooling. This will have provided them with the opportunity to witness first-hand, teachers in action within the classroom, and observe and engage with teachers for a period of thirteen or fourteen years. This "apprenticeship in teaching" described by Lortie (1975), often provides a false expectation for those beginning a teacher education programme, that anyone can teach. Even as children, a reasonably accurate portrayal of a classroom teacher's actions can be represented in play, due to the observations of teaching as a child. Likewise, those

considering a career change that are parents of school-aged children, may have gained a further insight into teaching before beginning a teacher education programme (Madfes 1990). These career changing parents will have experience of interacting with their children's teachers and school friends and therefore, have developed a perception of the role of a teacher and the classroom environment.

3.7.1 The Expectation of Teaching Based on CCTs' Own Memories

As discussed in Section 3.5.2, the positive prior teaching and learning experiences as a student can act as a motivating factor for many CCTs. The memory of a significant teacher can also impact their perceptions and expectations of teaching as they hope to replicate their own positive school experiences for other children (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003) and use their teaching role to engage in social change (Freidus and Krasnow 1991). However, the realities of teaching in the present day differ greatly from school experiences twenty or thirty years ago and what CCTs may remember from their own education as a young person (Lortie 1975). This is evident in the findings of Olsen (2008) as one participant recalled a long-held expectation of didactic instruction, quizzes and short answer tests, which was disregarded during her ITE. Compared to the school experiences of many teachers, particularly more mature-aged teachers, modern day teaching now involves group work, constructivism, problem-solving and various forms of assessment as well as many new subjects and the use of technology.

3.7.2 The Unexpected Workload of Teaching

For many non-teachers looking into the world of teaching or remembering their own experiences of the practice of teaching as students, they may have an assumption that teaching is a much easier job than others. However, the reality is very different as teaching

methodologies have evolved over the years and planning, differentiation and assessment are embedded into the daily routine of teachers. It is suggested by Van Overschelde, Saunders and Ash (2017) that the expectations of planning, teaching and assessment are not the tripping stones for new teachers, but rather the unexpected aspects, such as time spent creating resources, inclusive classroom environments and the extra-curricular activities and field-trips that teachers voluntarily engage with, which provide a sharp reality shock for pre-service teachers when they reach the classroom.

It has also been noted that CCTs often struggle with disappointment in their new career as they tend to have high expectations regarding team work and their ability to cope with professional demands (Troesch and Bauer 2020). Their former employment experience may have involved a lot of collaboration, team and project work, which is not always mirrored in the traditionally structured teaching profession (Marinell and Johnson 2014). The experience of professionalism along with commitment, maturity and the people skills that CCTs possess are listed as some of the attributes essential for quality teaching (Williams and Forgasz 2009), but this may not allow for a seamless transfer to the classroom environment, where a new set of people skills may be required to work with young children and/or teenagers.

3.7.3 The Expectation of Classroom Management

The 'career changers' that have experience in management and leadership in a former employment, hold an expectation that they will have autonomy in the classroom to carry out their own ideas (Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008) or that classroom management mirrors the management of other work environments (Hunter-Johnson 2015). For CCTs with experience of managing others in a work environment, they may hold an expectation that this skill could be easily transferred to the classroom. This expectation was highlighted in one

particular study conducted by Snyder, Oliveira and Paska (2013). A secondary school CCT who had previously worked as an engineer in the military, designing ships and training personnel outlined that her expectation of student behaviour was far off reality. She anticipated that all students would be interested in learning and would settle down in class, but this did not transpire when she began teaching and caused her to question her own assumptions. Similar challenges of classroom management and maintaining disciple were experienced by participants in Price's (2019, 344) study, which contradicted "the governmental aspiration for troops to bring discipline into the classroom".

Classroom management is an important facet of teaching and challenges with pupil behaviour can impact a teacher's efficacy and self-confidence. Watters and Diezmann (2015) highlighted the effect that disruptive pupils and problems with classroom management had on one CCT who had previously worked in the field of microbiology. This particular CCT outlined that the challenges she experienced with classroom management was one of the factors that lead to her leaving the teaching profession. The diversity of student needs and learning is another factor that may be challenging for CCTs (Wilcox and Samaras 2009) as the modern classroom involves managing these needs alongside managing student behaviour. Gallant and Riley (2014) acknowledge that the mismatch between teachers' ideals and expectations of teaching and the reality of the classroom contributes to attrition among early career teachers. It is therefore important, that CCTs' expectations of teaching are realistic prior to beginning a teacher education programme or a teaching career, so as to prevent attrition from their new profession.

.3.8 Career Attrition

As discussed previously the notion of a *'job for life'* is no longer a career goal for many

individuals and job flexibility and job opportunities available to employees are more varied now than ever. Although a job or career in the public sector is often viewed as secure, pensionable and well-paid, both the nursing profession (Mooney, Glacken and O'Brien 2008) and the Defence Forces (O'Riordan 2021) have highlighted recruitment and attrition issues as major challenges in recent years. Similarly, teacher attrition referring to qualified teachers leaving the profession before reaching the age of retirement (Kelchtermans 2017) has also been an area of interest among researchers.

Many variables have been presented as to why teachers leave the profession or indeed do not begin teaching at all after qualification (Struyven and Vanthournout 2014). This early career attrition or student attrition is also a cause for international concern among other professions such as nursing (Pryjmachuk, Easton and Littlewood 2008) and impacts the efficient performance of vital professions such as nursing and teaching. The following section will discuss teacher attrition and the factors that contribute to teachers leaving the profession. It must be noted that much of the literature on teacher attrition focuses on teacher attrition in general or attrition among teachers in the early stages of their career. It was difficult to find research on attrition among CCTs and this research study again aims to bridge this gap.

3.9 Teacher Attrition

Although Morgan, et al. (2010) believe that teacher attrition rates in Ireland are low, this belief is based on a 2005 study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) titled, '*Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*' (OECD 2005). The report *'Striking the Balance: Teacher Supply in Ireland*' (The Teaching Council 2015), highlighted a lack of data in Ireland on teacher attrition but estimated an average of 725 primary teachers in Ireland leave the profession each

year. The issue of teacher retention is a significant cause for concern in Ireland at present as many early career teachers move abroad to teach in what Struyven and Vanthournout (2014, 38) describe as 'transfer attrition' or 'teacher migration'. This growing concern prompted the former Minister for Education, Joe McHugh to propose a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to meet with Irish teachers working there and discuss the opportunities available in a bid to convince their return to Ireland to teach (The Irish Times 2019a).

The most prevalent reason offered by teacher unions to explain the lack of interest in teaching as a profession and attrition rates among teachers in Ireland is the current two-tier pay system for pre-2011 and post-2011 qualified teachers. As discussed in Section 3.3.1, this anomaly has sharply reduced the attractiveness of the profession (TUI 2018). In a letter to The Irish Times in January 2018, Joanne Irwin, former President of the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) warned that the retention of teachers and new entrants in a sector with pay inequality is a threat to the education system. She outlined that "a TUI survey, showed that 29% of new or recent entrants did not see themselves in the job in ten years time" (The Irish Times 2018a).

The issue of teacher attrition is also evident beyond Ireland and is highlighted in many international research studies. In exploring the reasons why teachers leave teaching, Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) cited that one in every four teachers eventually decide to change to another career. More recently, several research studies indicate that attrition rates among early career teachers range between 40-50% (Ingersoll 2003). Many research studies report a similar trend, and the attrition statistics are quite similar internationally. Rinke (2008) notes that in the USA approximately 40% of teachers leave within the first five years of teaching. Discussing attrition rates in Australia, Buchanan, et al. (2013) maintain it is difficult to obtain accurate figures as each state gathers its own data but estimate that up to one third

of teachers in Australia and other developed countries leave within the same time frame. Arnup and Bowles (2016) further the argument in suggesting that Australian research shows up to 50% of educators leave within the first five years. Lindqvist and Nordänger (2015) acknowledge that attrition rates in developed countries vary with lower rates in Germany and France in comparison to the UK and USA, while Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) maintain that data gathered by the Department of Education in Flanders, Belgium shows attrition rates varying around 16%.

Lee and Lamport (2011) believe that attrition within teaching has always been problematic and Struyven and Vanthournout (2014, 37) purport that "teacher retention should be of continuous importance for every educational system". Therefore, it is essential that every effort is made to assist the retention of all teachers within the system to maintain a high standard of education for primary and post-primary pupils in our schools. This is particularly true for CCTs because this cohort of teachers have already made a decision to walk away from one career after spending many years in the workplace, and it is quite possible that they may also choose to leave teaching (Lee and Lamport 2011).

3.9.1 The Reasons for Teacher Attrition

When examining teacher attrition, Lysaght, O'Leary and Scully (2017) hold that, teachers' initial expectations of teaching must be considered. Kyriacou, et al. (2003) suggest, that the mismatch between new teachers' expectations and the reality of the job influence their decision to leave the teaching profession. Buchanan (2015) agrees that if new teachers enter the profession with unrealistically high expectations, problems will arise. As discussed in Section 3.7, the workload of teachers and classroom management can be unexpected challenges for new teachers. Indeed, the most common reasons cited for attrition from

teaching in the early years include: work overload, family responsibilities and lack of administrative support (Buchanan 2010; Troesch and Bauer 2020).

However, Weldon (2018, 71) suggests six areas which affect the decision to leave teaching after qualification:

- Demand effect – teachers unable to find regular employment,

- Personal effect – leaving for personal and family reasons,

- Compatibility effect – feeling unsuitable to the role,

- Career Choice effect – pursuit of an alternative career,

- Environment effect – lack of support, school and school leadership culture,

- Performance effect – teachers sacked or de-registered due to poor performance or illegal activity.

Weldon (2018) specifies that these categories of attrition refer to early career teachers; those in the first five years of teaching. But they are also relevant to CCTs and findings from this study align with five of these categories discussed in the following sections; the demand effect, the personal effect, the compatibility effect, the career choice effect and the environment effect.

3.9.2 The Demand Effect

Despite the fact that job security is often cited as a motivating factor to enter the teaching profession, for many teachers in Ireland, the 'Demand Effect' and the difficulty in securing regular employment may also play a factor in teacher attrition. This factor features more in post-primary teaching as finding a secure, permanent employment can be a difficult task. The unavailability of contracts with full hours as well as the lack of affordable accommodation in

larger cities is cited by schools as reasons why recruitment of teachers is proving difficult (Casey 2020). The end of a school year brings the beginning of a stressful time for teachers who do not have permanent contracts as they wonder if they will have a job for the next school year. This factor featured significantly in a study by Glazer (2018, 68) in which participants recount receiving *'a pink slip'* to terminate their employment alongside a suggestion that they may be hired back again the following year, thus resulting in an anxious summer of waiting to see if this suggestion would transpire into a reality. Participants in this study also cited the insecurity of employment prevalent in Ireland today and this will be explored further in Chapter 5. The lack of future prospects acts as a strong reason for teacher attrition (Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) and the inability to secure a full-time position not only diminishes the expectations and aspirations of new teachers but acts as an obstruction to their teacher identity development.

3.9.3 The Personal Effect

Weldon (2018) outlines that the teachers that leave for personal reasons have not necessarily had a negative teaching experience. Findings from a study conducted by Smithers and Robinson (2003) found that one third of participants cited personal circumstances as a reason for their attrition. One participant clarified that she left teaching to care for her children. She did not mind the heavy workload of teaching, but she found that her children and family were second place to the job as teaching did not offer the flexibility she originally thought it would. Another participant in that same study cited a desire to travel as the personal reason for leaving teaching. Glazer (2018) also identified that attrition in teaching is not always influenced by a negative element, as one participant in the study opted to leave teaching for a number of personal reasons, including relocating to another city for their partner's work. As discussed in Section 3.6.3, many CCTs choose teaching as a new career for a better work and

life balance, however, if the professional life of teaching impacts on one's personal life, and creates a conflict with family life, it can also motivate teachers, including CCTs to leave the profession (Kelchtermans 2017).

3.9.4 The Compatibility Effect

As previously discussed in Section 3.7, an extensive apprenticeship of observation during primary and post-primary school, acquaints students with the tasks of the teacher and allows for a simplified identification with the profession (Lortie 1975) and an assumption that perhaps the task of teaching is less onerous than other jobs and professions. However, many neophyte teachers are unprepared for the challenges of the classroom and often do not continue in the profession beyond what Glazer (2018) terms the *'survival period'* or the first two years on the job. This observation is echoed by den Brok, Wubbels and van Tartwijk (2017) who suggest that teacher attrition may be particularly high in the early phases of the teaching career as teachers come to realise they are unsuited to the role.

The realities of the teaching profession only become evident when one is tasked with the role of teacher in the classroom. Borg (2004, 274) believes that non-teaching professionals may be more aware of their lack of knowledge of their job role, unlike student teachers who would have gained a perspective of the role of the teacher from their own educational experiences. Lortie (1975) also cautions that students' learning of teaching is more intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical. When tasked with the realities of classroom life it is possible that reality does not meet expectation and this reality plays a significant role in the decision to leave the profession. For many newly qualified teachers (NQTs) both first and second career, the responsibility of teaching comes as a significant culture shock (Smithers

and Robinson 2003) and impacts a teacher's decision to remain in the profession or choose to leave and pursue a different career path once more.

3.9.5 The Choice Effect

The 'Choice Effect' describes the attrition of those teachers that have chosen to leave the profession and pursue an alternative job in either education or another sector. Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) suggest that many teachers leave the role of classroom teacher, but remain within the education sector in some capacity, for example in administration. Findings by Smithers and Robinson (2003) show that approximately one third of those that left teaching attributed their attrition to 'wanting a change'. As one participant in that study outlined, the desire for a new challenge was a significant factor in his decision to leave science teaching and his new job as a science advisor was described as a positive move out of teaching. Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) also found that those who leave teaching assign a greater importance to salary, job responsibility and new learning. For CCTs, who have changed career once before, the choice to leave teaching for another job would not be a daunting one as they may have the confidence to pursue a completely different career path once again or return to their previous job/career.

3.9.6 The Environment Effect

While Ingersoll and Smith (2003) attribute the pursuit of another job and dissatisfaction with teaching as reasons for two-thirds of beginning teacher attrition, Ryan, et al. (2017) list teacher stress, burnout, school climate and the development of a teacher identity as factors in attrition rates among new teachers. These reasons fall into the category of the 'Environment Effect' (Weldon 2018) attributing teacher attrition to lack of support, school and leadership culture and teacher workload. These reasons for attrition are also cited in many other research

studies (Borman and Dowling 2008; Struyven and Vanthournout 2014; Glazer 2018).

Teachers' workload as discussed in Section 3.7.2 can often be an unexpected facet of teaching for many new teachers, contributing to high levels of stress and burnout. Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) found that workload was a significant factor in teacher attrition and was a stronger motive for female teachers leaving the profession. It is also evident that experiences in the classroom can leave new teachers physically and emotionally drained (Rinke 2008), as teaching students who lack motivation, trying to maintain discipline as a new teacher, time pressures and workload all impact the decision to remain in the profession (Manuel 2003; Howard and Johnson 2004; Beltman, Mansfield and Price 2011; Lindqvist and Nordänger 2015).

Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) identified a positive support system within the school as fundamental in assisting teachers' retention. Schuck, Brady and Griffin (2005) also identify school culture as a major influence in teachers' feelings of satisfaction, which in turn impacts their attrition or retention. The school climate plays an important role in a teacher's wellbeing, as a negative school climate increases stress, burnout and the likelihood of attrition from the profession (Ryan, et al. 2017). If a teacher does not feel valued in his/her role or that his/her future prospects are limited, then there is a greater chance of attrition. Buchanan, et al. (2013) maintain that where school culture is supportive and encouraging, new teachers are better able to cope with the challenges of their new career.

Lack of collaboration, teacher networking and administrative support again featured as a cause for attrition rates throughout different studies (Borman and Dowling 2008; Craig 2014; Hunter-Johnson 2015). It is suggested that even the presence of one other person to share

experiences with and seek advice from, will assist a neophyte teacher in enduring the initial difficult early years of teaching and prevent their attrition (Karge 1993). Formal support structures such as the provision of a mentor, an induction programme, the opportunity to discuss experiences with other teachers, a reduced teaching load and continued links with teacher education institutions are advocated by Kelly, Sim and Ireland (2018) as significant factors in reducing teacher attrition and increasing job satisfaction. If the school culture does not support new teachers to feel welcome, fit in, and if more experienced teachers do not engage in sharing expertise and practice (Gallant and Riley 2014), it is understandable why many new teachers would choose to remove themselves from this type of work environment.

3.10 The Consequences of Teacher Attrition

In a more general sense, the consequences of teacher attrition must also be considered. Lindqvist, Nordänger and Carlsson (2014) propose that teacher attrition imposes significant costs for schools and affects large numbers of pupils. Aside from the educational relevance, Kelchtermans (2017, 963) also lists four criteria which highlight how the issue of teacher attrition impacts society as a whole. Firstly, from a sociological viewpoint, teacher attrition and retention poses a problem for policy makers to ensure that there are enough qualified teachers to serve the needs of society. Secondly, the economic impact suggests a loss of investment if teachers leave the profession, prompting further investment to replace these teachers. From a public health perspective, Kelchtermans (2017) suggests that the cohort of teachers who leave the profession as a result of burnout or stress may have also been on sick leave prior to their departure, placing a further cost on public health expenses. Finally, from a human resources point of view, teacher attrition may actually be beneficial as it would facilitate "the weeding out of the employees who don't meet the expectations in terms of professional quality" (Kelchtermans 2017, 963) and ensure that those that remain in the

profession are motivated and interested to provide high quality teaching to their students.

3.11 Preventing Teacher Attrition

As outlined in Section 3.9.6, good relationships with colleagues (Ingersoll, Merrill and May 2016) and strong support systems (Buchanan, et al. 2013; Lindqvist, Nordänger and Carlsson 2014), all contribute to teacher retention. Acton and Glasgow (2015) also identify emotional awareness and intelligence as a factor in promoting teachers' wellbeing and retention and several authors note the importance of developing resilience among early career teachers (Kitching, Morgan and O'Leary 2009; Beltman, Mansfield and Price 2011; Lavigne 2013; Clandinin, et al. 2015; Arnup and Bowles 2016) which would assist in preventing teacher attrition.

Day and Gu (2013, 56) note that there are also associations between teachers' "identity, commitment and resilience." A discrepancy between the expectation of teaching held by a NQT and the reality of the role impacts his/her decision to stay in the teaching profession (Ryan, et al. 2017). The fulfilment or undermining of the expectations that a new teacher holds dearest also shapes their view of teaching as a career and contributes to their retention or attrition (Kyriacou and Kunc 2007). However, to avoid early career attrition among new teachers, Tait (2008) believes that resilience building activities should be included in both pre-service and induction programmes and that the wider school community need to acknowledge the connection between resilience, teacher development and retention.

A strong sense of identity also contributes to teacher retention as it builds confidence and resilience in beginning teachers (Wilson and Deaney 2010; Bieler 2013; Beutel, Crosswell and Broadley 2019). The four-year *Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and Effectiveness*

(VITAE) research study conducted by Day, et al. (2006b) highlighted that teachers' resilience was influenced by their professional life phases and teacher identities. Within the first professional life phase (0-3 years) professional learning activities and interactions with school leaders and colleagues impacted the morale and confidence of a new teacher, in turn assisting in the development of professional identity and classroom competence. However, the second professional life phase (4-7 years) was the period when teachers' professional identities were challenged more, as increased workload and responsibility impacted their teaching effectiveness and confidence. Day and Gu (2007) suggest that school leaders and policy makers need to acknowledge and understand the needs of teachers and provide suitable support to enhance a sense of positive professional identity and well-being among teachers. Hong (2010) insists that to explore teacher attrition, we must also focus on teacher identity, which may also assist in explaining the dropout phenomenon.

3.12 Professional Identity

In order to fully understand teacher identity, the concept of identity in its own right needs to be defined. One definition of identity as "knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are" (Jenkins 2008, 5), not only encompasses good knowledge of the self but also of the place of the self in one's surroundings. Holland (1997, 173) believes that "a person with a clear sense of identity has an explicit and relatively stable picture of his or her goals, interests, skills and suitable occupations." Stryker's (1968) theory of identity states that the self is composed of multiple identities which exist in a hierarchy of salience and the identity ranking highest will be invoked in a given situation. Stryker (2008, 20) holds that identities are "self-cognitions tied to roles and through roles, to positions in organized social relationships". Therefore, the self cannot be fully developed without social interaction and communication (Day et al. 2006a).

This argument is particularly relevant to teaching as much of the teacher's personal self, interlinks with his/her professional self and through teaching, one's identity is further developed through negotiated experiences and community membership (Wenger 1998). Taking these perspectives into consideration, my own definition of identity is how one views oneself as a person and a professional being. I believe that identity is an emotional concept and that emotions impact one's sense of identity. I also believe that identity is influenced by how others view you or see you both as a person and a professional, and that if that view is positive it will enhance your identity but similarly a negative view from others will cause you to question your identity.

Varying perspectives on identity and more specifically professional identity have been offered right up to the present day, yet much of the literature struggles to define what exactly the term 'professional identity' means (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). It is suggested that professional identity links to a teacher's wellbeing (Thomas and Beauchamp 2007) and that a well-developed professional identity will allow teachers to interpret and re-interpret their own beliefs, values and experiences (Flores and Day 2006). The complexity of classroom life can impact on a teacher's identity and that if a teacher feels capable in the role; his/her self-confidence will grow and lead in turn to greater competency in the role. This is particularly relevant for new teachers in the early part of their careers who may struggle with confidence in their role and ability, as well as striking the balance of asserting authority while still maintaining a good relationship with pupils (Volkmann and Anderson 1998). This will also apply to CCTs transitioning from a different career path where a strong degree of competency and confidence was experienced in a prior profession (Haggard, Slostad and Wintertin 2006) but may not have transferred to their teaching role.

Many researchers have attempted to explain the process of developing a professional identity as a teacher. MacLure (1993) suggests that identity is not an object that teachers have but rather the role they play and the context in which they operate. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) also agree that professional identity comprises the notion of agency and that the two are inextricably linked. They believe that if a teacher holds a strong awareness of his/her identity, they will actively pursue professional development and learning in line with their teacher goals. However, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) also state that because identity can be unstable, agency can be involved in the maintenance and shaping of a teacher's identity. Day & Gu (2007) hold that managing the challenges of classroom life is fundamental to effective teaching, and if teachers believe that they can achieve this, they will hold a more positive teacher identity.

It is uniformly agreed within the literature that the development of a professional identity is a dynamic and complex process. Given the changing nature of teaching as a profession, it is understandable that the development of professional identity is not a static but an ongoing process (Sachs 2001; Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Thomas and Beauchamp 2007) and can be influenced by many factors. Lindqvist and Nordänger (2015) believe that if the demands of the profession are not compatible with the teacher's professional identity, then he/she is left with the option to either reconstruct his/her identity or leave the profession. Similarly, if the professional identity encompasses a teacher's whole identity, this imbalance between the professional and personal identities can also contribute to the decision to leave (Kelchtermans 2017).

The term teacher socialisation, defined by Zeichner and Gore (1989) as the process in which an individual becomes a participating member of the teaching profession, suggests that

student teachers are influenced by a number of factors which in turn will impact the development of a teacher identity. These factors include not only Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation but also the individual's former teachers who acted as a positive role model, and their previous teaching, work and parenting experience; elements that CCTs often possess. As discussed in Section 3.5, these same factors were cited as motivating factors for CCTs when choosing teaching as a new career path. The multiple experiences that CCTs have encountered before their teaching role enhance how they consider themselves as 'being professional' (Nielsen 2016). It is suggested by Grier and Johnston (2009) that teacher identity is based on the core beliefs that an individual holds about teaching and being a teacher, and as a result of personal and professional experiences these beliefs constantly change and evolve.

Alongside the multiple prior experiences that influence identity development, Wenger (1998) again suggests that one's role within a community is closely linked to one's identity. However, if a career is defined as "a special genre of life stories that we tell to make sense of what we have done, are doing, and might do in our jobs" (Mac Lure (1993, 319), then professional identity begins its development long before an employment contract is signed and the personal biographies, stories and experiences also play a vital role in shaping teachers identities (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004). This concept is particularly relevant to this study as participants shared parts of their life stories and explored the influential factors in their decision to choose teaching as a new career.

When considering that no two individuals have the same life experiences and therefore, will construct different meanings of the self and the world around them (Nias 1989), there can be no uniform process to develop one's teacher identity. Rodgers and Scott's (2008) definition

of identity as (1) storied, (2) contextual, (3) relational and emotional and (4) shifting and multiple, hold particular relevance for CCTs as past experiences, a new work context and other personal identities will impact the construction of a new teacher identity. The following sections will discuss these four definitions in greater detail.

3.12.1 Professional Identity as Storied

Considering that CCTs bring life and work experience with them to teaching, it is no surprise that these experiences will impact their teacher identity formation. Pflug (2020) found that several factors shaped a CCT's professional identity as a teacher, including their identity as a parent, their personal identity and their prior professional skills and experiences. Lindqvist and Nordänger (2015) also suggest that career decisions are inseparable from the individual's personal biography which include family backgrounds and life histories, and decisions seem to be based on information located in the familiar and the known. Sugrue (1997) furthers this argument in saying that a student teacher's lay theories and identities can often have formed at a very young age and are often embedded in the psyche before the student teacher begins a teacher education programme. These lay theories are described by Holt-Reynolds (1992, p. 326) cited in Sugrue (1997) as "beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction" and may also represent the tacit knowledge of the student which has lay dormant and unexamined prior to their teacher education. Sugrue (1997) also outlines that identifying with teaching as a profession is an important step for student teachers but that there are many factors which influence a student teacher's identity and these include family influences, the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975) and atypical teaching episodes such as helping other siblings with homework and babysitting. For those CCTs who highlighted the long-held desire to be a teacher, it is possible that their identity always included that of a teacher, but for varying reasons had not yet been activated.

3.12.2 Professional Identity as Contextual

The school context and school culture have been identified in Section 3.9.6 as influential factors in the decisions of those who choose to leave the teaching profession (Rinke 2008; Gallant and Riley 2014; Clandinin, et al. 2015; den Brok, Wubbels and van Tartwijk 2017). Undeniably it plays an influential role in a teacher's professional identity development, as this occurs through social interaction and negotiating the meanings of our experiences with others (Wenger 1998). The influences of the school environment, the learner population and colleagues are stressed in many research studies as significant in shaping a new teacher's identity (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Flores and Day 2006; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009; Schultz and Ravitch 2013). As argued in Section 3.2, given the variety of backgrounds and experiences that CCTs bring to teaching, it is essential for schools to provide a supportive learning environment for teacher professional development and appreciate the needs, differences and experiences of these particular individuals (Day and Gu 2007; Stafford 2008).

3.12.3 Professional Identity as Emotional

On leaving a previous job or profession, CCTs bring valuable experience and skills to the teaching profession, along with a previous career identity. Yet changing career can also include a range of emotions which cannot be easily discarded. As a teacher, it is impossible to separate the personal self and professional self as teaching is a highly emotional practice (Hargreaves 1998) and much of a teacher's personality is transferred to their professional capacity. The interactions with children, their parents and colleagues, the many decisions a teacher makes on a daily basis, his or her classroom presence, values and beliefs, engagement with the curriculum and school policies all incorporate a personal dimension (Coldron and Smith 1999). In particular, Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012) highlight the role that emotions, both positive and negative play in developing a professional identity. The presence of

emotions or feelings can cause tensions for new teachers as they develop a new professional identity, and some may experience feelings of incompetency in their new role. This stems from moving from an identity of student to an identity of teacher and the expectation of needing to be an expert in this new role and developing coping strategies to deal with all of this tension (Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok 2013).

3.12.4 Professional Identity as Shifting and Multiple

It is agreed within the literature that identity is an ongoing and shifting process (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Thomas and Beauchamp 2007). At any given time, in any given context, one's identity can alter and be "ambiguous or unstable" (Gee 2000, 99). The multiple roles that individuals hold (e.g., parent, employee), can offset a change in one's identity through conscious choice or competing demands (Wilson and Deaney (2010). As CCTs come to the teaching profession with at least one other identity in hand, it is possible that their previous career identity will assist and inform the development of their new teacher identity (Grier and Johnston (2009; Tigchelaar, Vermunt and Brouwer 2012). Nielsen (2016, 237) holds that CCTs have the capability to operate positively within schools as they can "reconvert elements of their previous professional identities into teaching" while Anthony and Ord (2008) believe that drawing on previous experiences and expertise affirms a new teacher's identity and self-worth. This concept of identity as shifting and multiple is in line with Stryker's (1968) theory of identity. A CCT may come to teaching with multiple personal and professional identities and depending on the situation, identity salience may be invoked. For example a former nurse's professional identity as a nurse may take hierarchy over his/her teacher identity when a pupil is involved in an accident in school. Similarly a personal identity of parent, son/daughter may take hierarchy over a teacher identity if an unexpected personal situation arises for the teacher while in the classroom.

3.13 Supporting CCTs in Developing Their Teacher Identity

Utilising a previous career identity in their new career may not be a simple or straightforward process for all CCTs, as some may find it difficult to relinquish a previous career or professional identity. This in turn may hinder the acquisition of a new teacher identity. This proposition is supported by Williams (2010) in discussing how a strong occupational identity can impact the learning during teacher education. In addition, Troesch and Bauer (2020) hold that there needs to be a focus on teachers' biographies in order to support new teachers in the profession and assist their retention. These arguments hold particular relevance for most CCTs as their previous professional identities and personal stories may influence the development of their professional identities as teachers (Nielsen 2016).

Many research studies recommend that teacher education programmes play a vital role in building teacher identity prior to beginning a teaching career. Pre-service teachers must be enabled to become more aware of their emotions and begin to reflect on their own identity formation (Hong 2010). Grier and Johnston (2009) suggest that teacher education programmes are essential sites for identity formation for both traditional teacher education students and career changers. Kaldi (2009, 47) proposes that there lies a challenge for teacher educators to provide opportunities for mature student teachers to "develop their personal and professional identities unhindered."

Following on from teacher education programmes, it is also essential that schools and school leaders are aware of how best to support a new teacher's identity development. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) outline that the role of the context in professional identity formation needs considerable attention and this topic features in many other studies (Zeichner and Gore 1989; Flores and Day 2006; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Wilson and Deaney

2010). It is also suggested by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) that identity development involves understanding the self both within and outside the school context and it is shaped and often reshaped through interaction with others. These professional interactions and dialogue about classroom practices and challenges enable new teachers to recognise themselves as professionals and in turn enhance their teacher identity (Mayotte 2003; Cohen 2010). Participating in a community of practice also contributes to teacher identity formation (Anthony and Ord 2008).

The autonomy and isolation that often is a component of teaching can prove problematic for CCTs' new identity development (Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008). Without the element of contextual support, new teachers will experience identity conflict as Olsen (2008) maintains that their long-held expectations of teaching will not match reality. Gallant and Riley (2014) highlight that a lack of support for new teachers affects the development of an identity as a teacher and contributes to a decision to leave the profession. Therefore, it is essential that an early awareness of teacher identity and its continuous development assists teacher retention within the profession.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the key themes, issues and discussions in the literature that inform the findings of this study. A career changer's decision to enter the teaching profession can be influenced by economic factors such as lack of employment within their field, personal factors such as a long-held desire to become a teacher, the want to make a difference in the life of a child or teenager, prior experience of working with young people or dissatisfaction with a previous job (Rife, et al. 1988; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2005; Anthony and Ord 2008). For many CCTs, family circumstances

also play a significant role in choosing a career change, as teaching facilitates a better work-life balance. The expectations of teaching that CCTs hold before their career change are not always mirrored in the reality of teaching. Many research studies reason that the prior educational experiences and prior work experiences attribute to these expectations and perceptions of teaching among CCTs (Rife, et al. 1988; Richardson and Watt 2005; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Watt, et al. 2012).

The skills and experiences that CCTs bring to the profession of teaching were discussed and the argument was made to ensure that this particular cohort of teachers, are supported in recognising and transferring their existing skills to teaching. The topic of teacher attrition among CCTs and the factors that influence the decision to leave the profession were highlighted. These factors include job security, the demanding workload of teaching, school culture, resilience and professional identity.

The theme of identity is an intrinsic component of this study. Many research studies agree that identity formation is a complex, dynamic and constructivist process for any new teacher and that there are multiple aspects that play a role in its creation and development (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Rodgers and Scott 2008). My own understanding of identity is in line with Stryker's (1968) proposition that the self is comprised of multiple identities and as such, this theory informs each aspect of this exploration of the experiences of CCTs in Ireland. Without ever discussing a professional identity, it is possible for any individual to assume multiple identities in his/her life, e.g., a son, a daughter, a friend, a parent, or a carer. In addition to these personal identities, a CCT's identity is also comprised of more than one professional identity. The significance of identity in the decision to change career to teaching, the influence of other identities on the development of a new professional identity as a

teacher and the role teacher identity plays on attrition from the profession justify the research

design and the framework for analysis.

CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed to offer an insight into the experiences of CCTs in Ireland and specifically focused on the areas of career change motivations, expectations of teaching and the development of a professional identity as a teacher. It also aimed to investigate the factors that contribute to attrition from the profession as a CCT. The study's theoretical framework, acknowledging the influence of multiple identities within the self and the factors that contribute to the development of a teacher identity founded the basis for the research design. This study allowed me to explore in depth, the essence of CCTs' teacher identity and specifically the role that professional identity played in their attrition from teaching.

The research design was chosen specifically to allow CCTs to tell the story of their journey of becoming a teacher and committed to ensuring that participants constructed their own meanings of identity and explored the rationale for their attrition based on their experiences of their teaching career. This chapter sets out the research design of the study and provides a justification for the methodology and methods chosen. In this chapter, I will discuss the research paradigm and outline the rationale for the research design. The advantages and limitations of using such a design will be presented. The research methodology will be explained in detail along with the sampling techniques used for the study and how the data was collected. There were some ethical considerations to be considered for this research study and these will be outlined with a description of how the collected data was analysed. Finally, the reliability and validity of the research methods chosen will be examined in detail.

4.2 Ontology, Epistemology and Research Paradigm

The study's theoretical framework draws primarily on Stryker's (1968) theory of identity but is complemented by Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning to understand the role of identity in a CCT's decision to change career to teaching and how he/she develops a new identity as a teacher. The choice to engage with these particular theories arises from the ontological and epistemological positions held by the researcher and this study is underpinned by the assumption that our knowledge and understanding of ourselves and the meaning we attach to ourselves, our lives and the world around us is socially constructed. This perspective is known as constructivism or social constructivism and is in sharp contrast to the positivist perspective which claims that "science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 7).

While the positivist perspective assumes that objective knowledge is gained from direct experience and is scientifically measurable, generally in the form of quantitative research, the social constructivist's view is that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live, work, and develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell 2014). Research within this constructivist paradigm relies on the participants' view of the situation being studied and allows the participants to construct their own meanings of their experiences.

Guba and Lincoln (1994, 108) present three questions as foci when considering a research paradigm; the ontological question, *"what is the form and nature of reality?"* the epistemological question: *"what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and inquirer and what can be known?"* and the methodological question: *"how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?"* By answering these three

questions there was no doubt that this study would be situated within the constructivist paradigm, and a research approach weighted more towards the qualitative approach was selected in line with the constructivist perspective. Research conducted within this paradigm centres on participants constructing their own meaning of a situation. By interacting with and engaging in this context, individuals construct meaning and interpret particular situations in different ways (Crotty 1998). The role of the researcher is then to interpret the meanings (Creswell 2014) while continuously acknowledging their values, and that subjectivity is an integral part of the research (Robson and McCartan 2016).

As a constructivist researcher, I believe that there are specific contexts and experiences that influence the construction of meaning and that the school context and engagement with colleagues and peers, play a large role in a teacher's life and the formation of their teacher identity. The very nature of teaching is a social activity as teachers interact and engage with students, colleagues, parents and a variety of other agencies on a daily basis. Therefore, it was important to focus the research approach to emphasise the experience of CCTs as they live, work and act within this social situation. Social reality is something that is constructed and interpreted by people (Denscombe 2002) and in essence all meaningful reality is socially constructed (Crotty 1998). This research study focused on participants constructing their own meaning of their experiences of becoming a CCT, developing their professional identity as a teacher and the influential factors in their attrition from the teaching profession, thus locating the study firmly within the constructivist paradigm.

4.3 Research Approach and Design

Following an examination of the literature on career change and attrition within the teaching profession, a convergent parallel mixed method research design (Creswell 2014) was chosen for this study and the research aims and questions were focused to enable the participants to present their view of their own reality. A convergent parallel mixed method design collects both quantitative and qualitative data. The data sets are analysed separately and the results are compared. Creswell (2014) outlines that this type of research design assumes that both data sets provide different types of information, yet the results should be similar. This is achieved by using the same or parallel variables, constructs or concepts.

This method was to chosen to best achieve the following research objectives:

- Identify the motivations of CCTs to join the teaching profession.

- Examine the expectations of CCTs about teaching prior to working as a teacher.

- Investigate the experiences of CCTs in establishing a teacher identity.

- Identify the reasons for attrition of CCTs from the teaching profession.

- Highlight the necessary supports and advice CCTs believe would assist or improve the professional transition and experience in the initial phase of a teaching career.

The literature review discussed in Chapter 3 also informed the research questions chosen for this research study:

- What are the main factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which influence their decision to join the teaching profession?

- What are the main challenges, identified by CCTs, in transitioning to a new career as a teacher?

- What factors support the development of a teacher identity among CCTs?

- What are the main personal and/or professional factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which impact their attrition from the teaching profession?

- What role does professional identity as a CCT play in the decision to leave the profession?

Some of the literature discussed in Chapter 3, the Literature Review, highlighted studies that used a mixed methods approach, including Flores and Day (2006), Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen (2008) and Nielsen (2016). These informed my decision in selecting a design for this research project. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell 2014) and an approach to knowledge attempting to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints. Richardson and Watt (2005) explain the beneficial use of two components, a survey, and interviews in their research project. The first component of their research project, which was a survey, reached a large number of participants and allowed for the identification of patterns across the full sample of participants. From this, respondents with specific characteristics were selected for a follow-up interview, which provided me, the researcher with more detail and information.

The decision was made to use a similar design for this research project. Although the use of qualitative and quantitative methods is generally termed 'mixed method,' it must be noted that this research study is situated predominantly within the qualitative research realm, as it employed only a small element of quantitative research through the use of an online survey. The bulk of the data was gathered through the semi-structured interviews and enabled me to best answer the research questions. The primary purpose of the online survey was to gather a

general overview of the cohort of CCTs in Ireland. The survey also allowed the identification of patterns through use of close-ended, rating-scale items and richer qualitative data through some open-ended questions. In line with a convergent parallel mixed method design, the same concepts as used in the semi-structured interviews were examined; the motivations for changing career, the challenges of changing career, developing a new professional identity as a teacher and attrition from teaching. The distribution of the online survey also allowed participants the opportunity to further volunteer their participation through interviews which provided more detail and depth of information in relation to participants' survey responses.

The use of a mixed method design allows for a more general understanding of the research issue among participants rather than using either a qualitative or quantitative approach alone (Creswell 2014). Including both elements (a) provides better understanding, (b) provides a fuller picture and deeper understanding, and (c) enhances description and understanding (Burke Johnson, Onwwuegbuzie and Turner 2007). Therefore, the research was conducted in two phases; the first phase gathered data through the use of an online survey (Appendix 2) and the second phase gathered data from fifteen semi-structured interviews. The participants of the study were CCTs in primary and post-primary schools in different counties in Ireland.

For the purpose of this study, the term career change teacher (CCT) will be used and is defined as a teacher who has worked in a previous career for a minimum of two years prior to qualifying and working as a teacher. The criteria for participation was a primary or post-primary CCT who had joined the teaching profession having previously worked in a different career/job for at least two years prior to qualifying as a teacher. Participants included 112 CCTs who had both remained in and left the teaching profession. In total, there were 111

respondents to the online survey, four of which were discounted as they did not match the research criteria, bringing the total survey respondents to 107. Fifteen CCTs took part in the interview process, ten of whom had also completed the online survey.

4.4 Design Rationale

4.4.1 Online Survey

Surveys are a productive method of data collection when used with a large number of respondents in many locations (Denscombe 2003). They collect structured, numerical data without the presence of the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Without a complete knowledge of the background of postgraduate students enrolling in teacher education programmes, or concrete statistics of the number of postgraduate trainee teachers coming from previous careers, it was difficult to identify and access a suitable sample of CCTs. Therefore, the use of an online survey tool as a research instrument provided a forum to access a wide audience of primary and post-primary school teachers matching the research criteria, who could actively choose to participate in the research.

Different writers make different claims about the use of an online survey. Robson and McCartan (2016) believe that questionnaire-based surveys present a disadvantage to researchers as they can include a low-response rate and it can be difficult to ascertain if the respondents have answered truthfully. However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) argue that due to its voluntary nature, an online survey encourages greater honesty and authenticity from participants. The responses received in the online survey of this study align more towards this latter argument. Gillham, (2000a) advocates that, questionnaires have most value when used in tandem with other methods and cautions that the use of a questionnaire as a sole method is limited, as the answers for the participants to choose from have been selected by

the researcher. Therefore, to offset this limitation, the questionnaire used in this research study offered a variety of questions, including closed responses, Likert scale responses and open-ended responses. The online survey facilitated the collection of specific information from CCTs to highlight their experiences of changing career and participants had the flexibility to complete the survey over a period of time, convenient to them, as the portal remained open for several months.

Although the online survey provided access to the sample of CCTs in Irish primary and post-primary schools, it also allowed CCTs the opportunity to share their stories in a less detailed way, with the option of further participation through interview if they so wished. The quantitative data gathered through the online survey provides an overall picture of the participants in this research study. This data includes general data on the age, gender, qualifications, school context, length of employment, details of ITE, prior school/teaching experience, and current employment status. Likert scale responses were used to gather data on the reasons for leaving previous jobs/careers, reasons for selecting teaching as a career change, satisfaction with their ITE and induction process, and the decision to remain in or leave teaching. The open-ended questions of the online survey gathered data on the previous careers and skills of the participating CCTs, their motivations for choosing a teaching career, their perceptions and views of professional identity and their experiences of teaching in Ireland. Survey participants were also provided with opportunities to expand on their answers to several questions, e.g. the question "in your opinion was it an easy transition from your previous job?" requested a yes/no answer, but an open box to explain the answer was also provided.

4.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

While some aspects of the research study are easily examined through use of an online survey for example, the motivations, perceptions and expectations of CCTs, the semi-structured interviews enabled me to probe further some of the data which emerged from the survey (Denscombe 2003) and gain an in-depth insight into participants' motivations for choosing teaching as a new career, their experiences of teaching in Ireland and the influential factors which contributed to their attrition or retention. The same concepts examined through the online survey were mirrored in the semi-structured interviews but with emphasis on a more detailed analysis of CCTs' motivations for choosing teaching, the factors which supported the development of their professional identity and the influential factors that contributed to their attrition from the profession. Therefore, it is important to note that the bulk of the findings were compiled using the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and are complemented with the data gathered from the open-ended questions of the online survey and images/photos and phrases provided by the participants.

The subsequent collection of qualitative data through interviews assisted me to develop, explain and interpret the findings of the survey data gathered, specifically the motivations for career change and the challenges faced during the initial phase of teaching in constructing a new professional identity. Gillham (2000a, 82) outlines that an interview "doesn't just *illustrate*, it *illuminates*." Therefore, face-to-face interviews were initially chosen as a second method of data collection to provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore the reality of CCTs' professional lives. Face-to-face interviews also allow the possibility of further exploration of interesting responses which may arise during the interview. Similarly, the researcher may record non-verbal cues to understand or illustrate better the verbal response. Although interviews can be time-consuming and challenging to conduct they have the

potential to provide rich, interesting data (Robson and McCartan 2016).

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown prompted a quick adaptation to the interview process. Each interview was still conducted face-to-face, but through the online portal of Microsoft Teams. It must be acknowledged here, that this provided a significant benefit to me as the video recording of the interview allowed for closer examination of the non-verbal cues following the interview, which would not have been available through a non-recorded in-person interview.

4.4.3 Narrative Influences

Situated within the constructivist paradigm, the selected research approach enabled me to gather substantial qualitative data in the second phase of the research study. This data revealed and conveyed a deeper insight and understanding of the experiences and attrition of CCTs in Irish primary and post-primary schools. In adopting this approach, this study worked within the Deweyan view of experience in exploring the process of learning as a 'lived experience' (Wallace 2015), and thus examined the 'lived experiences' of CCTs who have left the teaching profession. However, it would be negligent not to acknowledge the influence of Connelly and Clandinin (2006) in this research design and their dimensions of temporality, sociality, place and continuity, each of which are relevant to the qualitative part of this study.

Through a discussion of their life-history and their journey to teaching and beyond, a focus was placed on the temporality of each CCT's career development and change. The experiences of the participant CCTs, as they unfolded over time, were discussed, evoking knowledge of the past, present and future. The notion of continuity underlines that not only are experiences connected through time, they are in fact continuous. Along with the

continuity of these experiences, the context and the personal and social relationships of the participants as teachers were all to be considered, to enable participants to construct their own meaning of their experiences. A physical place, or sequence of places, each may impact on the experience of the participants and this dimension remained a central facet of the interview as participants recalled and described early school experiences, family and home life and prior work places and experiences. Under the dimension of sociality, the feelings, hopes, desires, moral dispositions, together with personal and social conditions of the teacher are taken into account. These aspects are personal and unique to the individual and form their context, informing the inquirer/researcher about who the person is.

During the process of story-telling, the relationship between the inquirer/researcher and the participant is also relevant. The inquirer is part of the relationship and cannot be taken out of the equation. Robson and McCartan (2016, 252) maintain that "a skilled interviewer should be able to achieve a good rapport with nearly all interviewees in the face-to-face situation." Even though the interviews were conducted online, I endeavoured to build a rapport with all participants and to create an informal, relaxed atmosphere which began by sharing some personal details and a summarised version of my own teacher journey. I also told participants that I was in the ninth month of my pregnancy, which brought a sense of ease immediately during this introduction, as many participants good-naturedly joked that their story could bring on my labour. As it transpired one interview did, but as the saying goes, that's a story for another day!

The open-ended nature of each interview provided an opportunity for participants to document their lives and histories in becoming a teacher and the factors that led to their attrition from or retention in the profession. It was important for me as the researcher to

encourage participants to take the lead during the interview to allow the stories to emerge, stories which have previously gone unheard, unseen and undocumented (Bathmaker and Harnett 2010), particularly in Ireland where the voices of CCTs have remained silent. The interviews were transcribed and verified by each participant, and I then wrote a narrative of each participant's experience which was also analysed separately alongside the images provided by the participants. As a result, the data collected from these fifteen participants was rich and thought-provoking, the analysis of which yielded interesting and insightful findings on the experiences of CCTs in Ireland, outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter.

Bearing in mind that "narrative stories tell of individual experiences, and they may shed light on the *identities* of individuals and how they see themselves" (Creswell 2013, 71), the inclusion of a narrative element to the research design was fundamental to explore the theme of identity and allow participants to express their individual and collective identities (De Fina 2015). However, a person's life and life experiences belong to him/her and no one else, and Denzin (1989a) states that a life story may only focus on the particular set of experiences that are deemed important. Therefore, selecting the use of a qualitative approach enabled me to explore the factors that contributed to attrition or retention among CCTs and to identify the critical events (Webster and Mertova 2007) which influenced their attrition. As a constructivist researcher, I believed it was important that the stories of participants remained individual rather than collective and that each participant's identity was allowed to emerge through their story. The way in which the data is presented in Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter, allows for this individuality to emerge.

The influence of professional identity was also examined as a factor in each CCT's decision

to leave the teaching profession. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) argue that people shape their daily lives through stories, interpreting and making meaning of their experiences through these stories while Webster and Mertova (2007, 13) advocate that "narrative inquiry is human centred in that it captures and analyses life stories" and stories enable reflection on experience and the development of understanding. The influence of narrative research in this study facilitated the participant to recount events to construct with the researcher and move towards meaning making (Savin-Baden and Howell Major 2013). It is important to recognise that a teacher's life is not separated into specific elements such as a professional, personal life and family life (Germeten 2013) and in fact the personal biographies, stories and previous experiences throughout a teacher's personal life assist in shaping a teacher's professional career (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004). Squire, et al. (2014, 78) hold that "there are stories within stories" and that recounting a life story can highlight particular events of importance. Indeed, providing an opportunity for people to share their narratives can allow them to negotiate their identities and make meaning of the experience (Riessman 2008).

4.4.4 Photos and Images

A decision was made to incorporate photos and/or images provided by participants into the research project because images speak differently to words and provide a different kind of information. The aim was to encourage participants to think deeply about their journey to teaching and to provide an image or a photograph which they felt depicted an element of that journey. While Squire, et al. (2014) suggest that photographs are cues or triggers to make sense of biographies, Germeten (2013, 617) advises that the use of pictures can "open doors to a new understanding." Harper (2002, 13) agrees that inserting a photograph into a research interview will "evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words."

However a more predominant reason behind the inclusion of photographs into the research study was to encourage greater participation from the participants. Participants moved from passive subjects to the position of both participant and, to a smaller degree a co-researcher (Latz 2017) as CCTs both supplied the photos and provided an explanation for the choice of photograph/image. Latz (2017, 3) also argues that "historically photovoice has been used to highlight the experiences and perspectives of those who have been marginalized, those with voices not ordinarily heard by those in positions of power." While CCTs are not strictly a marginalised group, they are a cohort of teachers who are often overlooked and forgotten by those in positions of power. It is also suggested that CCTs are treated similar to younger, first career teachers and the skills and experience they bring to teaching are not valued enough. The inclusion of a visual element to their story strengthens their story, and the image/photo may be more effective in remaining in the mind of those dealing with CCTs in teacher education programmes, schools and the wider education circles than the story itself.

Consequently, all interview participants that volunteered for the research were asked, in advance of the interview, to supply a photo or an image. These photos and images were examined alongside the interview transcripts. During analysis, these photos enabled me to identify and, in some cases, confirm the themes and significant influential factors emerging from the stories of each CCT. These photos/images and phrases also allowed a deeper insight into the participant as a person and the values and beliefs that they held both on a personal and professional level. Reissman (2008, 145) outlines that "to understand identity, each investigator works the interface between visual and textual data, drawing connections between the image and some kind of discourse". Through the analysis of the images and the explanation provided by participants, a greater understanding of their individual identies was gained and a deeper value was added to the story of each participant. The photos, images and

phrases shared by participants are interwoven into Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter and reinforce the themes presented in this chapter.

4.5 Sampling

Participants for the study were recruited through non-probability purposive sampling to enable a detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and issues encountered by CCTs in Irish schools (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). In order to access a greater number of CCTs in Irish primary and post-primary schools, snowball sampling was selected as the method of sampling for the online survey. Snowball sampling enables the researcher to identify participants from a clandestine group (Robson and McCartan 2016). Snowball sampling is particularly useful in qualitative research and identifies a small number of individuals with specific characteristics to put the researcher in touch with suitable participants for the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011).

Three interview participants were identified through colleagues of the researcher and the remaining twelve interview participants were recruited following their participation in the online survey. In this study these individuals were chosen from the population of CCTs who qualified as primary or post-primary teachers after working in a previous job/career for a minimum of two years. Five of these individuals had subsequently left the teaching profession. This criterion was chosen to mirror the initial professional life phase in which a teacher's professional identity begins to develop (Day 2012). Sampling for the research study began in mid-February 2020.

In order to reach a large population of teachers and recruit an appropriate sample of participants, an email including details of the research project (Appendix 3), the link to an

online survey and the contact details of the researcher was sent to all local education centres in Ireland for distribution to NQTs participating in the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) programme. This email requested the co-operation among teachers and CCTs to share details to potential participants who may fit the criteria of the study. However, the general response received from several education centre personnel, was that it was not possible to distribute details of the research study via mail list and the reason cited was associated with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) issues.

The same email was sent to the Teaching Council and to all three teacher unions: the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) and the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI). A response was received from the Teaching Council stating they were unable to publicise the online survey information on their social media platforms and suggested the use of Twitter with the hash tag *#edchatie* and tagging *@teachingcouncil* and *@PDST_TechinEd*. The INTO responded with an agreement to share details of the research through their officers' e-newsletter. The ASTI responded with a request for a twenty-word piece to be posted on their social media platforms and the following piece was forwarded with a link to the online survey.

"Seeking participants for a Doctoral Research Project focusing on retention and attrition among Irish primary and post-primary career-change teachers (those who have worked in another job/career before teaching)"

The same notice was also sent to the other two unions, the INTO and the TUI for sharing on their social media platforms. However, the Teaching Council elections were underway at this time and subsequently no posting was made by any of the three unions regarding the research

project. A request to share details of the research project was also made to various other Facebook pages including: *'Irish Primary Teachers,' 'Voice for Teachers'* and *'Transitioning Out of Teaching,'* a page which is solely dedicated to Irish teachers who have already left teaching and those considering leaving the profession. Initially, no response was received, but following continued contact with the administrators, the post was shared online by *'Voice for Teachers'* and *'Transitioning Out of Teaching.'* By March 31st 2020, forty-eight teachers had responded to the online survey and three teachers had volunteered to participate in the interview process.

A suggestion had been made by one of the education centre administrators to visit the Department of Education & Skills (DES) website and access the database of contact details for individual schools. Taking advantage of the fact that all primary and post-primary teachers were working online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, an email was sent to every primary, post-primary and special school in Ireland on April 2nd 2020, requesting assistance from all principals to share details of the research project with their school staff (Appendix 4). This proved to be the most effective form of sampling throughout the project, resulting in a further sixty-three responses to the online survey, bringing the total number of responses to 111.

However, as the survey was anonymous, it is unclear if several teachers from the same school responded or if the response rate was more widespread across the country. Survey participants who, wished to further participate in the research in the form of a semi-structured interview, were asked to contact the researcher with her contact details provided on the information sheet and at the end of the online survey. In total, sixteen teachers volunteered

their continued participation, fifteen of whom participated in the interview process. These participants hailed from different parts of Ireland, four from the South, one each from the West and East, four from the Northeast, two from the Southeast and the remaining three from the Midlands. Thus, it can be assumed that the survey respondents were also spread across Ireland.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for interview. This method was chosen to satisfy the researcher's specific need in the project (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009; Robson and McCartan 2016). Non-probability purposive sampling allows the researcher to enable comparisons and focus on specific, unique cases in order to generate theory from the accumulation of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Of the sixteen respondents who volunteered to participate in the interview phase, all sixteen were chosen for the sample to provide a balanced response from both the primary and post-primary sectors and both genders. The sample included four male and twelve female teachers from a variety of previous careers and age brackets and included nine primary teachers, six post-primary teachers and one teacher from a special education school.

Each teacher agreed to participate in an online video recorded semi-structured interview, to further discuss and develop the topics arising from the online survey. In total, thirteen interviews were completed during the month of April in 2020 with two further interviews completed by the 10th June 2020. The final interview was initially postponed due to personal reasons cited by the participant and it was agreed to conduct the interview at the end of May 2020. However, when the participant was contacted to reschedule the interview, no response was received. The decision was made not to contact the participant further, adhering to the

ethical consideration of informed consent and volunteerism, in that participants freely chose

to take part in the research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 78).

4.6 Data Collection Methods

An overview of the study's data collection methods is outlined in Table 4.1 and the following

sections will provide more detail on each of the methods chosen for this study.

Data Collection Tools	No of responses	Form of analysis used
Online survey on JISC platform Distributed via social media – Facebook, Twitter, Email to all schools	111 respondents, 4 discounted, bringing total to 107	JISC analysis tools Manual analysis
Semi-structured interviews Video recorded using Microsoft Teams	15 participants (self-selected)	Manual analysis MAXQDA
Narratives Written following interview transcription and verification	15 narratives	Manual analysis MAXQDA
Participant images/phrases Collected alongside interview data	10 images 1 anecdote 1 set of phrases	Manual analysis

Table 4.2: Data Collection Methods

4.6.1 Online Survey

Preparation for this research study had begun in September 2019 and an application for

ethical approval was submitted in December 2019. Following a re-application, ethical

approval was granted on the February 12th 2020. During the same time period, an online

survey was designed using the JISC[7] online survey platform. Roberts (2007) believes that the

administration of online surveys reduces the time and cost associated with the recruitment of

participants. The use of an online survey as a data collection method also assisted in reaching

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[7] Joint Information Systems Committee – a UK higher, further education and skills sectors' not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions (JISC 2022)

a large population of teachers who fit the research criteria. A review of the literature informed the question design for the online survey which included closed and open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, Likert-scale responses and open response options (Appendix 2). Prior to distribution the survey was piloted among four CCTs, known to the researcher, to assess how long it would take respondents to complete, to check that all questions and instructions were clear and to highlight any items that may not yield usable data (Bell and Waters 2014). On receipt of ethical approval, the survey was launched on February 14th 2020 and remained open until on June 30th 2020. The survey was distributed via the outlets outlined in Section 4.5 above, with a corresponding email outlining the details of the research project, the criteria for participation and a link to access the survey.

The opening page of the survey provided details of the research, the role of the participant, the fact that ethical approval had been granted for the research and that participation in the online survey would be anonymous and confidential. It was also outlined what the data would be used for and that participants were not obligated to take part, but that consent would be sought to complete the survey (Appendix 2). Before beginning the survey, participants were asked to complete a table of questions including confirmation that he/she was a CCT and understood the purpose and nature of the study (Appendix 2). Clarification was sought that participants were participating voluntarily and that they understood that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Roberts (2007) outlines several advantages for the online survey participant, including convenience, enhanced voluntary nature of participation and the option of only answering relevant questions based on previous responses. The survey was also split into multiple pages with clear headings to avoid respondent fatigue and reduce the drop-out rate (Mc Cord 2007).

Data collected from the online survey included personal details of the CCT such as their age bracket, gender, status as a primary or post-primary teacher, year of qualification and details of previous job/career. The survey also gathered data on CCTs' motivations for selecting teaching as a career, and their experience of ITE and induction. Information on teaching experiences and knowledge of teacher identity were also collected alongside details of each participant's attrition or retention. The researcher's contact details were provided at the end of the email for those that wished to participate further in the research project in the form of an interview.

4.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview participants included three male teachers and twelve female teachers, eight from the primary sector, six from the post-primary sector and one teacher from a special school setting. Following selection for interview, individuals were contacted with details of the research study and informed consent was acquired (Appendix 5). Following consent from all individuals, a suitable date and time for each individual interview was arranged. A schedule of interview (Appendix 6) was sent to all participants in advance of the interview. Interviews were semi-structured in format. Robson and McCartan (2016) recommend the use of semi-structured interviews as although researchers have a list of topics, they also have the freedom to adjust the sequence of questions and give more or less time and/or attention to different topics depending on the individual interview.

Although semi-structured interviews allow greater flexibility and freedom, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) caution that careful planning is also required. Interviews included topics considered relevant by the researcher yet allowed for the flexibility and freedom to explore topics that might arise during the course of the interview (Denscombe 2003). Due to the

Covid-19 lockdown and the prohibition on travel outside a 2km radius, each interview was conducted online through the use of Microsoft Teams (the online platform used by Maynooth University) and was audio and video-recorded. Interviews varied in length, with five lasting between thirty and forty-five minutes and the remaining ten interviews lasting approximately one hour. Each interview took place at a time convenient to the participant. However, the nature of the pandemic lockdown also prevented participants selecting a convenient location to conduct the interview which resulted in all interviews being conducted in the participant's own home environment. Consideration was given and allowances were made for the fact that family life might interrupt the interview process as a result and participants were reassured that at any stage they could pause or stop the interview if necessary.

Researcher notes were taken during the interview to supplement the interview data. These included emphasis on specific details, pauses or hesitations during certain questions or feelings of discomfort displayed by the participant at any stage. On completion of the transcript of each interview, participants were sent a copy of their transcript for verification and to ensure the validity of the data collected, as Atkinson (2007) believes the "person telling his or her life story should always have the last word in how his or her story is presented in written form." Although a complete life story was not collected, the data contained significant events of each participant's life which led to their decision to change career to teaching. As it transpired no participant wished to amend their transcript.

4.6.3 Researcher Written Narratives

While the research study was qualitative in nature, the influence of narrative inquiry cannot be ignored. Narrative or story is a fundamental part of human existence and present in every age, place and society. In telling each other's stories, we make sense of what we encounter or

experience in the course of our lives (Slembrouck 2015). Following the verification of the transcripts by each participant, I proceeded to write my own narrative of that participant's story which will be referred to as researcher narratives throughout this and subsequent chapters. The rationale behind this was to present each participant's story in a chronological fashion, as most of the interview data jumped to and from different time periods while participants recalled different events or experiences of significance during the course of the interview. As a result, the interview transcripts were disjointed and challenging to analyse.

The researcher narratives chronologically sequenced the details presented by participants to chart their life from primary and secondary education, through their third level education and/or previous work experience, their teacher education and subsequent teaching career. Noting that narratives present life-like accounts which focus on participants' experiences, they align well with qualitatively oriented educational research and provide a framework and context for making meaning of life experiences. However, it is also argued that narratives are different from interview data and are created after interview data describing the factual information about the participants, is processed (Pepper and Wildy 2009). The implementation of this narrative strategy sought to provide a sense of the whole picture of the CCTs' journey to teaching, derived from their interview data and focusing on the specific and relevant aspects throughout their life. Due care was taken during this process to remain as objective as possible and to ensure that the voice of the participant was evident throughout the narrative. This was achieved through the use of frequent direct quotes and the images, photographs, stories and phrases supplied by each interview participant. I also enlisted the assistance of an impartial critical friend to read the anonymous narratives and provide feedback. This was most helpful to me as she highlighted any researcher bias that may have been evident, and edits were made where necessary.

4.6.4 Participant Images/Photos and Phrases

When each participant volunteered their participation in the interview process, an information sheet with details of the research study and a consent form were sent to each participant via email. This email also asked participants to select an image, photo or symbol that could be used to illustrate a part of their journey to teaching. At the concluding part of the interview, participants were asked if they wished to share their photo/image/symbol/saying and explain why they chose that particular image, photo, symbol or phrase. Twelve participants identified something that they wished to share and explained its significance in relation to their story as a CCT in Ireland.

This form of photo elicitation is termed participant-driven photo-elicitation, in which the control of data collection is handed over to participants who have the freedom to pick and choose how to represent that which is most important to them regarding the topic of discussion (Cleland and MacLeod 2021). It is also possible that images prompt a different perspective on the lived experience and can evoke emotions and thoughts in ways that cannot be achieved with a narrative. Cleland and MacLeod (2021, 232) also suggest that "by viewing and discussing photos together, the researcher and participant actively co-construct meaning". Therefore, photo-elicitation can complement a qualitative methodology and enhance the analysis of the data by combining both the verbal and visual. It was envisaged that participant supplied images would encourage participants to reflect on their experiences of becoming a CCT, choose an image to represent some part of their journey and become more meaningfully involved in the data generation (Van Auken, Frisvoll and Stewart 2010). This form of photo-elicitation also deepens the data collection process, by capturing aspects of lived experience in a way that may not be possible with other methods.

Participant-driven photo-elicitation shifts the authority between the researcher and participant enhancing the ability to represent participants' lived experiences. Stewart and Floyd (2004, 451) believe that during this process "(1) the researcher becomes less central, less powerful, with a less defining role regarding the life world of the people and communities we study, (2) participants function as, and more likely to view themselves, as collaborators in research rather than objects of study, and (3) the data generated are grounded in the culture of interest since it has been selected by those who live and experience it." This method of photo-elicitation encouraged participants to actively engage in the research process and gain a sense of ownership on the presentation of data and allowed the researcher to gain a deeper knowledge of their lived experience as a CCT in Ireland. It was also envisaged that providing an image or phrase/saying would also share another element of the participant's identity, and in turn allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the beliefs, values and emotions that comprise their personal and professional identities and how these identities might be linked to specific feelings (Stryker 1968).

Ten participants supplied a photo or image, either prior to the interview or immediately after. Seven of which were personal photos, the three other participants supplied general images as symbolic elements of their CCT journey. One participant shared a number of sayings and phrases that she valued in her personal and professional dealings with others and one other participant who had left the teaching profession shared a story from her time as a teacher to illustrate the joy she had experienced in teaching. Three participants chose not to share anything, and I did not pursue this any further to respect their decision.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Guided by the Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy (Maynooth University 2015), the

Maynooth University Research Integrity Policy (Maynooth University 2016) & British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines (BERA 2011), every effort was made to ensure that the research participants were at all times treated with dignity and respect. The research project was conducted in accordance with the Maynooth University Data Protection Policy (Maynooth University 2004) and adhered with data protection laws. Ethical issues are evident in all types of research (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2000, 93) and all research begins from a position of ethical tension (Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

To resolve this tension, details of the research study and confirmation of ethical approval were supplied with the email and survey link to all schools (Appendix 4). The opening page of the survey introduced the research project, stating the purpose of the study, what participation in the study would involve for the participant, confirmation of ethical approval, details of what will happen to the information provided in the study and the results of the study. Contact details of the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee, the researcher and her supervisor were also included, should participants incur any problems or issues with the research. The first section of the online survey included eight questions to confirm participant consent before beginning the survey.

Subsequent participants who volunteered for interview were provided with an information sheet, in advance of the interview stating the aims, structure and purpose of the research along with a consent form. Despite the original intention to conduct face-to-face interviews, each of the fifteen interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams. This was as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, limiting travel beyond a 2km radius of one's home. The consent form (Appendix 5) was adapted to include that the interviews would take place online and each participant was asked for their consent to

proceed with the interview online. Consent forms were signed and returned to the researcher via email. Upon agreement to conduct the interview online and completion of the consent form, a schedule of interview was also supplied to each participant in advance of the interview. The purpose of this was to supply participants with a list of topics for discussion during the interview so that they could prepare in advance if they so wished, and not feel under pressure to gather their thoughts during the interview. Each of these steps ensured that participants were fully informed of their role in the research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011), became participants in the research rather than subjects and adopted the goals of the research as their own (Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

Prior to beginning the interview process, the interview questions were also piloted in advance to minimise discomfort to participants. The interview questions were sent to four teachers from both the primary and post-primary sector, two of whom were CCTs. Feedback was received and amendments made, as necessary. Each interview participant was informed that the interview would be recorded, and verbal consent was also sought for this at the start of each interview. Participants were reassured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained at all times and that pseudonyms would be assigned to all participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and 'provide the best protection for participants' (Maynooth University 2016, p.2). It was also clarified to each participant that any information (other people, events and/or locations) that they shared or mentioned would be rendered unidentifiable for the purpose of the research study.

One particular ethical consideration I was conscious of throughout the research process, was my role as a third level tutor. The topic of study and the participant criteria rendered it possible, that some of the participants would be past students of the private online teacher

education institution, where I work as a Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) tutor on the PME programme. I was unsure whether or not to share this information as I was concerned that participants might be hesitant to share their stories if they were speaking to a tutor of their PME programme. Therefore, I decided to omit this information from the information sheet and informed each interview participant that volunteered their further participation. At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and provided the interview participants with a brief overview of my experience as a primary school teacher and third level tutor on the PME programme, and the other third level teacher education institutions where I have also worked part-time. In doing so, this ensured honesty and openness was evident between the interviewer and the interviewee, and that trustworthiness was at the forefront of my research study as the interviewee was fully informed before they began sharing their story.

Sensitivity towards participants was an ongoing consideration during the research study. Given the nature of the research content, it was always a consideration that participants may feel a degree of vulnerability in sharing their personal emotions, workplace interactions and experiences of their career transition and attrition from teaching during the interview process. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) caution that ethically important moments can often arise during interviews, such as participants indicating discomfort, becoming distressed or revealing an element of vulnerability. Although this situation did not arise during the interview process, participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw from the research study at any stage without any consequence. Similarly, I ensured to follow up with all participants after the interviews to ensure that they were satisfied with the interview process and the topics discussed and data provided. No problems or issues were noted during this process.

Interview participants were also provided with my contact details should they wish to contact me following the interview. One participant emailed me a month after the interview was conducted to inform me that they had been unsuccessful in a job interview in the school they had been teaching in all year, and they were considering leaving teaching. Following consultation with my supervisor, I replied to the participant, with some words of reassurance and suggestions as to where help might be available. The participant replied to thank me for my care and consideration.

On completion of each interview, a transcription programme was used to transcribe the video recorded interviews and these transcripts were subsequently manually edited where necessary. Following transcription and editing, participants were sent a copy of their transcript for verification and to ensure the validity of the data collected. This process ensured that the participant has the last word in how his/her story is written and presented (Atkinson 2007). There were no amendments made by any participant and consent was given again to use quotes from the interviews where appropriate.

Adhering to the Maynooth University Research Ethics policy (Maynooth University 2015), participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences. In compliance with Data Protection legislation and Maynooth University Guidelines for Data Collection, Storage, Retention and Disposal (Maynooth University 2016) the data obtained was processed fairly and ethically in accordance with the purposes for which it was volunteered and stored in a secure location. All hard copies were locked in a secure cabinet at the researcher's home. Electronic information was encrypted/password protected and stored securely on the Maynooth University server and accessed only by me, the researcher./

Participants were also made aware on both the information sheet and the consent form that the data would be retained for a period of ten years and would then be destroyed in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of that data. It was outlined clearly that the researcher would be solely responsible for destroying personally identifiable data. Manual data will be shredded confidentially by me, and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten. After ten years all data will be destroyed. Participants were also informed that the research will be written up and presented as a thesis and may also be presented at National Conferences and/or written and presented for publication. A copy of the research findings would be made available to them upon request.

4.8 Data analysis

The analysis of data involves finding, selecting, appraising and synthesising data (Bowen 2009). Within this research study there were several sets of data to analyse; the online survey, the semi-structured interview transcripts, the researcher narratives and the images and/or narrative phrases provided by the interview participants. Creswell (2014, 222) holds that there is a challenge in converging or merging sets of data and offers some solutions to reduce this challenge, including side by side analysis, data transformation or producing a joint display of data. As this research study employed a convergent parallel mixed method design, the data was analysed using a side-by-side comparison and is presented in Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter beginning with the quantitative statistical results, followed by the qualitative findings (Creswell 2014).

Another challenge for researchers is to ensure that the analysis, interpretation and presentation of different data sets is mutually illuminating or indeed related to each other in any way (Bryman 2007). A parallel mixed analysis of both data sets was selected as the best

approach to gain a complete understanding of the data. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, 128) outline that this method is "probably the most widely used mixed data analysis in the social and behavioural sciences." They do however, caution that this method limits the researcher to one type of data analysis, qualitative or quantitative, but this was appropriate for this research study as the bulk of the data collected for analysis was of a qualitative nature.

The study's theoretical framework of Stryker's (1968) theory of identity, Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning informed the analysis of the qualitative data which is evident in the presentation of the data in Chapter 5. In analysing participants' motivations for choosing teaching as a new career, particular attention was paid to the influence of family members and the role of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), in encouraging participants to change career to teaching. Similarly the multiple identities held by participants were examined and analysed to determine their role in the new career choice. At each stage of analysis and as each theme was identified, the influence of identity was explored and in particular, how participants' multiple identities (Stryker 1968) played a role in each experience or stage of their career.

The data analysis process began with organising the online survey data and the interview data, and each data set was read and reread several times "to understand what is going on" (Morse 1999, 404). An initial deductive approach was applied, where initial codes were drawn from the existing literature and analysis was based on pre-existing theory with a specific focus on aspects of the data that directly related to the research questions (Azungah 2018). This was followed by an inductive analysis approach to ensure a complete understanding of what was being said by participants, and to ensure that all important aspects of the data were captured (Gale, et al. 2013) and themes deriving from the raw data were also included.

4.8.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data in this research study was collected via JISC online surveys and by using the descriptive statistical analysis methods automatically conducted by JISC, the closed response data was automatically compiled in graph format. This data included participants' gender, age, current school employment status, school context, qualification as a primary or post-primary teacher, reasons for leaving previous job, reasons for selecting teaching as an alternative career and satisfaction levels with the ITE and induction processes.

The entire survey responses were exported into a Microsoft excel document and each response was analysed manually. During this process four responses were discounted as it emerged through their answers that these respondents were in fact first career teachers, and therefore did not meet the research criteria. The survey responses were categorised under the headings of motivations, expectations of teaching, challenges of teaching, developing a new professional identity and attrition as derived from the literature review, and with a key focus on answering the research questions. Following this categorisation, each of the open-ended responses were further analysed for threads, themes, patterns and tensions. This involved several readings of the data to ensure accuracy and provide a summarised account of what is contained in the texts (Connelly and Clandinin 2006, 132). Some open-ended responses provided detail in relation to other questions and were re-categorised as a result. For example some participants provided a reason for leaving their previous job as 'I always wanted to be a teacher' or when asked 'was changing career to teaching an easy transition from a previous job?' responded with 'it was something I always wanted to do'. Therefore, these responses were included under the theme of Motivations: I always wanted to be a teacher, despite the fact that these specific responses were not given to the question, 'Why did you select teaching as a career change?' These responses were then totalled and categorised into sub-themes such

as 'The Motivating Factor of Prior Positive Teaching and Learning Experiences' or 'The Challenge of Financial Issues and Family Commitments'. Although the data gathered during the online survey was used to gather an overview of the experiences of CCTs in Irish schools, it also supported the qualitative data gathered during the semi-structured interviews.

The inclusion of the online survey responses in Chapter 5, the Findings and Discussion chapter strengthens the findings as it provides a comprehensive picture of the experiences of CCTs in Ireland and highlights specific issues experienced by some CCTs which did not emerge in the interviews, e.g. the role school colleagues and the school environment play in hindering the development of a teacher identity. However, it must be noted that at times the online survey statistics are at odds with the interview statistics as not all interview participants completed the online survey. Of the 107 online survey participants, only 10 had left the profession, whereas of the 15 interview participants, 5 had left the profession. This too provides an explanation for the discrepancy between the statistics.

4.8.2 Qualitative Analysis

The data gathered through the semi-structured interviews contained the stories of participants, beginning with memories of their own education, details of their previous careers and their motivations for changing career to teaching, the process of qualification and employment as a teacher. Each transcript was printed out and read individually. Again, the interview transcripts were manually coded under the themes of motivations, expectations of teaching, challenges of teaching, developing a new professional identity and attrition as derived from the literature review and with a key focus on answering the research questions. Narratives from the transcripts were written in order to assist the qualitative analysis as the data from the interviews was at times disjointed and out of sequence. These narratives were written to

chronologically present the participants' stories and allow for easier analysis under the broad themes. The transcripts and narratives were read several times and certain words, phrases and experiences were highlighted and notes were made to identify significant emotions and events. Therefore, the qualitative analysis used a combination of a thematic coding analysis and some discourse analysis as similar procedures are used in both forms of analysis (Wertz, et al. 2011, 311).

4.8.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a process for coding qualitative data and requires an explicit code (Boyatzis 1998). It involves recognising patterns within the data set and categorising the emerging themes for analysis (Bowen 2009). A thematic coding approach was selected as most appropriate to this research study based Robson and McCartan's (2016, 461) thematic coding approach to qualitative analysis. Their explanation offers that thematic coding can be used for descriptive or exploratory research and within a variety of theoretical frameworks. Under the themes of motivations for choosing teaching as a new career, expectations of teaching as a new career, the challenges of teaching, developing a new professional identity as a CCT and CCTs' reasons for attrition, the interview transcripts were inductively analysed for further common sub-themes. Simultaneously, the qualitative aspects of the online survey were analysed using the same method and the researcher narratives were reread to ensure that the sub-themes identified were accurate. During this form of analysis, specific words and phrases were highlighted and identified for discourse analysis.

During this stage, both the interview transcripts and the researcher narratives were inputted into the software programme MAXQDA. All data was then coded descriptively using a three-step process identifying words, themes and categories. Recurrent themes were

analysed to identify issues shared among a wider group of CCTs (Denscombe 2003). Under each of the broad themes of motivations, expectations, challenges, teacher identity and attrition a number of sub-themes were derived from this coding process. Some examples of these common sub-themes included 'the motivation of I always wanted to be a teacher', 'family members who were teachers influenced my decision to choose teaching', 'the challenge of teacher workload' and 'lack of employment as a reason for attrition'. Although Braun and Clarke (2012) caution that what is common may not always be meaningful or important, Robson and McCartan (2016) outline that although thematic coding analysis is a generic approach to analysis, it has worth in examining the events, experiences, realities and meanings constructed by participants.

Thematic analysis was particularly useful in the analysis of the events, experiences and stories of the CCTs while allowing for emerging concepts and ideas, descriptions and classification and patterns of association (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). The qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the online survey was re-analysed through the lens of the sub-themes from the interview data. The objective of this process was to strengthen the qualitative findings and provide a comprehensive picture of the experiences of CCTs in Irish schools and the events that led to their attrition.

4.8.4 Discourse Analysis

Language contains important connections between saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity) (Gee 1999). Therefore, discourse analysis also enables a search for meanings and themes in texts and this form of analysis brings fresh insights to familiar situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). In analysing the language of both the interview transcripts and the researcher narratives, certain words or phrases emerged as significant to

the story of the participant. Similarly, the video recorded interviews highlighted the emphasis placed on words and phrases by the participant and enabled me to ascertain changes in participant behaviour and/or (dis)comfort during the interview discourse. Gee (1999) poses three questions regarding socio-culturally-situated identity and relationship building.

- What relationships and identities (roles, positions), with their concomitant personal, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values, seem to be relevant to the situation?

- How are these relationships and identities stabilized or transformed in the situation?

- In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

For the purposes of this research study, the analysis of the interview discourses focused primarily on the first question, specifically the beliefs, feelings and values relevant to the interview participants in developing their teacher identity. During the initial analysis of the interview transcripts, certain words and emotions were highlighted as significant. Using Gee's (1999) question, enabled me to identify the role relationships, feelings, beliefs and emotions played in participants' decision to change career and in the formation of their new teacher identity.

It was important throughout the analysis process that I acknowledged and monitored my own participation in the construction of the storied lives of the participants (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995). In the same way, I made every effort to maintain an awareness of my own identity, values and beliefs which are according to Denscome (2003, 268), "*inevitably* an integral part

of the analysis". The writing of the researcher narratives facilitated the development and organisation of a chronology of each participant's life (Denzin 1989b) and a biographical analysis of these narratives confirmed identification of significant events and factors which brought the participants to the profession of teaching and their subsequent decision to remain in or leave the teaching profession.

4.8.5 Participant Images and Phrases Analysis

Following the thematic and discourse analysis, each of the participant images and phrases were analysed. This form of analysis involved reading the reasons and descriptions provided by the participants to highlight which theme the image/phrase was most suited to. During this analysis, specific words or emotions were identified as significant and attributed to the image, for example an image provided by one participant signified how teaching a musical instrument as part of a primary school initiative encouraged him to consider primary teaching as a new career. Similarly, another participant provided an image to represent a lack of promotion and career progression as a reason for her attrition from teaching. Following analysis, these images and phrases were included under the themes in the findings to further strengthen and support the participants' stories.

The combination of both forms of analysis; thematic analysis and discourse analysis enabled a thorough exploration of the lived experiences of CCTs, their motivations for changing career, the challenges in transitioning to a new career as a teacher, the identification of the factors which supported their professional identity development as a teacher and the events and influential factors which led to their attrition from teaching. The following chapter, Chapter 5, Findings and Discussion will present the data under these themes.

4.9 Reliability, Validity and Limitations of the Study

The concepts of reliability and validity are easier to establish in quantitative research, yet they are still essential to appropriately ensure rigour in qualitative research as without rigour or trustworthiness, the research loses its worth and utility (Morse, et al. 2002). Reliability in qualitative research indicates that the approach is consistent across repeated investigations using different researchers and circumstances (Gibbs 2007). This is to ensure credibility, fittingness, auditability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985), cited in Morse, et al. (2002). However, this can be difficult to achieve with the use of semi-structured interviews as the interaction between interviewer and interviewee is specific to that situation. Although Golafshani (2003) maintains that the element of trustworthiness is crucial to ensure reliability in qualitative research, Morse, et al. (2002) caution that strategies of trustworthiness are not sufficient to ensure rigour and the researcher must endeavour to consistently verify every step of the research project to contribute to the reliability and validity of the study.

The design of the study using both an online survey and semi-structured interviews increased the reliability of the research as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) advocate that a questionnaire tends to be more reliable and participants are encouraged to share their experiences with greater honesty as the questionnaire is anonymous. Participants were assured of their anonymity at all stages and participation was voluntary. In advance of each interview, the interview questions were piloted to enhance reliability and participants were sent the interview schedule with the main questions and sub-points outlined. During the interview process, although semi-structured in design, the same format and sequence of words and questions were used for each participant to emphasise reliability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). The recording and transcribing of interviews also addressed reliability concerns (Creswell 2013) and further enhanced the rigour of this research, as following the

interviews each transcript was checked and rechecked alongside the video recording to eliminate any obvious mistakes. Participants were then provided with the opportunity to review the interview transcripts to ensure further validation once again and that they were happy to include it in the data and findings.

Throughout the research process, every effort was made firstly to carry out internal checks on the quality of the data and its interpretation, and secondly to ensure that all information about the research and its process was transparently presented (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). It is suggested by Morse, et al. (2002, 17) that "a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis." They also suggest the use of five verification strategies to contribute to the reliability, validity and subsequent rigour of the research. These strategies include. methodological coherence, selecting an appropriate sample, collecting and analysing data concurrently, thinking theoretically and theory development. Every effort was made during this research study to follow this advice and adhere to the suggested verification strategies, in particular the methodological coherence, appropriate sampling and concurrently collecting and analysing data.

The sample selected were all CCTs who fit the research criteria and could provide good knowledge of the research topic. The method of interview was deemed the best to answer the research questions to explore the factors which influenced the decision to become teachers, the challenges faced during this process, what supported their teacher identity development and the reasons for their attrition from teaching. These questions could only be fully explored through the interview process allowing CCTs to openly share their stories and experiences. Finally, the data was collected concurrently as the survey remained open during

the interview process and both sets of data were analysed at the same time. This as Morse, et al. (2002, 18) clarifies "is the essence of attaining reliability and validity."

Validity determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Savin-Baden and Howell Major 2013) and description, interpretation and theory are listed as the main threats to validity (Robson and McCartan 2016). Although it was originally planned that each interview would be conducted in a face-to-face setting and audio recorded, each interview was conducted via Microsoft Teams and video recorded. This process allowed me to minimise the threats outlined by Robson and McCartan (2016), as I could refer back to the data during analysis for consistent verification and to ensure valid description.

In writing the interview narratives, every effort was made to write the story as it was told by the participant, using the participant's own descriptions, words and phrases but with events and experiences in sequential order e.g. all recollections of primary schooling were kept together, followed by secondary schooling, and so on. Due care was taken in the interpretation of the data and this phase took longer than anticipated to ensure that the analysis was as accurate as possible. All qualitative data was examined multiple times both manually and through the use of MAXQDA. Multiple examinations may have been unnecessary but I wanted to ensure that through my interpretation of the data, the voices of the participants were at all times evident. To best achieve this I believed it was necessary to frequently revisit the data and present participants' direct quotes, thus adding to the reliability and validity of the research study.

Mathison (1988) recommends using several data sources to aid data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Therefore, data from participants employed in both teaching sectors was examined to provide justification for the themes emerging. The examination of interview data alongside any images supplied by participants ensured the reliability of evidence to support a theme (Creswell 2005). Denzin (1989a, 74) cautions that "a story is always an interpretative account; but of course, all interpretations are biased" and it must also be acknowledged that in sharing these stories, participants could be selective as to what they share. Elo, et al. (2014) suggest, that the use of quotations is necessary to indicate trustworthiness and help confirm the connection between the results and data. During the process of analysis, the data from the online survey and the interviews allowed for method triangulation, alongside triangulation of sources as the data from the researcher narratives, interviews and the participant images were compared. These methods of external validation contributed to the trustworthiness of the findings from the project (Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

As this research study used a non-probability purposive sample to select participants and the chances of selection are unknown, it must be noted that this sample is not intended to be statistically representative of CCTs in Ireland. But this sample was chosen with a specific purpose in mind (Ritchie and Lewis 2003) and that was to share the story of their experience as a teacher and their subsequent attrition from the teaching profession. While Polkinghorne (2007) recognises the value in stories and the meaning that people attribute to their life events, he cautions that these stories also have limitations, that researchers need to recognise to interpret the meanings. Therefore, the findings of this research study cannot be generalised and will be presented to display an understanding of the experiences of CCTs, the development of a professional identity as a CCT and the contributing factors which led to

their attrition from teaching.

4.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the methodology employed during this research project. To begin, this chapter outlined the research paradigm that informed the research study. The selection of a mixed method approach was used to explore the experiences of CCTs in Irish primary and post-primary schools. This approach was chosen to best answer the research questions and provide a deeper understanding of the motivations of CCTs in choosing a new career in the teaching profession, the transition from their previous career to teaching, the development of a professional identity as a CCT and the factors which contributed to and influenced their attrition from the teaching profession. The research instruments included an online survey with 107 respondents and fifteen semi-structured interviews with a mix of primary and post-primary, male and female CCTs. Additional data was provided in the form of researcher narratives based on the interviews and photos, images and sayings provided by interview participants.

The sampling of participants and the data collection methods were presented followed by the ethical considerations of the study. A mix of thematic analysis and discourse analysis was selected as an appropriate method of data analysis for the four data sets; the online survey, the semi-structured interviews, the researcher narratives and the participant images and phrases. The use of manual analysis alongside MAXQDA enabled the data analysis. Finally, this chapter outlined the reliability, validity and limitations of the study. The research methods yielded rich findings based on the experiences of CCTs in Ireland and these findings will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This research project explored the experiences of primary and post-primary CCTs in Ireland and focused on the factors influencing their attrition from the teaching profession. The project incorporated a number of data sets, as outlined in the previous chapter, and this chapter will present and discuss the findings from each data set. The bulk of the findings, have been garnered from the fifteen semi-structured interviews and will be supplemented with the three other data sets: the online survey, the researcher narratives derived from the interviews and the images provided by interview participants. Each data set was analysed separately and then in conjunction with the other data sets, to best answer the research questions:

- What are the main factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which influence their decision to join the teaching profession?

- What are the main challenges, identified by CCTs, in transitioning to a new career as a teacher?

- What factors support the development of a teacher identity among CCTs?

- What are the main personal and/or professional factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which impact their attrition from the teaching profession?

- What role does professional identity as a CCT play in the decision to leave the profession?

This chapter is quite extensive and presents detailed and interesting findings of the experiences of CCTs in Ireland. The first part of the chapter will provide details of the online survey participants and the interview participants and an overview of the responses to the

online survey. The next section will present the data from the semi-structured interviews under the following themes:

- Motivations for changing career to teaching

- Expectations held by CCTs of teaching as a new career

- Transitioning to a new career as a teacher

- The development of teacher identity and its influential factors

- Attrition and retention among CCTs

Throughout the chapter the images and phrases provided by the interview participants will be interwoven into the text.

5.2 Research Participants

5.2.1 Online Survey Participants (OSP)

The online survey was launched on February 14th 2020 and remained active until June 30th 2020. Over that duration there were 111 respondents, four of whom were discounted as it emerged that they were not CCTs and did not meet the research criteria. As outlined in Chapter 4, the Methodology chapter, Section 4.3, the criteria for participation were a primary or post-primary CCT who had joined the teaching profession having previously worked in a different career/job for at least two years prior to qualifying as a teacher. Therefore, 107 eligible participants completed the online survey and the results presented will be based on this number.

Figure 5.1 displays the responses to Q.2 and Q.4 of the online survey regarding the gender and teaching sector of participants. Ten of the interview participants also completed the online

survey and their answers are included in the presentation of the online survey data.
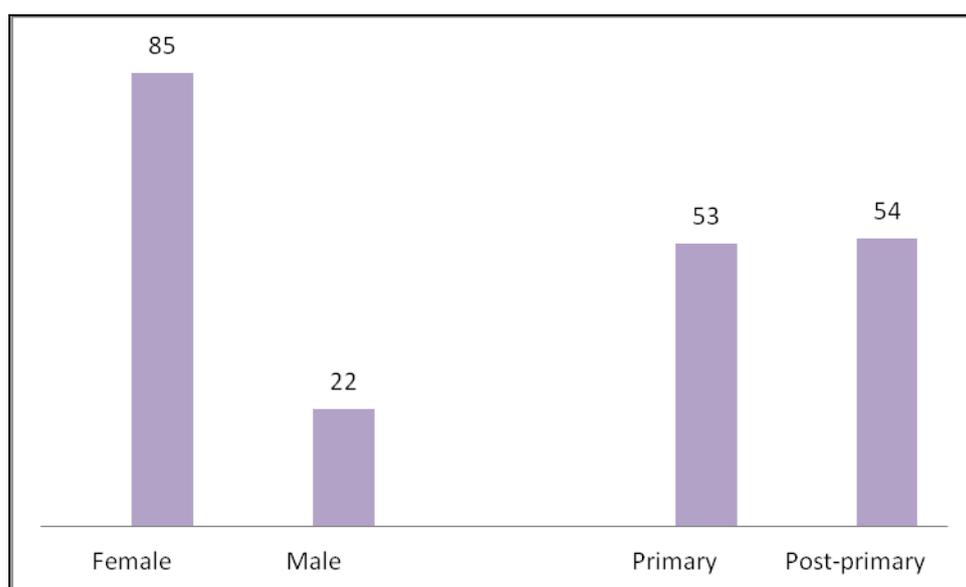
Figure 5.1: Gender and Teaching Sector of CCTs
(Online Survey Participants)

Of the 107 respondents fifty-three (49.5%) were primary school teachers and fifty-four (50.5%) were post-primary teachers as displayed in Figure 5.1. There were eighty-five female respondents (79%) to the survey, forty-three (50.5%) of whom were primary teachers and forty-two (49.5%) of whom were post-primary teachers. There were twenty-two male respondents (21%), ten of whom (45%) were primary teachers and twelve of whom (55%) were post-primary teachers. Therefore, male and female teachers equally represented both the primary and post-primary sectors. The higher number of female respondents is representative of the teaching profession, as the statistics obtained from the Teaching Council in May 2021 (Appendix 1) reported 109,200 teachers registered with the Teaching Council, of whom 83,653 (76%) are female and 25,547 (23%) are male.

Q.3 on the online survey asked respondents to select their age category and eighty-one respondents (76%) were aged 31-50 years as shown in Figure 5.2.
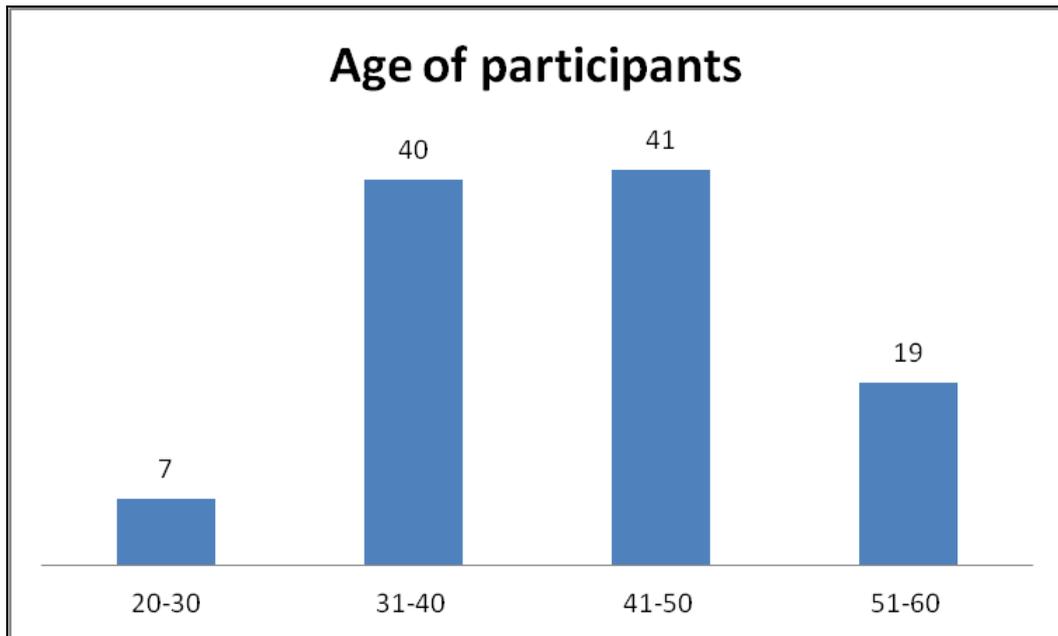
Figure 5.2: Age Categories of CCTs
(Online Survey Participants)

Participants were asked to outline how many years they were working as a teacher and if they were still teaching or if they had left the profession. The following two tables display the answers of both cohorts. Ninety-seven respondents (91%) to the online survey reported that they currently hold a teaching position. Their responses to the question *"How long have you been teaching?"* shown in Figure 5.3, indicate that the largest proportion of respondents, thirty CCTs (28%) at the time of completing the survey had less than five years' experience as teachers.
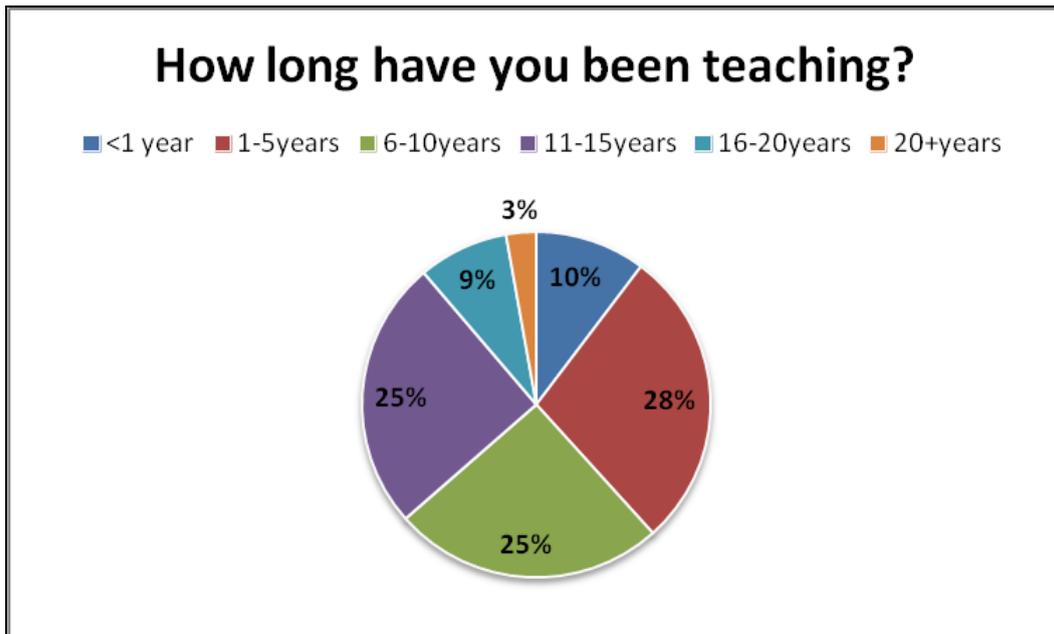
Figure 5.3: Length of Teaching Career
(Online Survey Participants Still Teaching)

Figure 5.4 below displays the responses of the ten respondents that have left the teaching profession, four respondents (40%) had worked for less than five years as a teacher and a further three (30%) had worked in the profession for less than ten years.
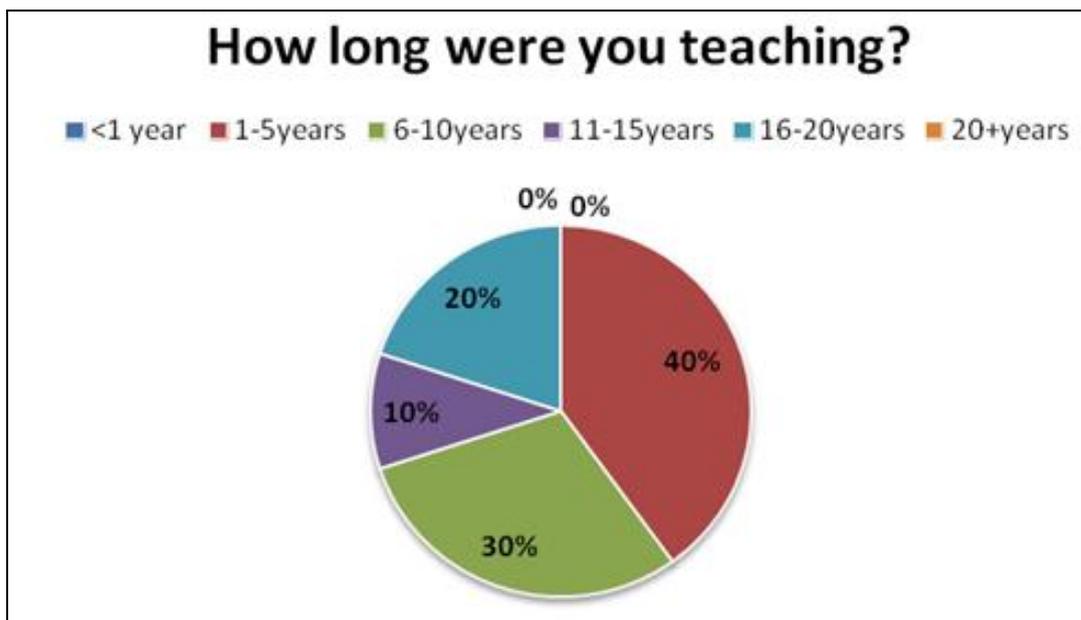
Figure 5.4: Length of Teaching Career
(Online Survey Participants No Longer Teaching)

When answering Q.7 *"What was(were) your previous job(s) before qualifying as a teacher?"* respondents cited a number of different job titles and these are outlined in Figure 5.5, categorised into the following sectors taken from CareersPortal.ie (2021):

- Engineering

- Sales, Retail & Purchasing

- Construction, Business

- Management & HR

- Computers & ICT

- Banking & Financial Services

- Creative Arts, Fashion and Media

- Advertising, Marketing & PR

- Insurance

- Clerical & Administration

- Food & Beverages

- Science Industry

- Leisure & Sport

- Accountancy

- Healthcare

- Tourism & Hospitality

- Other
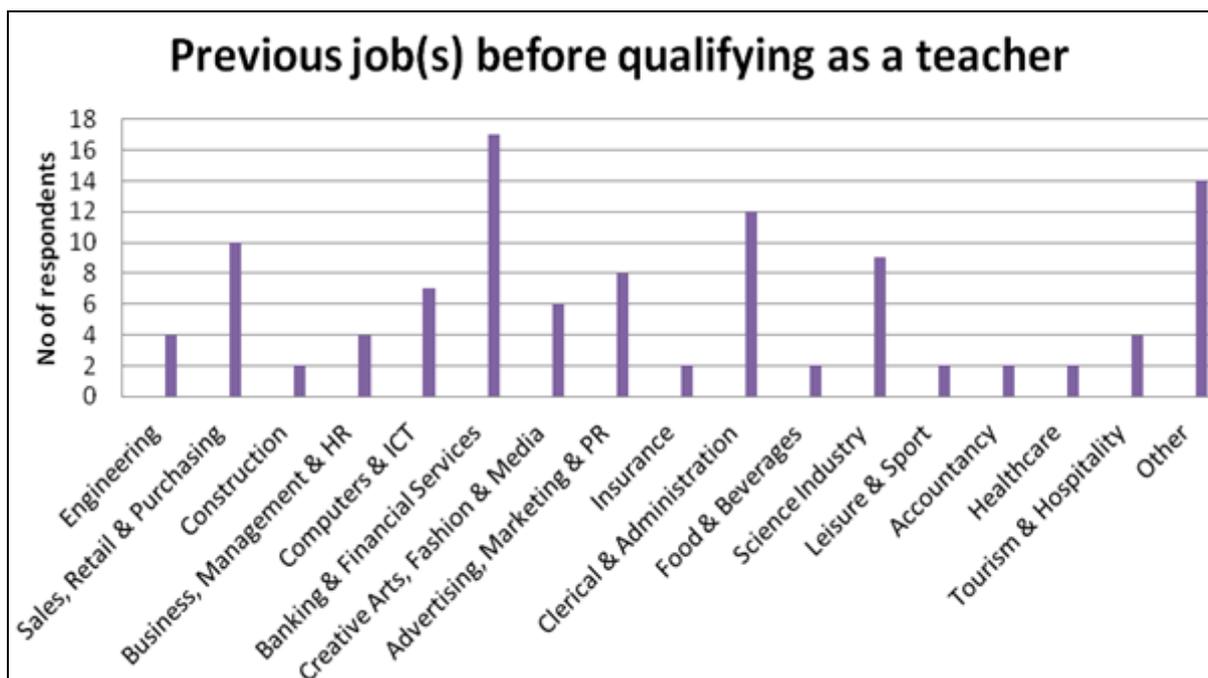
Figure 5.5: Previous Career of CCTs
(Online Survey Participants)

Seventeen CCTs (16%) had transferred to teaching from the Banking and Financial Services and twelve CCTs (11%) had previously worked in the Clerical & Administration sector. Ten CCTs (9%) cited their previous job/career as Retail, Sales and Purchasing, nine (8%) listed the Science industry and seven participants (6%) listed Computers and IT. Fourteen respondents (13%) listed a job which was categorised in Other. These included Archaeology, Cabin crew member, Horology, Horticulture, Warehousing, Technician, Hairdressing, Play Therapy, Languages, Special Needs Assistant (SNA) & Foreign Affairs.

As shown in Figure 5.6, forty-five respondents (42%) worked in their previous jobs for five years or less, while thirty-eight (35%) remained in their previous employment between 6-10 years before qualifying as a teacher.
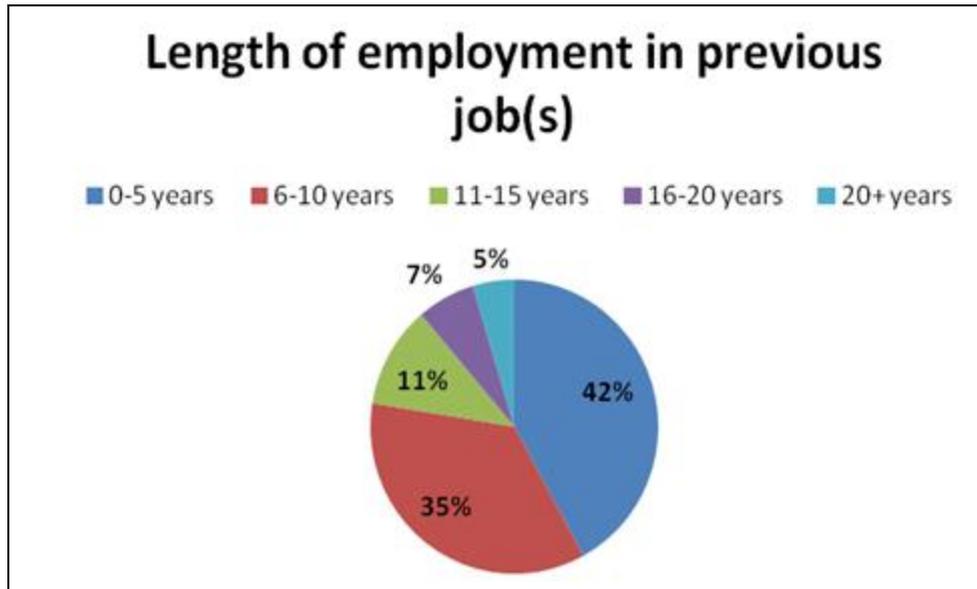
Figure 5.6: Length of Time in Previous Employment
(Online Survey Participants)

5.2.2 Interview Participants

Fifteen CCTs participated in the semi-structured interviews over a two-month period between April 9th 2020 and June 10th 2020. Ten of these participants also completed the online survey. Nine interviewees worked in the primary sector, five in the post-primary sector and one in a special education setting. Three participants were male (20%) and twelve were female (80%), which is again representative of the teaching population in Ireland (Appendix 1). Ten are still currently working as teachers (67%), four are not (27%) and one participant (6%) works as a teacher on a part-time basis. Table 5.1 provides further details of the interview participants:

Name	Age	Previous job	Length of time in previous job(s)	Year qualified as teacher	School context	Still teaching?
Aoife	41-50	Event Manager	9 years	2011	Primary	Yes
Brían	41-50	Banking	11 years	2004	Primary	Yes
Bríd	31-40	Archaeologist	5 years	2010	Primary	Yes
Cáit	41-50	Credit control	2 years	2004	Post-Primary	No
Ciara	41-50	Occupational Therapist	2.5 years	2006	Primary	Yes
Conor	31-40	Horologist	10 years	2016	Primary	Yes
Déarbhla	20-30	Customer care	3 years	2016	Post-primary	Yes
Deirdre	41-50	Marketing	4 years	2004	Post-primary	No
Eibhlín	51-60	Retail & Librarian	3 years	1994	Post-primary	No
Fionnuala	31-40	Admin & Retail	5 years	2013	Primary	Yes
Máire	41-50	Accountant	15 years	2014	Primary	No
Maebh	51-60	Home Economics Advisor, Youth Officer & Adult Education	19 years	1983	Special Education setting	(Part-time)
Micheál	41-50	Entrepreneur	10 years	2001	Post-primary	Yes
Sinéad	20-30	Social care	4 years	2019	Primary	Yes
Siobhán	51-60	Secretary	16 years	2004	Primary	Yes

Table 5.1: Interview Participants' Details

During the months of June, July and August 2020 all interviews were transcribed and edited to ensure all mistakes were eliminated. Following transcription, the interviews were manually analysed and then thematically analysed using MAXQDA software. The findings from the semi-structured interviews will be presented in conjunction with the findings from the online survey under the themes listed in Section 5.1. Each of the five themes will be discussed in relation to the results from the online survey and semi-structured interviews. The images provided by interviewees will also be presented as relevant to the themes. Direct quotes from interviewees and online survey participants will be interspersed throughout each theme. The pseudonyms assigned to interviewees will follow their quotes and the acronym Online Survey Participant (OSP) with a hash tag and their survey number will follow any direct quotes from survey respondents.

5.3 Theme 1: CCTs' Motivations for Changing Career to Teaching

The online survey offered participants five options to choose from as a reason for leaving their previous job. These five options were identified through the literature review, as common motivations for leaving a previous job (Rife, et al. 1988; Crow, Levine and Nager 1990; Freidus and Krasnow 1991; Novak and Knowles 1992; Priyadharshini and Robinson- Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2005; Anthony and Ord 2008; Wilson and Deaney 2010; Bunn and Wake 2015; Troesch and Bauer 2020). Participants could select any/all that applied and the reasons that respondents cited for leaving their previous job(s) are listed in Figure 5.7. The largest number of respondents (forty-five) selected loss of interest in the job representing 42%, while twenty-three of the thirty-nine respondents (59%) that selected *'Other'* specified that they had always wanted to be a teacher. The survey also provided participants with the option to elaborate further on the reasons for

leaving their previous job and an additional eight CCTs elaborated further that teaching had always been the career they wanted, bringing the total number of survey respondents that had always dreamed of being a teacher to thirty-one (29%).
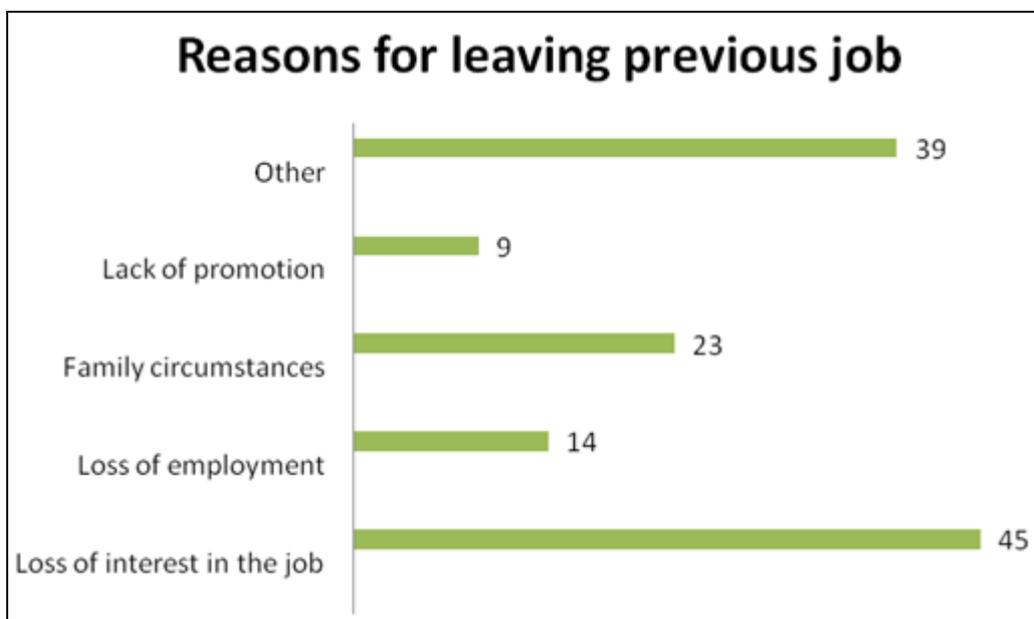
Figure 5.7: Reasons for Leaving Previous Job/Career
(Online Survey Participants)

To answer the research question, *"What are the main factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which influence their decision to join the teaching profession?"* Q.11 on the online survey asked CCTs why they chose teaching as a new career. Again, five options were presented, and respondents could select all/any that applied to them. The multiple reasons cited by participants are presented in Figure 5.8.
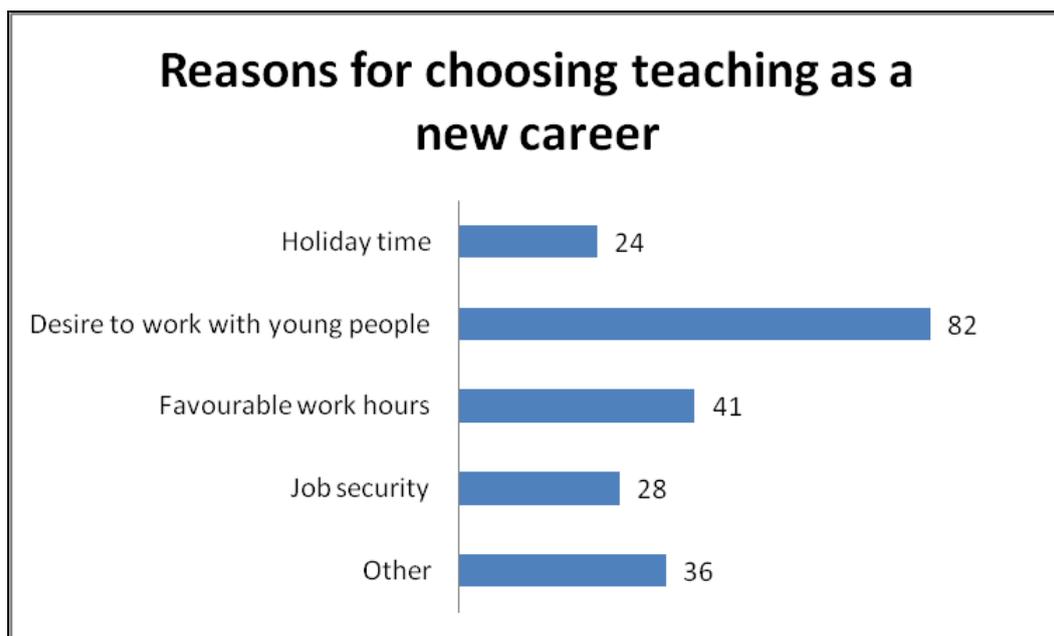
Figure 5.8: Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a New Career
(Online Survey Participants)

Of those that chose *'Other,'* ten respondents (9%) specified that they had experience in training or coaching others, and a further six (5%) provided the same reason when asked to elaborate further on their reason for leaving their previous job. Other reasons included job satisfaction, the desire to make a positive contribution to society, or to make use of a specialist subject. One survey respondent stated that *"a psychic suggested working with young children"* (OSP #10) while another provided the response, *"to support my kids"* (OSP #4). Another survey respondent provided a very personal reason for choosing teaching as a new career: *"My daughter was adopted. My experience of* (sic) *Irish education system was not positive from perspective of teachers' lack of knowledge about attachment issues and how to support children like my daughter"* (OSP #33).

When answering the same question as to why they chose teaching as a new career, interview participants listed both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and the results of this research project mirrored other research studies discussed in Chapter 3 (Priyadharshini

and Robinson- Pant 2003; Anthony and Ord 2008; Watt and Richardson 2008; Lee and Lamport 2011; Apfel 2013). As held by Hunter-Johnson (2015), intrinsic motivating factors emerged stronger than extrinsic factors in this research study, as participants cited a long-held desire to be a teacher, the desire to work with young people and make a contribution to society as the primary motivating factors for choosing teaching as a new profession. The apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975) offers prospective teachers a front row seat to the profession of teaching, which although observed at a young age, can be carried through to adulthood and motivate CCTs to choose teaching as a new career. Although extrinsic motivating factors such as the desire for greater job security, the favourable working hours and holiday time that teaching provides were mentioned by some participants, they were not as prominent as the intrinsic motivations.

Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) suggested that CCTs could be categorised into three cohorts based on the motivations that led them to teaching, and these were discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. A summary of these three groups is outlined in Table 5.2 below:

The Homecomers	The Converted	The Unconverted
• Entering a teacher education programme resembles a psychological homecoming. • Believe their earlier plans to teach were thwarted by negative parental and societal attitudes, market forces, and/or financial obligations. • Homecomers appear to have viewed teaching as their profession from an early age.	• Did not seriously consider teaching until some pivotal event or confluence of factors caused them to reconsider professional plans. • Expressed disillusionment with the previous occupation, especially profit values and competitive working relationships • In choosing to teach they have repudiated many business values yet perceive some continuity between their past and present occupational experiences.	• Achieved high status in other occupations. • Disenchanted with a teaching career, not currently teaching, and appear unlikely to do so in the future. • Although they do not intend to teach, they express interest in educational reform.

Table 5.2: Categorisation of CCTs by Crow, Levine and Nager (1990)

This next section will discuss two of these three categories of CCTs, the 'Homecomers' and the 'Converted' as they are most relevant to this study and best describe some of the participants. Seven motivating factors emerged from the data of the semi-structured interviews: the long-held desire to be a teacher, the influence of family members, the influence of a crucial event, positive prior teaching and learning experiences, loss of employment, loss of interest in the job and the desire for better job security. These seven motivating factors will be discussed in depth and will include quotes from the interview participants and some images supplied by the interviewees.

5.3.1 The Motivating Factor of 'I Always Wanted to be a Teacher' – 'The Homecomers'

In total, thirty-one CCTs (29%) who completed the online survey outlined that teaching had always been in the back of their mind as a career choice. This emerged when participants were asked to elaborate further on their reasons for leaving their previous job and/or their reasons for choosing teaching as a new career. It must be acknowledged that this response highlights the limits of a survey or questionnaire (Gillham 2000a). The option of *'I always wanted to be a teacher'* was not provided as a response for participants to select, and the true response may differ from the data gathered if that option had been supplied.

The CCTs that responded that they always wanted to be teachers could be categorised as 'Homecomers' (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990) as teaching had been a long-held desire or a childhood dream. Seven of the ten interviewees (70%) who had completed the online survey, outlined that their strongest motivating factor was their desire to work with young people. However, during the interview process, it emerged that in fact nine of these

interviewees (60%) had originally considered teaching as a first career or stated that they always wanted to be a teacher. During her interview, Fionnuala outlines that she played school as a young child, *"I used to play school with my teddies and the teachers would send any spare books they had home or old copies or paper, stuff that they were getting rid of."*

Eibhlín remembers a similar experience as a young child *"when I was little, I had the blackboard and I used to teach all my toys."* She also recalls as a young girl, visiting her older sisters who were teachers, *"because I was that much younger, when they started having babies, my mom and I would go, and we'd stay for two weeks or whatever when the baby was first brought home from the hospital. I would go into these tiny, little one and two-teacher schools, and go to school there for a week or two weeks, or whatever it was. As a small child, I thought this was just the most magnificent arrangement. All I wanted to do was to grow up to be a teacher like that."* Eibhlín's experience reinforces Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation as the prior experiences and observation of teaching as a young child informed her perception of teaching.

Sinéad shared Image 5.1, displaying the inside of a wardrobe door from her childhood home which shows homework she had assigned, written in chalk as she played teacher. This childhood imitation of teaching through play is borne from the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975) gained by every school child throughout their education.

Image 5.1: Photograph Shared by Sinéad (Interview Participant)

This finding, the long-held desire to become a teacher correlates with that of Rife, et al. (1988) who suggests that an interest in teaching begins at a young age, as several participants in their study also recalled playing 'teacher' with their friends. Therefore it is possible that the interest in teaching was always part of a CCT's personality type, especially if it was something that they had considered from a young age as Holland (1997) reports that personality types develop from heredity, activities, interests, competencies and dispositions. This also supports Stryker's (1968) theory of identity that society impacts self which impacts social behaviour and provides an explanation for a child mimicking the school environment through their play.

The desire to become a teacher is not always the primary motivating factor listed in other research studies as Williams and Forgasz (2009) found that only five of sixty-seven respondents (7.4%) who selected *'Other'* as a motivating factor, stated that becoming a

teacher was a long-held dream. However, findings from this research study contradict Williams and Forgasz (2009), as the long-held desire to become a teacher was a strong motivating factor for participants when choosing teaching as a career change. One survey respondent explained that a member of her family believed she'd make a good teacher, but she was swayed by a teacher in her post-primary school and the prospects of working in IT. *"My aunt was a teacher and always said I should be one... never believed her or listened to her when I was younger. IT was the major career buzz word back then & I fell for it. Or should I say I was guided that way by my career guidance teacher, and I listened to him over my aunt"* (OSP #63). This response echoes the responses of two CCTs in Chambers' (2002) study who were dissuaded from choosing teaching as a first career by others.

Another respondent explained why they did not choose teaching as a first career, *"Always was the plan but wanted life experience first"* (OSP #93). This reason echoes findings by Anthony and Ord (2008) from a cohort of CCTs named 'The Time is Right cluster' who all expressed a long-held desire of becoming a teacher. In their study twenty-eight out of sixty- eight CCTs (41%), stated that they too had previously considered teaching, but initially opted for a different career path. Interviewees, Cáit, Conor, Brían and Déarbhla said that teaching had been an initial consideration, but for varied reasons they each had chosen a different career path. Similar to the reason provided by OSP #93 above, Cáit also opted to gain some life experience following her undergraduate degree and she went travelling before pursuing a teaching qualification. *"I went to [university name]. Did Irish and History as an Arts degree, and then I travelled for a bit."*

Brían had originally considered teaching but decided to postpone doing the postgraduate course in teacher education for financial reasons. *"I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do. So, at the end of that three years, um, I got offered the H.Dip. in [third level institute name]. And at the time, that's back in 1991, there was no big kind of fuss about getting the H.Dip. you could get it anytime if you know what I mean. Um, so I decided, financially, I couldn't afford to do it. So, I postponed it."* One of his lecturers assisted him in getting a job with the bank, drove him to the interview and Brían began working in the banking sector. Once he began earning money, he admits that pursuing a teaching qualification fell to the back of his mind. *"You know what when you're,* (sic) *I'm twenty, I'm graduated, um, I'm living away from home. Um, you have money coming in and I just kind of went into, uh, a thing of where I forgot about the dip, and I started enjoying myself and bought a car"* (Brían).

Similarly for financial reasons Déarbhla rejected pursuing post-primary teaching as a first career, *"I got a lower 2:2 in my degree, and at the time they were only accepting people with 1:1's into teaching.........Because the grades weren't really matching up, and the finances weren't there, I went out working."*

These explanations agree with findings from research conducted by Chambers (2002) where many respondents rejected teaching as a first career as it lacked status and offered few financial rewards. The sense of gaining acceptance emerged in the language of Conor's interview as he believed teaching was a profession beyond his reach. Throughout his life, he felt ashamed that he had no specific third level qualification, despite having completed an apprenticeship in a very skill-specific craft. He believed that teaching would

have provided him with an acceptable career in the eyes of society as it was a job that was valued by others. Even though he repeated his Leaving Certificate exams, Conor admitted that he was still not mature enough to pursue teaching as a first career, *"When I did do the exams, I got something like 450 or something the second time around. I was near enough to it, but I hadn't enough motivation to want to do it. I just wasn't mature enough. That's basically what it boiled down to."*

Fionnuala also felt she wasn't mature enough to become a teacher as she was only 16 when she completed her Leaving Certificate and chose to study Business and Languages. *"If I do teaching, all I can be is a teacher. If I hate it, I'm a teacher at the end of it. I was like, if I do something else, I can always go on and do teaching then after. That's what made the decision. I went with a more open course because I really didn't know…. looking back, I did know what I wanted to do, but I just felt I was too young to make that decision."*

Fionnuala's belief echoes that of one participant in the study conducted by Freidus and Krasnow (1991, 9) who stated that she did not believe she had the maturity to be an effective teacher fifteen years beforehand. For many of the 'Homecomers' in this research study, teaching was always something that they dreamed of pursuing, even as young children. However, they opted for different careers before qualifying as a teacher, citing reasons such as feeling too immature to become a teacher following the Leaving Certificate, to gain some life experience and financial reasons.

5.3.2 The Motivating Factor of Family Influences

In his theory of vocational personality and work environments Holland (1997) proposes that vocational aspirations can be influenced by family members. Similarly Lave and Wenger's (1991) study highlights that trades and/or occupations, knowledge and practices

can be passed down through family members such as the Yucatec midwives and this concept was applied to how family members influenced CCTs in choosing teaching as a new career. Lee (2011) holds that traditional age pre-service teachers are more influenced by former teachers or members of their family who are teachers, while CCTs are more influenced by value systems and prior work experiences. However, over the fifteen interviews with CCTs for this study, it emerged that nine of these had close family members who were teachers; parents, grandparents, siblings or aunts and uncles. Eibhlín admits that coming from a family of teachers was the reason she rejected teaching for many years. *"I come from a large family, and they're nearly all teachers. All my sisters are teachers or retired teachers now. I have three sisters and my five brothers -- actually, all nine of us all married a teacher, first time round, some kind of a teacher. I think, maybe two of my brothers were teachers."*

Both of Aoife's parents were teachers so she recalls that her childhood was very much steeped in education. *"Both of my parents were teachers so we would always have had a very… I suppose an upbringing that was steeped in education. Education would have been prioritized in our house."*

When writing Máire's narrative, it emerged that one of the strongest influences for choosing teaching as a career change was influenced by the grief of losing her father who was also a teacher. The language of grief permeated her interview as she told me that he had passed away a year before she was made redundant from her accountancy job. *"So, he was a teacher and my dad had passed away a year before I moved into doing teaching."* She outlined that choosing teaching for a career change was an opportunity to try a new career after being made redundant but also to develop a better understanding of his

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profession, and it enabled her to forge a stronger a connection with him. *"Trying something different and also getting more of an insight into what my dad did, and my grandmother did. A couple of my cousins were teachers as well, and I had quite a lot of friends that were teaching."*

The influence of family members as a motivation for choosing teaching as a new career corresponds with results from Anthony and Ord (2008) where almost half of the change-of- career cohort had teachers within their family. This finding reinforces Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning as a strong influence on a CCT's decision to become teachers. Immersed in the language and stories of teaching, the idea of teaching as a career would have been carried through from childhood and presented a sense of familiarity to CCTs when considering teaching as a new career.

5.3.3 The Motivating Factor of a Crucial Event – 'The Converted'

Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) categorise CCTs who choose teaching as a new career after a crucial event as the 'Converted' and outline crucial events such as family reasons, health or financial factors that prompt a career change. In addition to Máire, another online survey respondent cited the death of his father as a reason to re-evaluate his career. *"Dad died suddenly, realised I wasn't happy in work. Taking time off to be with family was difficult"* (OSP #77). The death of a parent is a crucial event in anyone's life and it is not uncommon for people to re-evaluate career and life goals following a traumatic event as such this (Kanchier and Unruh 1989).

Another survey respondent explained that a traffic accident and multiple surgeries on her back, forced her to retire from her nursing job and qualify as a teacher. Another CCT

explained in her survey response, *"I had a baby. Work hours were not family friendly. Neither was the salary but if I wanted more money I needed to work more hours/commute longer/travel more. Also I was bored"* (OSP #10). A further four survey respondents also cited that the birth of a child prompted a career change to teaching, as it was a more suitable career for their family circumstances. In her interview, Ciara explained that ill health prompted her, to reassess her work-life balance as she felt teaching would be better suited to her life *"I was diagnosed with a chronic condition at the time as well. I felt like, oh, I'm going to have to revise my life a little bit, and what am I going to do? I thought, I think I* (sic) *like teaching. I would like it. I know now that I can get on with kids. Maybe this would be the area for me."*

As well as the crucial event of ill health acting as a motivating factor for Ciara, her previous job as an occupational therapist had provided her with some experience of working with young people and a confidence that she would be capable of working with young people in a teaching capacity. Watt, et al. (2012) outline that positive prior teaching and learning experiences is a strong motivator for many CCTs and in this research study, six other interviewees had similar experiences of positive prior teaching before beginning their teacher education programme.

5.3.4 The Motivating Factor of Prior Positive Teaching and Learning Experiences

As outlined in Figure 5.9, when asked if respondents had previous experience of working in a school setting, forty-seven CCTs (44%) had prior experience within a school context, either as a volunteer, as an SNA or through involvement with third level or adult education. Eighteen of these forty-seven respondents (38%) that answered yes, had worked as an unqualified substitute teacher in schools prior to beginning an initial teacher

education programme. Lave and Wenger (1991) state that legitimate peripheral participation leads to participants acquiring the skills to perform by engaging in the process, in this case, the process of teaching a class. However, as the learner participates in the practice of an expert, this performance is carried out to a limited degree and with limited responsibility. This accurately describes the process of substitute teaching imitating the practice of an expert and learning the skills and roles of teaching without yet assuming full responsibility.
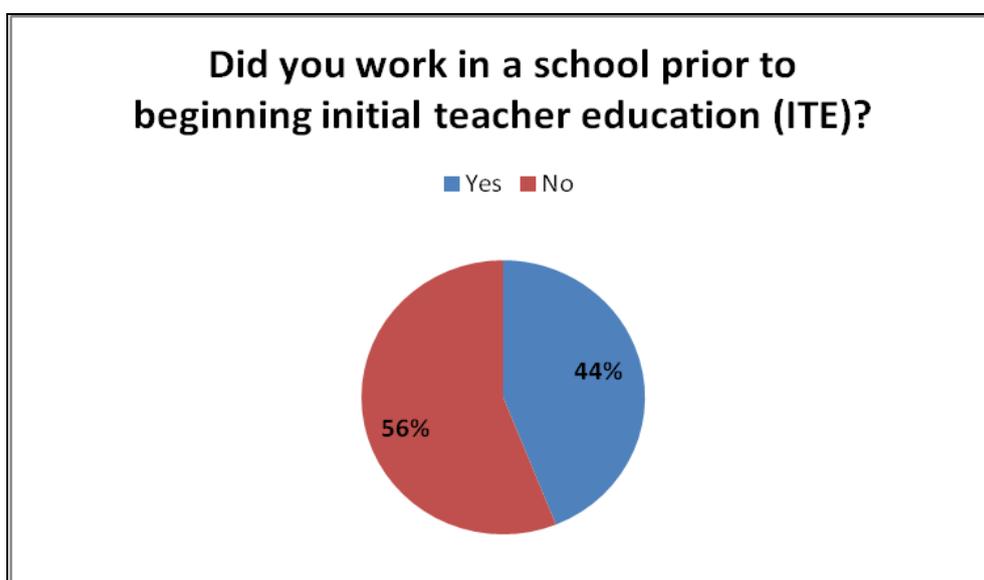
Figure 5.9: Prior Work Experience in a School Setting
(Online Survey Participants)

During the course of the interviews, it emerged that six interviewees (40%) had prior teaching experience. Bríd had worked on a programme called Archaeology in the Classroom and had worked as a substitute teacher on occasion. Siobhán had worked as a substitute teacher in the school where she worked as secretary when a teacher was absent. Deirdre had worked as an EFL teacher in South Korea for three years. Cáit had worked as an unqualified substitute teacher for eighteen months and Sinéad had experience of working with young children in schools through her role as a social worker.

Conor had worked in a primary school setting teaching traditional music as part of an initiative set up by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann[8], to introduce traditional music classes to primary schools in the region. "*I can honestly say if I hadn't been going into the primary schools teaching music, I would never have even considered it.*"

He provided an image of his accordion displayed below (Image 5.2), which is central to his career change, because it was through teaching music to primary school pupils, that he gained the confidence to pursue a new career in teaching.
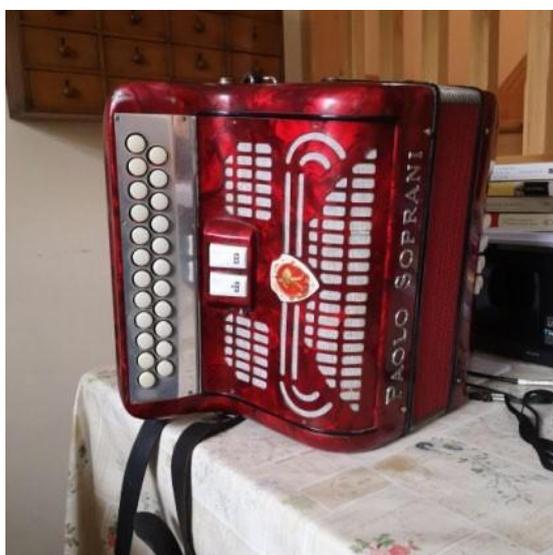
Image 5.2: Photograph Shared by Conor (Interview Participant)

Prior experiences of teaching act as a 'pull' factor for many CCTs considering a career change into teaching (Watters and Diezmann 2015). This factor also corresponds with the motivating factors presented in Anthony and Ord's (2008) 'Teaching is Me' study, which highlighted that, participants were attracted to teaching as a new career because of their positive teaching-related experiences. In this research study, it also emerged that many

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[8] Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (Association of Musicians of Ireland) is the largest group involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann 2022)

participants also had positive prior learning experiences and several recalled influential teachers from their own primary and post-primary schooling. This is in line with Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation as pupils gain an insight into the teaching profession during their own schooling, therefore encouraging the choice of teaching as a new career given this prior knowledge of the profession.

One online survey participant stated that *"some of my favourite teachers influenced my career choices"* (OSP #70) and of the fifteen interviewees, eleven (73%) reported very positive school experiences and four of these CCTs (27%) admitted that they *"loved school"*. Each of the interview participants recalled one very influential teacher, if not two, from their schooling and it emerged from the interviews that many of these participants chose to study at third level the subject that this influential teacher taught them in school. Eibhlín recalls her French teacher with great fondness and they remain in contact to this day. Eibhlín chose to study French in university. Aoife credits her English teacher in secondary school as a very motivating teacher and Aoife studied English for her original Arts degree. Cáit admits that her Irish teacher was *"an absolute cow, but she played me like a fiddle and I got the A as a result of it. I thought she was the business"*. However, her teacher's influence resulted in Cáit qualifying with a degree in Irish at university. Micheál mentioned in particular the teacher that taught him engineering and drawing, and Micheál is now a technology teacher.

Although Wagner and Imanuel-Noy (2014) report that the influence of a teacher was rarely mentioned directly in their research findings, the findings from this study disagreed and in

fact concur with other studies that credit former teachers as significant influential factors in the career choices of prospective teachers (Fielstra 1955; Richards 1960; Robertson, Keith and Page 1983; Watt, et al. 2012; Heinz 2013).

5.3.5 The Motivating Factor of the Loss of Employment

The loss of employment did not emerge as a strong motivating factor in the online survey, as only fourteen survey respondents (13%) opted to pursue a career in teaching following a loss of employment in their previous jobs. Separate to this, six of the fifteen interviewees (40%) had also encountered a loss of employment in their previous jobs, which motivated them to look towards teaching as a new career path. Three interviewees (20%) lost their job due to the economic recession in 2008 and believed that teaching would provide a more stable and secure job in a period of financial turmoil in Ireland.

The loss of previous employment is described as a push factor by Anthony and Ord (2008), as is the lack of progression in a previous job, which was highlighted by Siobhán as a reason she chose teaching as a new career, *"There was really no great satisfaction in it. And I always felt, there was no progression to be made in it. I wasn't going to go anywhere in it. It was.... that was it, you know, and it was always going to be a poorly paid job. You know, there was really no… It was earning a living but that's about all."* The words achievement and progress featured strongly in Siobhán's narrative and it was clear that, for Siobhán, she sought a career in teaching as a means of having a sense of achievement and fulfilment unlike her previous job. *"I suppose there was no real sense of achievement. It was, you know, you were given work to do, or you had your role, and you just did that work."* This correlates with Evans (1997) cited in Troesch and Bauer (2017)

that job satisfaction, specifically job comfort and job fulfilment are sources of personal achievement.

5.3.6 The Motivating Factor of the Loss of Interest in a Previous Job

Forty-five of the online survey respondents (42%) cited a loss of interest in their previous job as a motivating factor for moving into teaching, and six interviewees (40%) highlighted the same reason. Three of these interviewees (20%) also outlined that they believed teaching would be more meaningful work and would allow them to make a more valuable contribution to society, which echoed responses from six other CCTs (5%) who completed the online survey. Both Bríd and Brían cited increased dissatisfaction with their original career and the belief that teaching would enable them to make a more positive contribution to society. *"What I also wanted* (sic) *something different from, in terms of leaving archaeology, was a sense of giving a direct impact, a direct positive impact into the world"* (Bríd).

Brían entered teaching in response to and in rejection of the corporate culture of his previous job, *"I didn't like that cold thrust, business selling thing all the time. Um, and I realized that, you know, I said to myself at thirty-one, I'm going to be working for thirty-five years. Do I want to be doing this? I was measured 100% by the number of sales I had at the end of the week. And that was all"* (Brían). This sentiment was reiterated in an online survey response given by another CCT *"Actually loved my job, loved the people, loved the planning and organisation, but it felt hollow - didn't like earning money for a rich multinational, working with rich financial clients. Felt there had to be more job satisfaction out there - couldn't see myself still in the role until retirement"* (OSP #24). These factors echo findings from Chambers (2002) in which four of ten respondents (40%)

in that study outlined their motivation for entering the teaching profession was to reject the limiting corporate culture they previously worked in, which was more concerned with profit than service. Based on Holland's (1995, 24) description of the Social Type espousing a value on social and ethical activities, it is also possible that Brían and Bríd's personality types were more suited to teaching than their previous jobs and encouraged them to reject a former job/career less suited to their personality and values, and choose teaching as a new career.

Similar to other research studies (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990; Freidus and Krasnow 1991; Powers 2002; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2006; Bunn and Wake 2015), an increased dissatisfaction with a previous career and the desire to engage in more fulfilling work acted as a strong motivator for a career change among CCTs participating in this study. Although the loss of interest in a prior job or loss of employment is a motivating factor to choose teaching as a career change, that factor alone, may not be enough to sustain a new teacher in their new career.

5.3.7 The Motivating Factor of Job Security

The need for greater job security did not rank highly among the research participants of this study. Only twenty-eight of the online survey respondents (26%) cited it as a reason for choosing teaching as a new career and only three interviewees listed it as a factor, similar to findings by Watt, et al. (2012). However, those that did cite job security as a factor explained that the economic recession in Ireland had played a significant role, *"The recession was a huge factor in it. As well, I suppose, I was getting older, and the realisation was coming to me. I'm not making a fortune out of this. I was self-employed, and there were a lot of headaches with it. You were very much at the whim of the*

customer" (Conor).

After taking a year out from her job in archaeology, Bríd returned to it in the midst of the economic recession, and this subsequently played a role in her decision to leave that job permanently. *"I came back to archaeology briefly late 2007, 2008. I think towards* (sic)*, we did a big site down in [county] that was under a huge time pressure, huge economic pressure and I was the senior supervisor there. Just the way that the end of that site...the company was in difficulty! I was kept on, but our crew was fired. They were fired in a very difficult way. Then after that, the writing was on the wall, as far as I could see with archaeology in Ireland"*. She then applied for two postgraduate courses in the UK, forensic archaeology, and primary school teaching. She explained her reason for choosing teaching, *"When I got accepted to both courses, I decided, "Well, which one is going to afford me the kind of life I want to live?" From now on, nobody ever really knows. But I felt that primary teaching would have been a better choice for me, so I did it."*

Bríd's motivating factor concurs with findings from many other research studies that teaching provides a consistent and pensionable job with favourable work hours and holidays (Freidus and Krasnow 1991; Novak and Knowles 1992; Chambers 2002; Kaldi 2009; Williams and Forgasz 2009; Wilson and Deaney 2010; Wagner and Imanuel-Noy 2014; Watters and Diezmann 2015). However, it is also suggested by Kyriacou, et al. (2003) that the aspects that motivate a person to choose teaching as a career are based on their expectations of what the job will be like in reality. They also suggest that these expectations play an important part in a student teacher's choice of teaching as a career and if these expectations are not subsequently realised by the reality of the job it may

prompt these new teachers to leave the profession within the first few years. The following section will present the data findings under the second theme, the expectations held by CCTs of teaching as a new career.

5.4 Theme 2: Expectations Held by CCTs of Teaching as a New Career

The second theme that will be presented and discussed is the expectations held by CCTs prior to beginning a teaching career. The expectations of the CCTs who participated in this research study varied greatly and were influenced by participants' own memories of school through the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975), and situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) by acquiring the knowledge of the role of teaching from family members and school teaching experience. Twenty-nine survey respondents outlined that they expected teaching to be a rewarding job/career, and nineteen of these CCTs admitted that their expectation was that although rewarding it would also be challenging. *"I knew it would not always be easy but felt it would be rewarding"* (OSP #16), echoing findings from Bunn and Wake (2015) that CCTs hope that teaching will provide them with a rewarding and challenging professional life.

Five interview participants in this study also outlined that their expectation was that teaching would be a rewarding job, although Fionnuala admits that she expected the school day to finish at 3pm. *"I thought it would be rewarding, that work would finish at 3pm or shortly after it and that I would enjoy it."*

Bríd expected teaching to be demanding work. However, this was primarily based on her experience of teaching in the UK where she completed her ITE, *"I trained in England, and still, England is struggling to get its balance around teacher retention. There was a huge*

expectation of long, long hours coming into school at 7:00am, leaving school at 6:00pm, and then going home and planning individual lessons for delivery the next day. I always expected teaching to be hard work, and it was." Her expectation echoed the expectation of participants in the study conducted by Richardson and Watt (2006) that teaching is a highly demanding career, with a heavy workload, a high emotional demand and requiring lots of hard work.

There were four predominant expectations held by CCTs that emerged from the interview and survey data and these will be presented and discussed in the sections below. They include CCTs' expectations based on personal memories of teaching and learning, expectations of pupil behaviour, expectations of the workload of teachers and expectations of teaching based on the previous personal experiences of CCTs.

5.4.1 Expectations Based on Personal Memories of School

For other participants, their assessments of teaching were based on their own school experience as they held a rose-tinted view of teaching from their own experience as a student. This concurs with Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation, as the profession of teaching is viewed through the eyes of a child and does not allow a full understanding of the complexity of the role. A common belief among the online survey CCTs was that teaching had not changed over the decades. Sixteen respondents (15%) stated that they expected teaching to mirror their own school experience as a primary and secondary school student, with one respondent clarifying his own belief, *"Perceptions were based on what I saw in school. Sitting at desk, commanding from* (sic) *top and being able to crowd control without leaving that top space too much"* (OSP #77). These sentimental assumptions or naive attitudes about teaching described by Madfes (1990, 150) conflict

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with the realities of teaching for many CCTs and she cautions that the "historical understanding of school sites were from the position of student and therefore incomplete". This limited understanding of teaching from a student perspective (Lortie 1975) emerged strongly among several interview participants in this research study.

"I suppose society had a bit to do with this. My view of teaching was very, like tunnel vision, I suppose. I never really factored in the paperwork or the difficult students. It was more the idea of teaching I think was how I perceived teaching to be, nearly like Miss Honey from Matilda. That really lovely environment and the amazing looking classroom and the nice lifestyle, nice car, nice job, what society sees that (sic) *as a teacher"* (Sinéad).

"I suppose you're when you're growing up, a teacher is always perceived as someone responsible and it's a responsible job. It's a steady job. Um, you know, your parents would always say, you'll always have a pension. So it was, it was, it was always perceived as, as a good job to have. And the teachers were always perceived as responsible people" (Deirdre).

"That had been my perception was (sic) *it would be to get your English book, to open page* (sic)*, start reading and answer the questions because that's the way it would have been when we were in school. That's not the way at all anymore"* (Fionnuala).
Image 5.3 shared by Fionnuala depicts uni-fix cubes. This image also represents the hands-on approach and active learning she now adopts in her teaching role, which differs greatly from her original view of teaching which centred on textbooks and teacher instruction.

Image 5.3: Photograph Shared by Fionnuala (Interview Participant)

Conor thought that a high level of academic ability was required in order to become a teacher. This belief agrees with findings from Richardson and Watt (2006), as participants in that study rated teaching as a highly expert career which required high levels of specialised and technical knowledge. Even after Conor was accepted onto the teacher education programme, his confidence still was low as he learned how different the classroom was to his own memories. He explains *"I suppose I didn't count on my life experience and that into the mix at the time. But teaching, I thought was inaccessible basically. Outside of that, the actual practice of it, I was very much at sea with, because I only had my own memories of primary school from the '80s. I felt it had changed a lot. There was a lot of talk about technology, and this is all coming at me. I suppose my perceptions were very different to maybe the reality"*

This statement concurs with findings by Freidus and Krasnow (1991) that once inside the classroom; the original perceptions of CCTs are altered as the realities of teaching emerge.

5.4.2 Expectations of Pupil Behaviour

Another expectation that emerged from ten online survey respondents (9%) was that pupils would be engaged and interested in learning. One primary school CCT stated in their response, *"I thought it would be easier. Children would work independently more"* (OSP #47) while two post-primary CCTs explained their expectations of the classroom, *"That it would be filled with students who were interested in* (sic) *subject I was teaching"* (OSP #26), while the perception held by another CCT was, *"that students listened better than they do. I'd sit more!"* (OSP #59). A realistic understanding of classroom practice and pupil behaviour is necessary for CCTs who leave well-ordered work environments to begin a teaching career. Better knowledge of the operations of modern schools and teaching would assist in the retention of CCTs in the profession as suggested by Bauer, Thomas and Sim (2017).

Deirdre explained in her interview that she felt originally that she had some knowledge of what teaching would entail, as her sister was a teacher. However, the realities of the classroom drastically altered her expectations of teaching and she was unprepared for the amount of discipline issues she would encounter. When analysing Deirdre's narrative, it was clear that respect was a value she perceived was part and parcel of teaching. She used the word many times throughout her interview, when discussing the behaviour of both colleagues and pupils and expected that as a teacher she would be treated with respect. *"So, when I stepped into the classroom, then, um, initially, um, just in one school I went to, it was the [school name] and it was all boys. And like trying to teach the maths, you know, like different levels, obviously there was, but they...say the lower level, they had no interest in being there. You'd walk into a classroom, and they wouldn't even look up. So that surprised me because it just showed a, I suppose, a lack of respect!"* This corresponds with

findings from other studies (Powers 2002; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003) that discipline, class disruption and lack of motivation among students can prove challenging for CCTs.

5.4.3 Expectations of Teacher Workload

Five respondents from the online survey (5%) admitted that they did not expect the amount of planning and paperwork involved in teaching. As classrooms and schools are very different today compared to when many CCTs attended school, it is understandable that their expectations of teaching nowadays may be somewhat misaligned. *"I didn't expect to have so much additional work, correcting, planning, Croke Park etc on top of my contracted hours"* (OSP #14). Other interview participants also agreed that the classroom was very different in reality. Cáit admitted that she thought teaching was an easy job with short hours and great holidays. Déarbhla, also had expected teaching to be easier than it actually was and admits that she thought it would be as simple as *"go in and wing it. No prep... I would have been one of these people that would have been like, "Oh, teachers, holidays, great life."*

Lortie (1975) outlines that viewing the experience of teaching as a child or teenager will not allow for full comprehension of the pedagogical and organisational complexities of teaching. The CCTs who have no practical experience of a modern day classroom, and are relying on their own memories of school will undoubtedly receive an unexpected shock of reality when they begin teaching as a NQT.

5.4.4 Expectations Based on Personal Experiences of Teaching

Five participants from the online survey (5%) outlined that they had a realistic expectation of teaching as they had family members who were teachers. Interviewees Brían, Bríd and Máire explained how family members had assisted in keeping their expectations of teaching realistic. *"I suppose my dad was a teacher and I have uncles* (sic) *teachers, so I would have known, you know, a fair bit about what it was"* (Brían).

"I expected it to be hard work. I wonder if this is something that probably comes from my family background. I know that it's something, generally, when people talk about teachers who come into, (sic) *people who come into teaching, they have a certain expectation that it's going to be like this, and all kumbaya with kids. That's absolutely not what I expected. [laughs] It was exactly how I expected, hard work"* (Bríd).

"I knew that it was a challenging career and I knew that it was becoming more challenging with all the different (sic)*, even from hearing from my dad and from friends, that the paperwork or parent's demands and they would have been like, I would have kind of gone into it, knowing that that was something to consider and to be ready for it, for that side of it"* (Máire).

This corresponds with findings by Anthony and Ord (2008), that the CCTs who had family members in the teaching profession held more realistic expectations. For these CCTs, it is reasonable that they would have a better knowledge of the role of the teacher, and a more accurate expectation of teaching as a job. As held by Lave and Wenger (1991), situated learning provides a better knowledge of a job or profession, especially if one has been

immersed in the language and stories of the job from a young age or has had the opportunity to practice the role of teaching through substitute teaching work.

Another five survey respondents (5%) had prior school experience, so they too believed they had good knowledge of the profession. This belief was also shared by some interviewees. Maebh outlined that her previous role included some elements of teaching and she found she quite enjoyed that aspect of her job, *"Well, I would have seen sort of the job, you know, the, the advising, the home economics advisory role as part teaching, because when we were out on placements from the college (third level institute), we would have worked with a lot of adult groups and communities. So, there was, (sic) and I quite enjoyed that."*

Máire undertook some observation in a classroom before her ITE and she shadowed two teachers, which although she admitted was a little intimidating, gave her a good insight into the job. *"You know, you got exposure to some really experienced teachers, and it is almost intimidating seeing how good some people were... you know it was interesting and fantastic watching that! And so, yeah, I think that the experience was what I expected."* Experience of teaching and/or the classroom provides CCTs with a more accurate expectation and an increased level of self-efficacy for teaching as a new career choice (Richardson and Watt 2006).

This research study found that nine out of the fifteen interviewees (60%) had worked as a substitute teacher, prior to acquiring their teaching qualification. Ciara specifically opted to undertake substitute teaching work to establish if it was a suitable choice for a career change. She recalled, *"I decided I wasn't going into it without doing some work*

experience. Back then, you could do it if you had your Leaving Cert[9]. It was gas really. I subbed[10] for about four months." Siobhán, as school secretary was often called upon to step into a classroom if a teacher was absent and therefore, developed valuable knowledge of the role of the teacher, "*I just knew that when I was in the classroom in the school, you know, that I always enjoyed it and that I got on well with the children and I was able to manage them well."*

These findings concur with those of Richardson and Watt (2005), where one CCT indicated that her positive experience of teaching art to adults had strengthened her belief that she would be a good teacher. Working as a substitute teacher prior to ITE, provides CCTs with a genuine insight into the job and the opportunity to assess their own skills as a teacher before committing to a career change. This prior teaching experience eliminates the 'praxis shock' (Buchanan 2015, 33) experienced by new teachers as a result of their high expectations and this study highlighted that CCTs with previous practical experience working in schools and with students, held more realistic expectations of teaching.

However, this study also found that many CCTs held unrealistic expectations of the workload of teaching and pupil behaviour based on their own memories of school. If CCTs hold an inaccurate view of teaching or the role of the teacher, based on their own experiences as students, then their expectations will not match reality. This in turn will impact their development as a teacher, their wellbeing and resilience. In addition, Lysaght, O'Leary and Scully (2017) suggest that positive, realistic, and optimistic expectations upon entry to the teaching profession can have a significant impact on teacher's retention.

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[9] Leaving Certificate - state-run exams at the end of post-primary education
[10] Worked as a substitute teacher

5.5 Theme 3: Transitioning to a New Career as a Teacher

The third theme developed from the data was the process of changing career to teaching and the challenges that it presented to CCTs. Question 15 on the online survey asked participants if they found the transition to teaching from their previous job an easy process. As seen in Figure 5.10, sixty-five (61%) online survey participants answered yes.
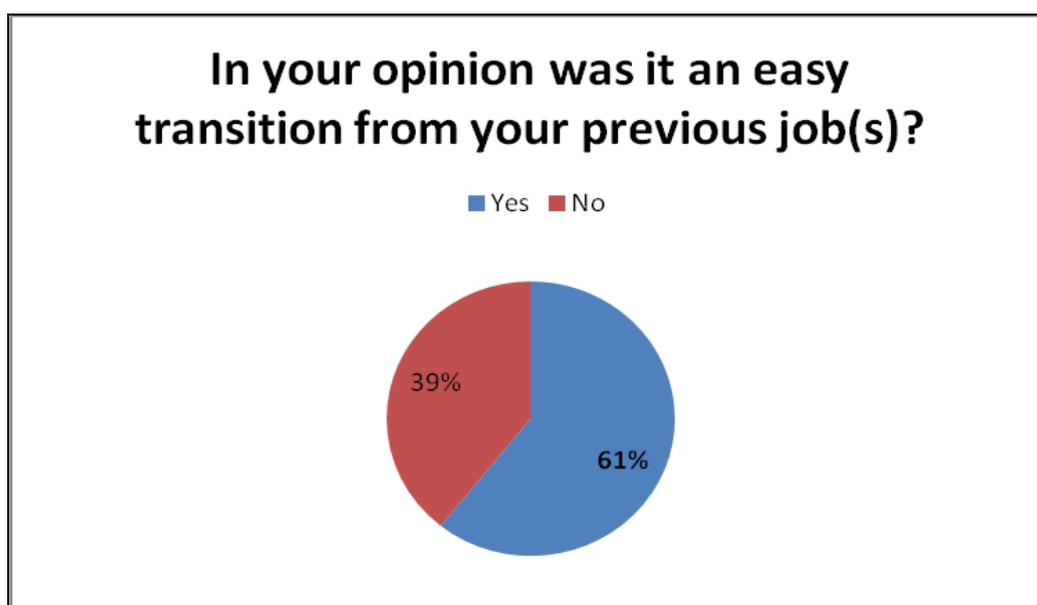
Figure 5.10: Transition Process from Previous Job to Teaching
(Online Survey Participants)

When asked to elaborate on their answer, twenty-five online survey participants (23%) cited that their prior job experience, other experiences working with young people and the life skills and/or the skills they had garnered in their previous job(s) had assisted the transition to the teaching profession. *"A lot of the skills from my previous role were transferrable"* (OSP #38). Another respondent explained her answer, *"Yes, as I had previous experience with children and also* (sic) *management side of my job allowed me to be as organised in the teaching world"* (OSP #42).

5.5.1 Prior Experience as a Factor Which Assisted the Transition to Teaching

Seven survey respondents (7%) outlined that they found the transition quite easy as they had friends and family within the profession, and it was a career that they had always wanted. This reinforces Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of situated learning providing a good understanding of the role and Holland's (1991) theory of vocational choice as CCTs found the transition easier because the role was more suited to their personality and perhaps was always part of their identity (Stryker 1968). One respondent, who had previously worked in retail, clarified that changing career to teaching was an easy process as she was leaving a more challenging role, *"Nothing fazed me. My last job was demanding, dealing with large amounts of money etc. so teaching was an easy transition"* (OSP #87). Prior experience working with children also was beneficial to another survey respondent, *"I had previous experience of coaching children in summer camps, so I knew what to expect"* (OSP #66). One post-primary CCT outlined that she felt that as a mature student, she adapted to teaching easier than a younger teacher, *"I was a mature student, used to speaking to groups of people so didn't experience the same issues as young NQTs"* (OSP #50). This concurs with one participant in Lee's (2011) study that CCTs are more skill-equipped than younger teachers as a result of their previous professional experiences. Years of previous work experience would have allowed CCTs to develop and master effective work practices which could be adapted to their new role of teaching.

It is understandable then, that CCTs may adapt these second-nature practices to their teaching environment as found by Green (2015) who cited that eleven out of twelve (92%) participants in her study adopted a workplace learning model for their classes. Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) also cite three mediating forces which assist CCTs in their career transition to teaching, one of which is the use of skills gained in a previous occupation.

However, the transition to a new job can often be challenging for others. As outlined in Section 5.3.2, the unrealistic expectations, held by CCTs prior to commencing a teaching career, can add to the challenges of transition as they are unprepared for how complex and challenging the world of teaching can be (Freidus and Krasnow 1991). Although many research studies cite motivating students and classroom management as the primary challenge for CCTs (Powers 2002; Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008; Wilcox and Samaras 2009; Wagner and Imanuel-Noy 2014), this did not emerge as a significant finding in this study.

Even though many survey respondents outlined that they found the transition to teaching easy, eight of the fifteen interviewees (53%) stated that they found changing career quite challenging and provided varying reasons to explain. This contradiction highlights the value in using questionnaires in tandem with other methods (Gillham 2000a), as using a variety of methods can facilitate different types of responses. The main challenges described by the interviewees included the financial impact of undertaking an ITE programme, the school context and workload issues which will be presented in the following sections.

5.5.2 The Challenge of Financial Issues and Family Commitments

Change of career brings a financial challenge or hardship for some CCTs (Lee 2011), as they embark on a course of study with third level education fees and travel expenses to pay, without a steady income to offset the expense. Alongside the financial strain of returning to third level education, CCTs also outlined another challenge they face as mature students, which is leaving a job in which they were experienced and have much expertise and moving to a novice position as a NQT. One online survey participant explained, *"Financially it was a huge hit. I had to work very hard to get where I am now. It was so difficult going from*

knowing everything about my old job to nothing about my new job. As I was a mature student, I found it difficult" (OSP #90). This echoes findings from Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) as one CCT outlined the stress she experienced in leaving a job where she felt secure and successful and beginning as a novice again when she moved to teaching.

The financial strain of changing career was cited by ten online survey respondents. The explanations provided by CCTs included; (1) depending on family members to support them while completing their teacher education programme, (2) a decrease in salary from their previous job/career and (3) their previous work experience was not taken into consideration and (4) they began at the bottom of the pay scale in the teaching profession similar to first career teachers. Other respondents clarified that working part-time eased the financial pressure, *"The hardest part was giving up permanent employment to do the H. Dip. Once I got the offer of a part time job as a youth worker, I felt on a more steady footing. At that time, it was only a year, so it was doable. With the current two-year PME I don't think I would have been financially able to do it"* (OSP #80).

Five online survey respondents (5%) also explained that the distance learning nature of their online ITE course was most beneficial as they could work and study at the same time. *"The part- time and online nature of the programme allowed me to work at the same time and gain invaluable experience in the classroom whilst studying"* (OSP #78). For financial reasons, interviewee Déarbhla also opted to complete her ITE through an online programme, so that she could continue working. She admits *"I wouldn't have been able to work. Plus, we'd have been paying money for the accommodation. I think it was coming in at like €3,000 more expensive whereas at least, with [third level institute name] I was able to keep working and I was able to keep going the way I wanted to go."*

Sinéad cited a similar reason for choosing a particular PME programme to complete her ITE, *"My reason for choosing [third level institute name] was I didn't apply for the other two, for [third level institute name] and [third level institute name], or any of them because I was working at that stage. We were living out and renting and I was driving a car and all that. To be honest, if I didn't have [third level institute name], I wouldn't have probably got into teaching because I couldn't justify in my head not earning any money and obviously paying for the course itself."*

Siobhán outlined that for her the financial cost of third level education as a mature student was challenging and clarifies that it would not have been possible for her without the assistance of a grant. "*I think for someone to go to college* (third level education), *it's a big thing. If you have a reasonably well-paid job, and you're changing to go into college* (third level education)... *financial support!* (sic) *I was very lucky. I got the back to education grant, which bridged a gap for me, allowed me to go. If I hadn't got that, I probably wouldn't have been able to give up the job that I had to go.*"

The financial sacrifice of changing career was also highlighted by Bunn and Wake (2015) as they hold that CCTs face a unique challenge in trying to balance job and family commitments while undertaking a programme of study. Kaldi (2009) believe that this juggling act is more pertinent to women than men. However, only one female CCT highlighted that she found the transition challenging because of family circumstances and Brían's interview further contradicted Kaldi's (2009) finding.

Brían began his ITE in his early thirties and he was married at the time, living in the west of Ireland, and studying at a teacher education institute in the south of Ireland. He outlines that

there was no opportunity to do his ITE through an online format at that time, so he had to give up his job, income, company car etc and pursue a full-time postgraduate course. *"I had to give up my job and sell my car and go back to student life again for eighteen months."* He also recalled some challenges he encountered during his ITE programme in the way he was treated as a mature student, with no consideration for his family commitments and the sacrifices he made to travel long distances to and from home to study.

Aoife admits she relied heavily on her family for financial and emotional support *"I had the support from home as well. I moved home and I lived at home, and I had their support as well financially. They were able to give me a loan. That made a big difference in having that cushion."* An additional challenge for Aoife was the fact that she began her ITE programme when her son was only nine weeks old. Even though she had family support, her son was with a childminder when she was undertaking her teacher education programme, adding to the financial strain. The financial pressure did not end when Aoife assumed a teaching job, as the pay she received as a teacher, differed greatly to her previous job. *"At the start I found it really, really hard because when I came out, even though I ended up on the old scale, my colleagues ended up in the new scale, which represented a reduction but still, the start of the old scale when you were renting a house and you're paying for childcare. I think when I started out first, I would have been making about €100 or less if I was claiming all my social payment benefits. That was hard to manage at the start financially."* This finding agrees with Lee and Lamport (2011) that for CCTs juggling family and study commitments, the challenge of changing career is intensified.

Eight online survey respondents (7%) provided further details of the difficult journey they undertook to gain a teaching qualification, which including re-sitting some Leaving

Certificate exams to gain the entry requirement for an undergraduate degree in either teacher education or another degree course which they followed with a postgraduate course in teaching. *"Had to totally retrain, repeat two subjects in Leaving (Certificate), attempt to get into college* (third level education) *three times before successful"* (OSP #98).

This additional challenge was also shared by Siobhán as she too had to re-sit three Leaving Certificate subjects to fulfil the requirements for entry to a three-year Bachelor of Education programme as a mature student, *"I would have* (sic) *to go back to re-sit my Leaving Cert (Certificate) in three subjects. I didn't have honours Irish and I needed two more honours to go to [third level institute] as a mature student."* Siobhán admitted that she got extra tutoring (grinds) in Irish which added to the financial burden but were necessary to help her achieve her honours requirement. Siobhán shared Image 5.4 of herself crossing the finish line of a Half Iron-Man race and compared her journey to becoming a teacher as a similar feat, *"a lot of hard, lonely work went on in the years leading up to it. Self-doubt about my ability to complete the course was never far away, but the feeling of achievement when I got over the finish line was worth every step."*

Image 5.4: Photograph Shared by Siobhán (Interview Participant)

5.5.3 The Challenge of the School Context

Another area that posed some challenging aspects for CCTs was the school environment as a new workplace. Two online survey respondents, who had qualified as primary school teachers, highlighted in particular, the challenge of changing career to teaching and the role and influence of the school leadership on the atmosphere of the school. *"I found not having judgement from experience hard. I had built this up in my previous career and missed it. Also, how small each school community is, and driven by personality of the leaders"* (OSP #45). Another respondent explained, *"Schools can be extremely toxic environments arising from school principals' failure to address unacceptable behaviour"* (OSP #33). Similar experiences were highlighted by Lee (2011) in that participant CCTs felt politics and favouritism can exist among school leadership. Participants from Lee's (2011) study cautioned that schools can be very insular environments and that new teachers should avoid the negativity which may exist among other teachers.

5.5.3.1 Teamwork

For those that have worked in other work environments and have experience of teamwork, the school environment and classroom can prove a very different work environment. Ciara worked as an occupational therapist and her job involved working within a multi-disciplinary team, *"When I was a first-year occupational therapist on a medical team and my client was being discussed, I was expected to be the person that brought the goods to the table. There was a huge expectation that you are a part of a team. You have to produce something."* Similarly, one participant in a study conducted by Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen (2008) explained how the autonomy of teaching was an adjustment coming from a job with a lot of teamwork.

Ciara also highlighted the difference in the atmosphere of the school environment to her previous job, *"In this particular school. I saw people producing whole plans for the school, and then other members of staff taking it the night before and passing it off as their own. I couldn't get over that kind of stuff. That's not in every school, obviously, but I just found that every school is determined by the principal at the top down. I found that quite scary in one way."* A similar experience was also highlighted by another CCT in a study by Wilcox and Samaras (2009) who expressed surprise that all teachers do not conduct themselves in a professional manner. Troesch and Bauer (2020) cite a study by Bauer, et al. (2017) which states that CCTs coming from other jobs and professions often have high expectations of teamwork among teachers and they are disappointed to realise that teaching differs in this respect to many other occupations. However, each school environment is very different and support from school leaders and colleagues is essential for CCTs to adapt to their new career and develop their skills and identity as teachers.

Déarbhla admitted that when she started teaching, she expected a greater level of collegiality and co-operation with her teaching colleagues than she received. "*I also had this feeling that teachers were like all best friends because when you're younger you'd see them out on nights out, especially when I was working in the hotel. Working in the staff room it was not like that and it will never be like that.*" During her interview, she shared some stories of incidents and misunderstandings with colleagues and pupils that have taught her to be more cautious in her dealings with others. She also shared Image 5.5, an umbrella to explain the challenge her journey in becoming a teacher has presented her, "*I've had to protect myself from the rainy days.*"

Image 5.5: Image Shared by Déarbhla (Interview Participant)

Déarbhla believed that she had to change her personality when she became a teacher and suppress her outgoing, bubbly nature. Holland (1997) presents a theory that most people can be categorised into six personality types and that knowledge of these personality types and the model environments can forecast certain outcomes, including vocational choice. In choosing a career change to teaching it is important to have a good knowledge of oneself, one's values, interests and competencies to ensure that one's personality type corresponds well with that choice of career.

5.3.3.2 Working as a substitute or temporary teacher

Due to the lack of permanent contracts in teaching, many CCTs accept temporary contracts or substitute contracts when they start teaching. However, this experience of working as a substitute teacher in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland presented an extra challenge for three interviewees as they found acceptance from colleagues was difficult to attain. Ciara outlined that she was treated very differently as a substitute teacher and Deirdre recalled, *"I think I was seen just as a, I'm a replacement for a while and there was no effort made from anyone really. Um, I found that I suppose a bit challenging as well, because you'd be sitting in the staff room by yourself."*

The sense of isolation, rejection and the lack of a welcoming environment were also experienced by other CCTs in Watters and Diezmann's research study (2015) as forging relationships with colleagues emerged as a strong challenge for CCTs. Déarbhla described the staff room as a lonely place for a non-permanent member of staff, as she is on a temporary contract in her school at present, *"Now, where I'm sitting in my room, I'm with the trainees because it's just like new teachers and trainees ended up in this particular room. That can be lonely because it's such a big staff, the people are carrying on and doing their own thing that sometimes you're just inside in the staffroom and you're looking left and right and going, who will I talk to?"*

This finding corresponds with Anthony and Ord's (2008, 370) study where CCTs reported challenges forming relationships with teaching colleagues and one participant described the school staff room as "very cliquey". Lee (2011) suggests that teaching is a relatively lonely profession as teachers spend much of their day interacting with children or teenagers with limited adult contact. A new work environment can be a daunting experience for

anyone, but it can be particularly challenging for CCTs who may have experienced contrasting values among former colleagues and a different work atmosphere in their previous job.

5.3.3.3 School leadership and management

Two interviewees (13%) highlighted, specifically issues with school management and how that can affect a teacher's desire to remain in the school and teaching profession. Conor outlined his experience of good and bad leadership and the importance of a good relationship between the school principal and a new teacher. *"The first year I came out, I was teaching in [county]. I had fantastic experience in the school I was in, with the principal. That principal retired at the end of that year, and we got a new principal the following year. The tone, the atmosphere in the school, the whole thing changed so much. I didn't stay there. I moved home even though I had a permanent position there."*

As a mature new teacher with life and work experience to hand, it is possible that Conor had the confidence to walk away from this situation, which a new first career teacher may not have. Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2001) suggest that because career changers have experience of other work environments, they are well placed to appreciate how effective collegial and administrative support can assist their teacher induction process. Mayotte (2003) agrees that CCTs are more assertive and capable of voicing their dissatisfaction as a result of their age and experience. Prior life and employment experience provides CCTs with a greater sense of self and confidence in their own ability to remove themselves from a situation that may be damaging to their career and their health and wellbeing.

Cáit spoke of her frustration when seeking promotion within the school and criticised

school management. In her previous job, she admits that she was promoted quite quickly to supervisor but as a teacher, she found that acquiring a promotion was much more challenging. During her teaching career she applied for a seconded position with an educational support service, but because she was an Irish teacher, she was refused the secondment due to the lack of substitute teachers available, *"There was a lot of tears. I was devastated, I have to say. I just couldn't believe they said, no… I am such a valuable asset to the school."* She then applied for three deputy principal positions within the school but was unsuccessful each time. Cáit shared Image 5.6, a broken bridge, as she explains, *"This bridge, too short, is an image of my perception of my career in teaching, in that it didn't seem to matter what I had done or how far I had come, the gap to the next level of my career was never to be closed. That section was reserved and there was no space for me!"*

Image 5.6: Image Shared by Cáit (Interview Participant)

Forging positive relationships with school leaders can be challenging for CCTs, as outlined by Madfes (1990), where many participants in her study reported that they felt administrators did not treat them as professional or in a professional manner.

5.3.3.4 The challenge of the workload of teaching

Nine CCTs from the online survey stated that the workload, both during their ITE and

once qualified made the transition to teaching difficult, *"Felt the transition was very different as on my previous job, little planning was required, and the level of preparation was something I wasn't prepared for"* (OSP #39). Another respondent who had in fact changed career a number of times outlined, *"Possibly the most difficult transition from one job to another has been into teaching. The volume of work that has to be done at home is overwhelming - especially during the first five years"* (OSP #100).

Three survey respondents discussed the challenge of school placement, and how their previous work and/or life experience was not considered during this time. One respondent explained, *"Teaching Practice was a horrible experience! I was a professional adult, highly regarded in my previous career. Going back to university as a student was actually fine but it was things like teaching practice with inspectors and doing the Dip, while being watched and criticised by inspectors, that felt incredibly difficult and frustrating"* (OSP #34). This sentiment was shared by another CCT who outlined, *"I found the course and especially school placement and inspection to be very stressful and felt that very little acknowledgement of previous/life experiences were given by inspectors"* (OSP #48).

A recurring grievance cited by several interviewees in this research study was the amount of paperwork required in teaching which increases a teacher's daily workload. Bríd qualified in the UK and states that Ireland is following suit regarding increased amounts of paperwork. She believes it is having a detrimental impact on the teaching profession. *"Over the past decade that I have been teaching, Ireland has increasingly gone down these ridiculous levels of paperwork in teaching that England has already done. It has destroyed the profession."*

Cáit too remarked on the change since she began teaching *"When I started, there was no such thing as a plan. You went into the classroom, and you taught. The next thing you know you're making plans."* The unexpected high level of paperwork in teaching was also highlighted by CCTs in the study conducted by Ng and Peter (2010) exploring the retention and attrition of alternatively certified teachers in the USA.

After completing her probation year, Fionnuala questioned if teaching was a sustainable career if the level of planning and paperwork for teaching was to be upheld, *"I was like, "I don't know if I can do this for the next thirty years." You know, it just felt -- I was like it's constant stress. It's constant paperwork, there's constant pressure."* Questioning the sustainability of teaching, with heavy workloads and increased pressure is common and was outlined by another CCT in the Watters and Diezmann (2015) study *"Challenges Confronting Career-Changing Beginning Teachers: A Qualitative Study of Professional Scientists Becoming Science Teachers."*

Sinéad also explained in her interview that the level of paperwork expected in teaching was a factor she didn't consider. *"I didn't realize how much - probably my naivety - but I didn't realize how much paperwork would be involved in teaching. I just felt that it was more of the teaching thing."* As a social worker she prepared numerous, detailed reports, but she maintains that there was a purpose to that level of paperwork, which she feels is lacking in her new profession and she questioned its value. *"I think a lot of the paperwork I'm doing is far beyond what I'm actually teaching. I'm teaching better than I'm doing my paperwork in one aspect.... I think it's a lot of, is it worthwhile? Is all of the elements of the paperwork worthwhile?"* This agrees with findings from Lee's (2011) study where one participant stated that the bureaucratic game of paperwork was in fact

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hindering the education process.

Much of a teacher's planning takes place outside of school hours as the school day is taken up with the tasks of teaching and learning and Wilcox and Samaras (2009) hold that new CCTS are not prepared for the range of tasks required outside of the classroom. Déarbhla outlined the difference between teaching and her previous job, in particular that she is no longer in a job where she can walk out the door and not think about it until the next morning. She believes that the summer holidays are a necessary release from the stresses of teaching, even though she did not always believe that, *"I would have been one of these people that would have been like, oh, teachers, holidays, great life. You do need them. I have had burnout at least two of my four years during the summer holidays."* This concurs with other CCTs that outlined how the mental stress of dealing with kids warrants the teacher holidays (Madfes 1990).

As discussed in Section 5.4.3, the workload of teaching is unexpected for many CCTs and proves to be more complex than originally anticipated in comparison to previous jobs held (Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008). Participants in this research study outlined the challenges that they experienced in changing career to teaching. These included the school context, the workload of teaching, family commitments and the financial strain of changing career. They listed their prior job experience, previous experiences working with young people and their life and/or employment skills as elements which assisted their transition to teaching. It has been suggested in other research studies (Lee 2011; Tigchelaar, Vermunt and Brouwer 2012; Pflug 2020) that previous work and life skills also assist in the development and shaping of a new teacher's professional identity. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the

development of professional identity to gain a deeper knowledge of the career transition process for CCTs.

5.6 Theme 4: The Development of Teacher Identity and its Influential Factors

The fourth theme which emerged from the data centred on the development of a professional identity as a teacher. Several factors were outlined by CCTs as influential in developing a new professional identity in their new career. Questions 28-30 on the online survey asked respondents about their professional identity, both as teachers and in their previous job(s). Figure 5.11 displays that out of 107 respondents 101 CCTs (94%) believed they had developed an identity as a teacher. As Holland (1995, 173) asserts, "a person with a clear sense of identity is more likely to accept or find work that is congruent with his or her personal characteristics and to persist in his or her search for a congruent work environment." Therefore, it may be argued that CCTs found it easy to develop their teacher identity as the role of teacher was better suited to their personalities.

Figure 5.11: Development of Teacher Identity
(Online Survey Respondents)

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Of the six online survey participants who felt they had not developed a new professional identity as a teacher, two respondents shared further explanations. These included a lack of opportunity for career development due to school staffing issues, *"It is difficult for my school to accommodate career development and allowing me undertake a Masters in Education due to staffing crisis"* (OSP #25) and the requirement of the Irish qualification for those qualified abroad, *"As I qualified in the UK, I had to get my Irish within a limited timeframe and did not want to go to the time and expense. As a UK national living in Ireland, the Irish teaching profession (Teaching Council) made me feel like a 2nd class citizen"* (OSP #52).

Twelve of the fifteen interviewees (80%) believed that they had developed a new identity as a teacher, but some outlined that it was still a work in progress, and three CCTs; Deirdre, Déarbhla and Máire, felt that they had not developed an identity as a teacher. Both Máire and Deirdre are no longer teaching and Déarbhla has considered leaving the profession on more than one occasion.

5.6.1 Factors Influencing the Development of a Teacher Identity – Online Survey Participants

Respondents were asked to select any of the five factors supplied that they believed assisted the development of their teacher identity. These factors were selected following the literature review. Their answers are displayed in Figure 5.12.
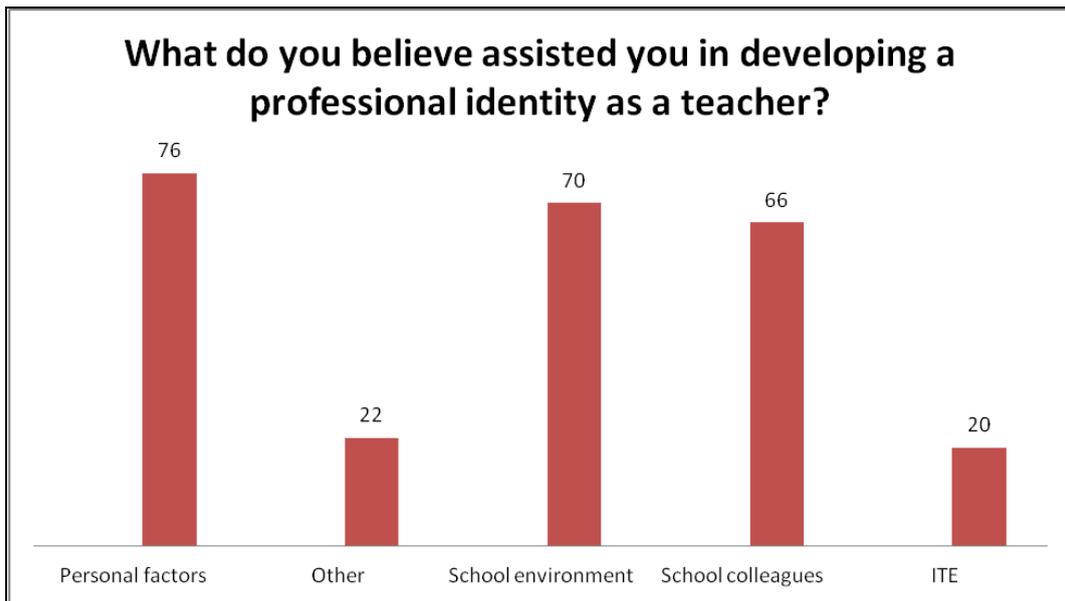
Figure 5.12: Factors Assisting the Development of Professional Identity (Online Survey Respondents)

In this study, personal factors emerged as most influential. Even though the school context and developing relations with colleagues were highlighted as challenges in their career transition, when discussing teacher identity, CCTs cited the school environment and school colleagues as influential in assisting their professional identity development. When asked to expand on their answer if they selected *'Other,'* four respondents cited their previous life and employment experiences as influential, four others stated that CPD had played a role, two CCTs clarified that school leadership had a negative impact and one other respondent outlined that *"I always felt/feel like an outsider as I joined teaching late and struggled to gain a full time role"* (OSP #100). This finding agrees with Green (2015) that previous industry experiences and vocational attitudes are influential factors in identity formation in a study.

5.6.2 The Influence of Personal Factors on Teacher Identity Development

As highlighted in Figure 5.12, personal factors emerged as the strongest influence for

CCTs in developing their teacher identity. In this study, several participants highlighted the influence of their previous experiences which included personal and professional experiences. Four online survey respondents specified their life and professional experiences as influential and Ciara and Déarbhla both recalled personal family experiences as significant in developing their compassionate side as a teacher. Both CCTs experienced a break-up in family life when they were younger and agree that it has impacted how they deal with the students in their care, *"My parents split when I was in secondary school and mental health would've been an issue in our house. They're the students that I gel with the most. I went into teaching because I had gone through that and because people had helped me through it in their own way of teaching styles"* (Déarbhla).

"I think, definitely when I came into teaching, because I had come from, I suppose, a broken home, and I would have come from a home where everything looked perfect on the outside because my dad was a [job title] and my mother was a [job title] and pillars of the community, but I'm very aware that nothing is ever as it seems, usually. I would have been a very big champion of the underdog, I think, early on. The kids in the class that were from very difficult backgrounds, they would have always gravitated towards me" (Ciara).

Ciara also admitted that her background in occupational therapy has influenced the way she views her students and that her primary focus is always on their holistic needs and care. Agreeing with Holland (1995) and the role of family in assisting the development of one's personality, Maebh credits her parents as influential in defining how she interacts with others through her work. She shared some phrases that she has tried to incorporate into her life and work both past and present.

"Annette, I choose sayings over my lifetime, one I remember from my childhood, and I always think of them in relation to my life and advice I would pass on.

'If you don't have anything good to say about someone, don't say anything at all**.' In my life this means to stop and think before I say things, it means being respectful of other people, for me it does not mean suppressing my views but about how I communicate these views in a kind way. This means in my life both in teaching and in my personal life, '**Be Kind.'

*A saying that has become very sentimental to me over my life's career path is, '**Never judge anyone until you have walked in their shoes.'***

My work as a teacher with very marginalized people in society, it makes me very reluctant to judge anyone and to try and treat all people as equal. I truly believe this makes me a kinder person and more compassionate."

This construction of one's personal knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes derived from family identities (Stryker 1968) and the integration of such into one's professional life is an important aspect of professional identity development and concurs with Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok (2013).

5.6.3 The Influence of a Previous Career Identity on Teacher Identity Development

When asked about their previous career identity, seventy-nine online survey respondents (74%) believed they had developed an identity in their previous job, while twenty-eight (26%) stated they did not develop an identity in their previous job/career. Of these seventy-nine respondents that answered yes, fifty-four CCTs (68%) stated that they still retained a connection to this prior career identity and twenty-five (32%) answered no, as displayed in Figure 5.13.
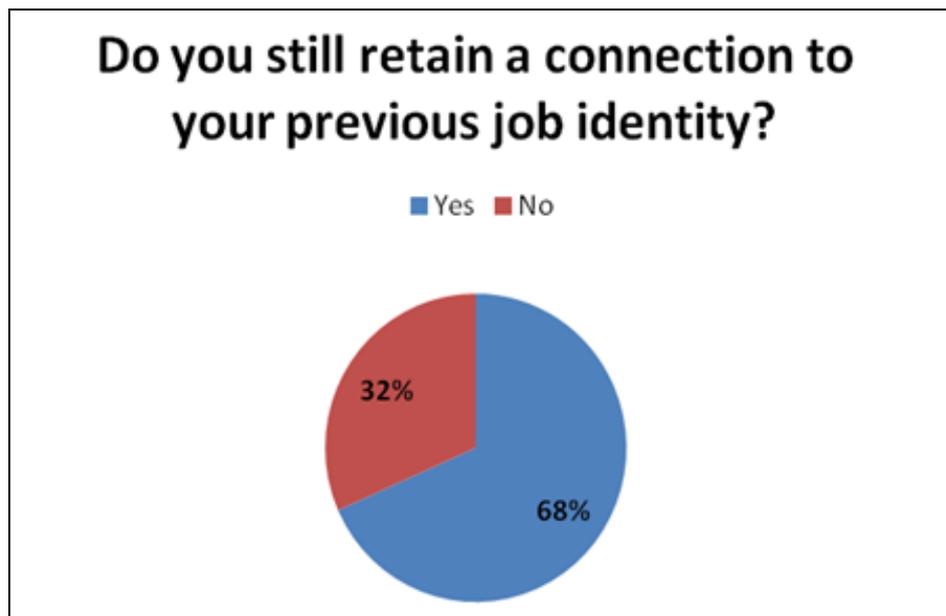
Figure 5.13: Retention of Previous Professional Identity
(Online Survey Respondents)

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Stryker (1968) believes that one's identity is comprised of multiple identities and it would be fair to assume that former career identities still formulate part of a CCT's identity and they bring that to their new identity as a teacher. Respondents were asked to explain how they maintained a connection to their previous identity. Eight explained that they are still in contact with colleagues from their previous job *"I still call in and see my old colleagues and I would still be called for advice on designs"* (OSP #10) and eleven clarified that the connection is maintained because they are still involved in that previous role, either on a part-time basis or in a voluntary capacity *"I was an engineer. I write engineering books now, so I still read and research these areas"* (OSP #104). One participant explained that they still retain their previous professional registration, should they ever wish to return to that role again *"I am a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry. I could go back and work in a lab as I have the qualifications and experience to do so"* (OSP #49).

Twenty-one survey respondents (20%) outlined that they still use the skills they developed

in their previous career in teaching, and this finding also emerged from the interviews. Cáit, Micheál and Brían outlined how their previous jobs and the skills developed through these jobs played a role in shaping their teacher identities. Brían worked in a managerial position in his previous job in the bank and used his knowledge and experience to acquire the role of principal after only four years of teaching. *"I had my eyes on being a principal from day one. Um, and I knew that the management skills I would have would be useful in running a school...... I knew I needed to learn the trade and I did need to spend my time learning about teaching and all that. Um, but at that time, it wasn't a big deal to get principal of a two-teacher school in the country somewhere"* (Brían).

This description from Brían echoes another CCT from a study conducted by Pflug (2020). In that study, exploring how CCTs construct a new professional identity, one participant outlined that part of her identity as a teacher was that of a novice, and she was aware that she had a lot to learn, but like Brían, the managerial skills from her previous job had benefitted her teaching. Wilson and Deaney (2010) hold that mid-career entrants to teaching bring important life skills and experiences and participants from this study also agree. Micheál outlined how he uses aspects from his experience of running his own business to motivate his students. *"I do babble onto the lads a lot. Especially more fifth, sixth years. Boys, you're two months away from employment. The way you're acting now, do you think someone's going to employ you for those bad behaviours and mannerisms? Absolutely not, you'll be out of work fast. I talk to them on an adult not boyish level and that's why I feel I got through business that way."*

In her previous job, Cáit described herself as the "*go-to girl, who got things done and done*

well" and she transferred that characteristic into her teaching role. She believes that as an Irish teacher, she needs to keep her students interested and motivated and that if they enjoy coming to her class, the learning is easy, and the work will be completed. "*I would always finish things off and I'd always see things through, and I'd always make sure everything gets done."*

Even though Fionnuala identifies stronger with her teacher identity now, she still utilises her administrative skills in her teaching, *"I feel I more identify with teaching now. I suppose there's always going to be a bit of that part of it that goes back. If I stepped into an office, straight away I'd go back into office mode and go out and give my dad a hand and straightaway filing, get a system going, organization. I suppose that comes -- I probably brought that into the teaching as well. The organisation end of it is so important but it's definitely skills that I've built up through working in the office."*

This finding resonates with the suggestion by Nielsen (2016) that CCTs can transform their previous professional identities into the profession of teaching. It also agrees with Stryker's (1968) concept of identity salience in that the multiple identities that a person holds can be activated at any given time, depending on the situation. Therefore it is understandable that if necessary, a CCT will enact a previous identity or incorporate it into their new role if it is better suited to the situation.

The range of previous work skills and experience can assist many CCTs in developing positive relationships in their new teaching roles (Williams 2010) and many participants outlined that the interactions they have with their pupils assisted in developing their teacher

identity.

Bríd experienced some challenges in developing her teacher identity and admits that for a time her previous identity as an archaeologist remained prominent, insofar as she felt like an archaeologist who teaches. However, she credits her postgraduate studies in education as significant in cementing her identity as a teacher and Image 5.7 represents the building of her teacher identity.

"My torn-up notebook from my master's studies represents the idea of building a teacher identity. The work put in and the torn-out pages, with the blank pages left behind for me, kind of symbolises how once you start to build something, you don't necessarily know what will be made at the end of it. Similarly, an identity integrating the personal and the professional is never finished but always under construction. The Christmas decoration represents one of things that I love most about teaching, which is the personal connection with children and their families, supporting someone in their journey to becoming an adult. I love taking out my Christmas decorations and thinking of the children who have given them to me over the years and it's one of the things that I love most about teaching."
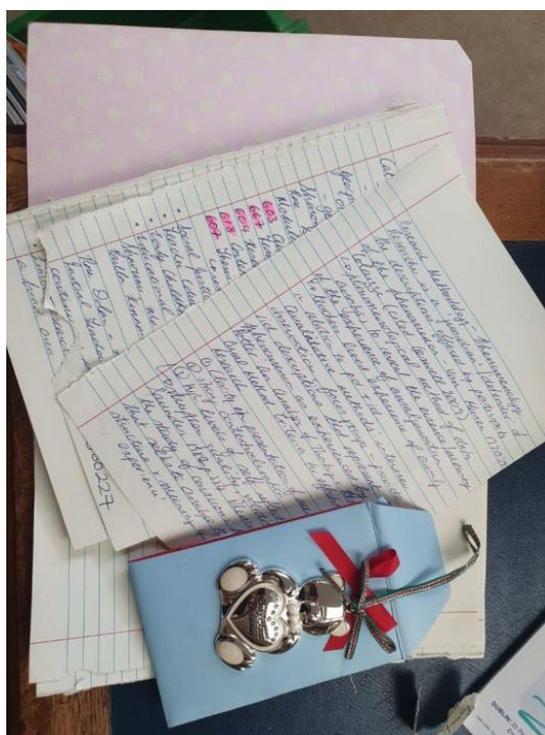
Image 5.7: Photograph Shared by Bríd (Interview Participant)

The relationships that teachers develop with students is an important part of a teacher's

identity, as teachers who have poor relationships with pupils tend to perceive themselves as inadequate in their contribution to the school (Beijaard (1995) cited in Day, et al. (2006a)).

5.6.4 The Influence of Relationships with Colleagues and Pupils on Teacher Identity Development

Other strong influential factors listed by online survey respondents in assisting their teacher identity development, included the school environment and school colleagues, as displayed in Figure 5.12 in Section 5.6.1 earlier in this chapter. For the interviewees, positive interactions with pupils increased their self-confidence as new teachers and promoted a greater sense of their capabilities as teachers, supporting findings from Flores and Day (2006). When interviewees were asked what they believed influenced the development of a new teacher identity, both Conor and Ciara cited without hesitation, their pupils and their interactions with them as a teacher.

"I suppose the children! Even though I have the degree and I have the qualifications or whatever, unless you can actually successfully get something across to kids or impart knowledge to them, you can't really class yourself as a teacher" (Conor).

"I suppose……Interaction with the kids. I like to get things back from the kids. I like to hear what they're thinking, and I like to challenge that. When they bring their own experiences to anything we're talking about, I instantly feel I'm more engaged and they're more engaged. I suppose that's something that influences me personally as a teacher" (Ciara).

Ciara's statement echoes findings from Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012) that pupil interest stimulates strong, positive attitudes among new teachers, which in turn influences

their professional identity development. Sinéad admitted that she found it difficult as a teacher to strike the right balance in forming relationships with her pupils and it was very different to her role as a social worker. Similar to findings by Volkmann and Anderson (1998), CCTs can experience a dilemma in asserting themselves as figures of authority in the classroom while still showing students that they care. *"I suppose, building a relationship with children where you are professionals so you're not their friend...that probably was quite hard. That's probably actually one of my key challenges"* (Sinéad).

This is in contrast to findings by Nielsen (2016) who states that CCTs are more impartial in their teaching and are not as connected to a mothering perspective of teaching. However, Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok (2013) believe that coping with emotions is a challenging process for new teachers as feelings are an inherent part of teaching. Coming from a previous job, where Sinéad treated the children she met with care and compassion, it is natural to transfer this quality into her teacher identity as Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) hold that vocational identity cannot be separate from the caring self. Holland (1997) furthers this concept in stating that a person with a clear sense of identity will seek work that suits his/her personal characteristics.

Déarbhla also admitted that she found it hard to strike a personal and professional balance *"I really thought I'd get on with every student, that I could talk to them about anything but they twist things, especially teenagers. They really do twist things."* This struggle experienced by Déarbhla, concur with findings by Wilson and Deaney (2010), that when the socially constructed teacher identity does not match up to the ideal teacher image, it can cause stress and anxiety in a new teacher. As a result, Déarbhla questioned her career as a teacher following some issues with students and colleagues and she admitted that she

found it hard to cope. Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2012) hold that, the intensity of negative experiences can overshadow other emotions, draw more attention, and create more anxiety for new teachers. This was certainly evident in the interview with Déarbhla as she recalled several negative experiences in each school which impacted on her mental health.

Other interviewees highlighted the influence of colleagues in developing their teacher identity. Eibhlín shared a story of one particular colleague who she believes assisted her teacher identity development. Her first teaching post as an English teacher was covering a maternity leave in a large disadvantaged school in a large city. When the head of the English department took a leave of absence from the job, a retired principal took over the post and Eibhlín maintains that as a new teacher, she felt very welcomed into the community of practice, *"he would come to meetings, and he would say, okay, so who's got some ideas? Then if you had an idea, it didn't matter if you'd been teaching for five minutes or twenty-five years, if it was a good idea, he would run with it. We did some really innovative stuff."* She credits that mentorship and the peer support she received from other new teachers as very formative in her early teaching years, agreeing with Wilcox and Samaras (2009) that interaction with other educators helps to build a community of practice and in turn a teacher's identity (Mayotte 2003).

As outlined in Figure 5.12 in Section 5.6.1, sixty-six survey participants (62%) listed school colleagues as influential factors in the development of their teacher identity. The relationships that new teachers develop with their colleagues in the school community can impact the development of a new teacher identity (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Pflug 2020), and participating in the social context or a community of practice contributes to the creation of a new teacher identity (Wenger 1998; Anthony and Ord 2008; Schultz

and Ravitch 2013). In fact, Day and Gu (2007) maintain that the influences of colleagues and cultures in the school, particularly in the first few years of a new teacher's career are crucial to how they learn to behave and to be as professionals. Participating in the school environment, interacting with pupils and colleagues promotes legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) and assists in developing a teacher identity as a long-term, living relationship between the person and their participation in the community of practice.

5.6.5. The Influence of Accrued Teaching Experience on Teacher Identity Development

Many participants in this study reported that, the longer they are working as a teacher, the more assured they are of their teacher identity. This finding agrees with Wilson and Deaney (2010) that agency is the driving mechanism for changing identities. Remaining in the same setting for a period of time, within a supportive network, enables the CCT to become more involved in the school community. Sinéad believes that her teacher identity is linked to experience and as the months go by, she feels more like a teacher. As new teachers entering the school environment, CCTs learn about their new role by participating in the school community.

Lave and Wenger (1991) maintain that an extended period of legitimate peripherality provides an opportunity to get a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the community. Although Deirdre cautions that if CCTs are not invited or welcomed into this community, their teacher identity is affected, *"I suppose because my, my experience in the [school] was I suppose, overall negative and that it wasn't, I wasn't, uh, uh, accepted or included as such. Um, no, I didn't really; I was just going in just doing my classes and going home again. Um, that was it, I wasn't really, um, embracing, embracing, um, the*

whole identity of being a teacher, because I didn't feel like a teacher because I wasn't involved in staff meetings or, as I said, I hardly, I hardly met any staff." Greater participation in the community of practice enables new teachers to become master practitioners and increase their sense of identity (Lave and Wenger 1991). As a new teacher, if access to this community of practice is denied or if legitimate peripheral participation is limited, a new teacher's motivation to remain within the profession is affected and can in turn lead to attrition from the profession.

5.7 Theme 5: Attrition and Retention

The final theme will discuss the factors which influence the attrition of CCTs from the teaching profession. However, as the majority of research participants are in fact still teaching, the factors which have contributed to their retention are also presented. The first part of this section will outline the factors which have led to the attrition of CCTs participating in this research study. Section 5.7.1 will present the data from the online survey in which ten participants share the factors that have influenced their attrition and Section

5.7.2 will present the individual stories of the five interviewees and the factors which led to their attrition from teaching. To conclude, Section 5.7.3 will discuss the factors which have assisted the retention of CCTs in the teaching profession.

5.7.1 Factors Influencing Attrition from the Profession – Online Survey Participants

The final section of the online survey explored attrition and retention among CCTs. Respondents were asked if they were still working as a teacher, to which ninety-seven (90.7%) answered yes. The ten respondents who answered 'no' (two of whom were also interviewees), were asked to provide their reasons. Eight options were provided, and

participants could select more than one option.

Figure 5.14 displays the reasons provided by those who have left the teaching profession.
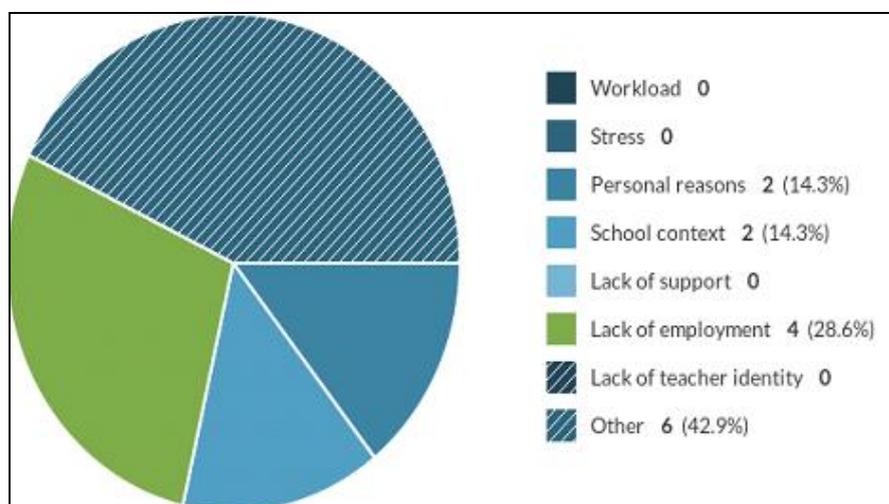
Figure 5.14: Reasons for Attrition from the Teaching Profession
(Online Survey Participants)

The strongest reason selected was *'Other.'* Respondents were given the option to further expand the *'Other'* reasons, which included relocation to another country, caring for a terminally ill parent and three other respondents explained their reasons below.

"Money! Sick and f***ing tired of doing the CID[11] dance" (OSP #7).

"School culture silenced people like me who expressed constructive but possibly critical views- challenged the system and advocated for less privileged pupils" (OSP #70).

"I was pregnant with my second child and couldn't afford to receive maternity pay on a ten- hour contract" (OSP #103).

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[11] CID - Contract of Indefinite Duration

5.7.2 Factors Influencing Attrition from the Profession – Interview Participants

Fifteen CCTs participated in the interview phase of the study, four of whom, Deirdre, Máire, Eibhlín, and Cáit are no longer working as teachers, and Maebh works part-time as a teacher. Their individual reasons for attrition are very different and include costs and benefits, goals and interests, employment opportunities, lack of promotion possibilities and family circumstances. Each story is unique to the participants and more insightful when presented as an individual story rather than grouped under a common theme. Each story of attrition is presented under the categories specified by Weldon (2018), as discussed in Chapter 3, the Literature Review Section 3.9.

5.7.2.1 Máire – The compatibility effect

Máire qualified as a primary school teacher in 2014, after working as an accountant for 15 years. However, she never sought a teaching post following qualification, and she attributes this decision primarily to financial reasons. This concurs with findings from Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) that salary and conditions of service influence teacher attrition. As a new teacher in 2014, Máire would have been placed on a different pay scale to other teachers qualified prior to 2011. She admits that starting out on a lower salary as a mature teacher with a mortgage and bills was not financially viable, so she accepted a part-time accountancy job the summer she finished her teacher education programme to replenish her finances and subsequently decided not to pursue a teaching job.

"So, I was single and had a, had a mortgage and had bills. So, it would have been, it would have been kind of tough going and starting on it, you know a twenty-four-year- olds salary   Starter salary! That was definitely a reality side of it. And, um, and then I think if I absolutely loved the job and felt it was my vocation that I really had to be in, I would

have made sacrifices to do it, but I think it just didn't feel strong enough. And I also think it was such a refreshing experience for me. That I think then when I did kind of go back into the finance world and it was kind of nice to be back in it as well."

Another CCT who completed the online survey also highlighted their position as a lower paid teacher (LPT) and stated that they would not be afraid to change career again, having already done so, "*It's a possibility seeing as I have done it already, I wouldn't be afraid to do it again. Also, because I am a LPT on a miserable pension, I might go back to the private sector if the right opportunity presented*" (OSP #10).

Although Máire does not believe that her previous career identity impacted the development of her teacher identity, she outlines that she struggled with asserting the authoritative part of her personality in teaching and that if she had been younger when changing career, it may have been easier. *"I think maybe if I had developed that different personality, maybe when I was younger or something it would have, been more of a familiar part of who I am."* Máire felt unsuited to the role of teacher and decided to leave teaching as a result (Weldon 2018). She also believes that as an older CCT, she never fully developed her teacher identity, and this also influenced her attrition. Her previous career identity assumed the hierarchy in identity salience as she returned to her previous career (Stryker 1968).

"One thing I did find a challenge for me personally, was like, I was 36 when I made that change. And then I was like, between 36 & 38 doing it. I did find developing my teacher personality kind of a challenge because it was somebody that wasn't familiar to me. If you know what I mean! I tried to explain the rules and then being maybe more firm and that

side of things, it was definitely a very new personality to me. And one I wasn't familiar with; I did find that kind of ...a challenge that I wasn't expecting."

Máire's explanation concurs with Holland's (1997) theory that certain personality types are more comfortable and better suited to matching work environments. She returned to her previous job as an accountant the summer after she qualified, and she outlines that financial factors also influenced that decision. "*So, after I qualified, I went back that summer to kind of just replenish my funds and I was planning on working for the year and then maybe thinking about doing the dip the following year. But I think when I went back and I kind of was getting involved and... I'd have to be very honest and say money was definitely a factor."* Qualifying in 2014 placed Máire on a different salary scale to teachers who qualified prior to 2011. Borman and Dowling (2008) suggest that a teacher's decision to leave the profession is based on the evaluation of the costs and benefits. Changing career to teaching incurs a huge financial cost to CCTs as many leave full-time employment to pursue their studies. If teaching does not provide enough benefits to offset the costs, then early attrition is much more probable.

5.7.2.2 Deirdre – The choice effect

Although Deirdre felt that she had begun to develop her teacher identity when she worked as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher abroad, she believes that her negative experiences in Irish schools as a temporary teacher did not allow her to develop it further and contributed to her decision to leave teaching. Gallant and Riley (2014) identified school culture as an influential factor in attrition among early career teachers and Deirdre outlined that she wasn't included in staff meetings and as a result didn't feel like a teacher.

"I just thought, but there was no real support or induction in that school. Um, I think I was just seen a short term, and no one really bothered. I suppose it didn't really entice me to look really hard or maybe like I did, I was offered jobs, but then again, like [my sister] I was into the horses, I'm into farming and I wanted to stay closer to home. I was getting jobs in the West or in the Midlands, but I didn't want that. So, when I wasn't getting my ideal job, I suppose I wasn't, um, I wasn't too bothered. I wasn't, I didn't want to go. I didn't want to travel."

She also found it difficult to secure a permanent second level teaching job. She eventually found a job locally in further education and opted to leave teaching to pursue this alternative career described by Weldon (2018) as the Choice Effect. *"All I was getting was maternity cover or temporary leave and that sort of thing, I wasn't getting anything permanent. And then obviously I wasn't being paid during the summer holidays. I was teaching English during the summer holidays and a job came up in [county]. Was it in [county]? Yeah, a job came up in [county] then for a further education, further private, further education provider, like a QQI centre, um, delivering, um, training to adults. So, I applied for that and, um, I stayed then and I'm still in further education."*

In discussing her professional identity, Deirdre admits that she retained her previous professional identity from marketing, and she utilises it now in her current job, *"Yes, I do think I had a professional identity and it's something that I think I still have because I brought everything in that role to my current role. Um, and I use it on an ongoing basis, and I've increased my skills and I've increased my identity through two different methods, like networking and training and, um, just the whole professional network. And so, I think, yeah, definitely I did."* This is in line with Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice,

that a person with a clear sense of identity is therefore, more likely to find work suited to their personality. This also agrees with Stryker's concept of identity salience, that the self is composed of several identities and that depending on the situation a certain identity will take hierarchy. In Deirdre's case, she did not believe her new teacher identity was strong enough and therefore it did not take a hierarchy and she decided to leave teaching.

5.7.2.3 Eibhlín – The demand effect

Eibhlín had no such difficulties establishing her teacher identity and believes it is an inherent part of her personality (Holland 1995) even though she has not taught in a school for at least five years. *"I still see myself as an English teacher. I can't remember the last time I taught, but it's probably five years ago. For 10 years, I was at home with my kids, but I'm always an English teacher. I'd say I'll always be one in my head. I loved being a teacher."*

The lack of job stability and financial factors were cited as reasons by seven survey respondents that they might consider leaving the profession. Another survey respondent clarified the need for greater job security in teaching, *"This is not definite. I am approaching my mid 30s and recently married. There are no job prospects in Dublin or otherwise so we can't qualify for a mortgage and since I am constantly covering maternities and career breaks, I don't qualify to be fully paid for maternity leave of my own. I'm giving it one more year before I look elsewhere for security"* (OSP #22). This echoes other research studies that job security is a primary factor in teacher attrition (Struyven and Vanthournout 2014; Glazer 2018).

Described as the Demand Effect by Weldon (2018), Eibhlín found it difficult to secure employment and is no longer working in the teaching profession. The primary reason

Eibhlín found it difficult to acquire a full-time teaching position was as a result of issues with the Teaching Council recognising her teaching qualifications as she qualified as a teacher in a different country. Her qualification as an English teacher was recognised but not her French teaching qualification. When she first moved to Ireland, she attended Alliance Française one night a week and sat the internationally recognised exams set by the French government. Several years later she completed a Masters in Linguistics while living abroad for a period of time, yet when she returned to Ireland, she still encountered registration issues. *"Then we came back, and the Teaching Council wouldn't recognise the French. They recognized that I did a masters and they recognized that I'd lived in a French-speaking environment, but because what I studied was Linguistics, even though it was about the acquisition of another language, it wasn't Literature. They charged me €200 for the lovely chance to say, No, you can't do it."*

Eventually Eibhlín decided to retrain and completed a higher diploma in software development which then led her to complete her PhD. She currently works with a third level teacher education institute as an academic developer. However, she admits that no job has given her the same pleasure as teaching. *"Whereas, even in the job I'm in now, I like the job. I've got great people that I work with, but I don't feel that sense of — I mean, essentially if you put me in a classroom, you can throw anything at me, and I feel like I would cope. I feel like that's just who I am, and I have it. I worked for a year and a half in the civil service because of not being able to get work in teaching, and I never felt comfortable. In 18 months, there wasn't a single day where I was like, "Yes, this is it. This is me," definitely."*

Eibhlín shared a story rather than an image to describe her teaching journey. *"I don't really have a saying or a symbol, but I do have one story from a class I taught five years ago that simultaneously filled me with joy and broke my heart. They were fifth years, and I came in on a maternity replacement In short, we got on really well, they were creative and funny and open and absolutely delightful. Their final summer test marks were great, and we kept in touch on Edmodo*[12]*, even after I left. The part of the story I really want to share is that they wrote a petition, completely without my knowledge, and presented it to the principal, to ask if I could be kept on as their teacher. I'd never felt anything like it. I really, really loved those girls. Totally and utterly heartbroken not to be kept on! And when I asked the principal did he receive it, he shrugged and said, oh, the petition? Oh, they all do that!*

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I've never had a class do that before, and in fact I don't think I've ever heard of one doing it. And here's the thing. We had fun, but we did LOADS of work. It wasn't about being friends with them, or enjoying their company (although I did, and am still friends with one who is studying at the college (third level institute) *where I now work); it was about mutual respect and the feeling they had, that I was a good teacher."*

It is important that CCTs are aware of the employment possibilities before embarking on a career change to teaching. Bauer, Thomas and Sim (2017) found in their study that many participants had not researched employment prospects in teaching before changing career and they suggest that mature age CCTs are aware of the employment situation in teaching before committing to a teacher education programme. A better knowledge of these

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[12] A global education network used for communication and resources by students and teachers (new.edmodo.com)

employment opportunities in teaching could assist in reducing attrition among early career teachers.

5.7.2.4 Cáit – The environment effect

Cáit is currently on a career break from her school and works part-time as a placement tutor on a teacher education programme in a large university. She also works as a substitute Irish teacher in some of her local secondary schools when she is available. In line with the Environment Effect (Weldon 2018), Cáit outlines that the lack of promotion opportunities and the sexism she experienced within the school context all contributed to her decision to move out of teaching full-time. *"I was tipping forty before I had ever experienced sexism. I'd heard about it. I've really experienced sexism. It's hilarious…. like wow! I literally got patted on the back going good girl, and then the board of management said at one of the dos 'we'd like to thank all of the men and girls who teach in this school.' I hadn't been called a girl in twenty odd years. It is the epitome of sexism in there and I found that…. didn't bother me. Actually, probably coming towards the end of my time there, it was beginning to bother me."*

As an Irish teacher, Cáit was told she was needed in the classroom more, as there is a lack of Irish language teachers. She also feels further restricted as an Irish teacher because there is no opportunity to travel abroad to teach. *"When I think of all the years I spent in university, the money I've spent, the brains I have, my skills in life, I could have been or done anything. I can't even travel with this job. There's not much of a demand for an Irish teacher in Dubai."*

Similar to Cáit, the school context has also been identified by Struyven and Vanthournout

(2014) as a source of stress and frustration and contributes to a teacher's decision to leave the profession. It is also suggested by Lindqvist, Nordänger and Carlsson (2014) that a positive work environment and better working conditions could assist in the prevention of teacher attrition. Unable to establish legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) and full membership of her community of practice would undoubtedly cause Cáit to question her identity and inevitably make the decision to leave the community.

Cáit has no intention of teaching full-time again and although happy in her role as a placement tutor, she is open to other career opportunities, *"At the moment, I'll stay in education because I can, and it's easy, and [university] is there for me and the substitute teaching, it's just there for me and it's easy. It's not hard, there's no challenge to it. To move now at this stage into another field, you're talking huge pay cuts, you're talking hours that might not suit my lifestyle because I've got a nice lifestyle right now."* Despite the fact that her children are older now and more independent, she admits she has no interest in returning to a job which involves a long workday and a long commute. *"If it means getting up at five o'clock in the morning to go work, no! Why would I? At this age, I don't have to. It would have to be something very interesting to make me give up my life, a little comfortable lifestyle that I have right now. Like in the line of Pretty Woman, "I say who, I say when, and I say how much."*

5.7.2.5 Maebh – The personal effect

Like Cáit, Maebh also works part-time in a special school as a home economics teacher for pupils aged 12-18 years. This arrangement suits Maebh's life now as she is in her fifties and her husband is also semi-retired. Maebh has no plans to return to teaching full-time

and after completing a course in restorative justice last year she is now considering moving into a different field again. *"I have thought, you know, I've talked about myself going forward. Do you know, um, I've talked about a few things I'd like to do right? Going into the next stage of my life, um, and I'm sort of interested in the mediation. Um, but so I might go back to [third level institute] to do more in it. Um, but I'm also thinking of, um, sort of doing food and safety training with adults as a, as um, just as a whole working with a company, just doing it."*

Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) suggest that personal reasons and job related motives such as those outlined by Maebh, factor in a teacher's decision to exit the profession. In addition to this, Borman and Dowling (2008) hold that attrition from teaching as an older teacher is also attributed to family circumstances and the desire to spend more time with children or spouses, which was also provided as a reason by Maebh. This reason for attrition was termed the Personal Effect by Weldon (2018).

5.7.3 Factors Influencing Retention in the Profession

As there were only thirteen out of 112 participants (12%) who had left the teaching profession after changing career, it was important to also highlight the factors which had assisted in the retention of the other ninety-nine (88%) participating CCTs. This section will present the data gathered from the online survey and the interviews outlining the factors which influenced retention in the teaching profession. Online survey participants were asked to rank their satisfaction in deciding to remain in the teaching profession and seventy-two participants selected either satisfied or extremely satisfied, accounting for 75% in total, as displayed in Figure 5.15.
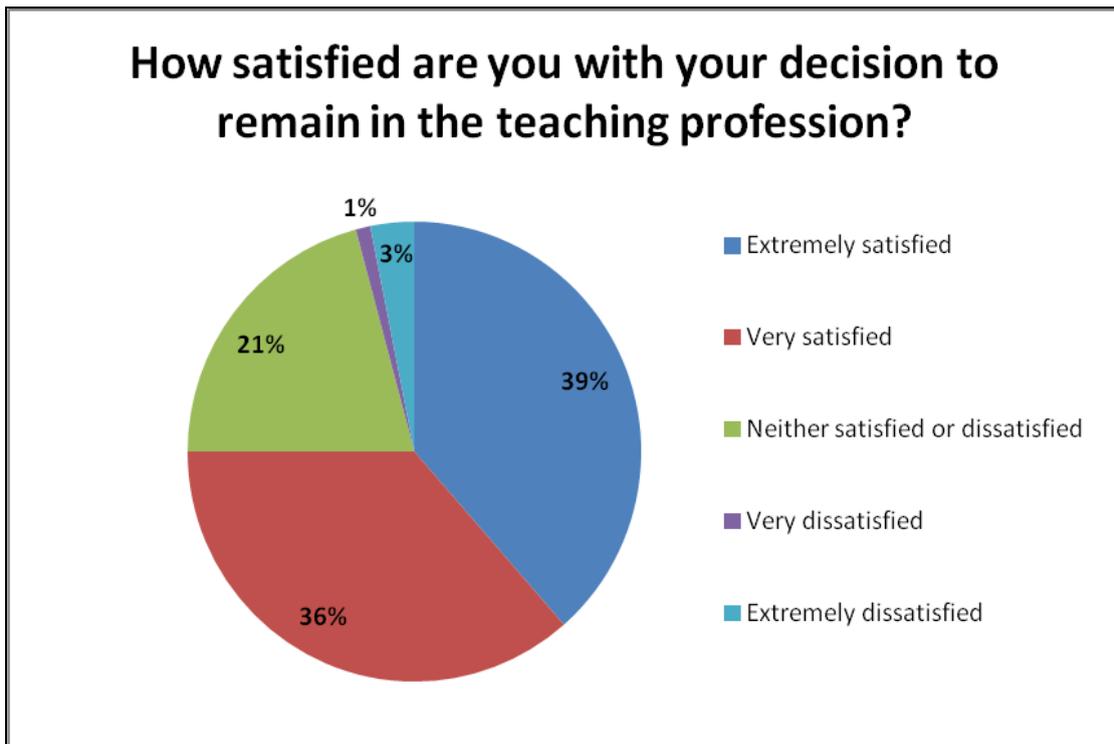
Figure 5.15: Satisfaction with the Decision to Remain in the Teaching Profession (Online Survey Participants)

During each interview, participants were encouraged to discuss if they were happy to remain in the teaching profession or would they consider changing career again. The responses received were mixed. However, the factors that emerged as influential in their retention were the work-life balance that teaching offered to CCTs, the positive interactions experienced by CCTs within the school context, personal and professional identity, and the maintenance of wellbeing as a teacher.

5.7.3.1 The work-life balance of teaching as an influential factor in assisting retention in the profession

Micheál outlined that teaching provides him with a better work life balance than business and he is happy to stay in the profession. *"I like teaching at the moment. I like the school I'm in. They're very nice staff. The principal is very supportive, a good woman. I would not*

like to think that I'll stay as a teacher. I'd like to move into school management. I would like to use that MBA that I went after.... As it stands, yes, I like teaching, I like teaching, but I never say never! Whatever opportunity comes my way, I weigh up the averages, is it a better opportunity or not? What I love about teaching is there's a good family-life balance to it. That's what I really love."

Brían agrees that despite the intense workload, teaching offers him a better work-life balance than his previous job in the bank and teaching provides good rest periods in the form of school holidays. Brían shared Image 5.8, which displays the ying and yang symbol to denote this. He explains, *"For me I mention **synchronicity** – I felt that my work life and private life needed to have more of this and felt my previous career did not sit with my own personal values."*

Image 5.8: Image Shared by Brían (Interview Participant)

This finding agrees with Bauer, Sim and Thomas (2017) that teaching provides many career changers with the financial stability and a better work-life balance that they desire as mature age professionals.

5.7.3.2 The school context as an influential factor in assisting retention in the profession

Siobhán outlined that the school environment and her relationships with members of the school community contributes to her happiness as a teacher and her retention in the profession. *"I'm 16 years there now. I've about 10 to go. I'm happy in it. I'm acting principal at the moment. My principal's on a career break. So, I've made good progression through the school. I've had a lot of different responsibilities. I enjoy the staff; I get on well with the pupils and parents. So yeah, no, I'm very happy. And I'd like to think that I'd be there till I finish."*

Like Siobhán, good relationships with school staff were mentioned by several participant CCTs as important factors in remaining within the teaching profession. This finding supports Lave and Wenger's (1991) belief of a strong membership in a community of practice assisting identity development and retention in that role. Ingersoll, Merrill and May (2016) found that high levels of leadership support assisted in teacher retention. Conor acknowledges two individuals who have been a great source of support to him throughout his teaching career, a colleague he met during his first-year teaching and one of the staff at the teacher education college he attended. However, he outlines how working alongside challenging colleagues can impact a teacher's retention in the school and perhaps the profession. *"I did my second-year teaching and the principal that we had, nearly cost me my career the second year. I left at the end of that school year and five other teachers left with me. We can't all have been wrong."*

Ciara shared a similar experience from her previous school. *"I found the last six years very hard, very hard in the place I was in; very hard. It was an awful atmosphere. Bullying was rampant; rampant. When I rang my INTO rep, I was told to read page 1 to page 30 of such*

and such, relationships with your manager- relationships with your principal. No use at all. It wasn't just me. I find the kids fabulous. I still love teaching kids. I still love being around kids. I still love the way they think. I'm not tired of that, but I find the adults in teaching can be hard at times, to be honest."

The work environment is a significant factor which contributes to the retention of new teachers. If teachers feel supported and valued in their work environment they are likely to become better at teaching and engaging with professional development (Buchanan, et al. 2013) and ultimately remain within the teaching profession.

5.7.3.3 Identity as an influential factor in assisting retention in the profession

Although not quite a 'serial careerist' as described by Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003), Micheál has changed career twice. He qualified first as a teacher but left due to lack of employment. *"In 2008 that school closed down because the recession was just about to kick in, but so many families were leaving the area we couldn't stay no. It was the reverse cylindrical move of a recession, school closed down, I had been applying for work in the teaching environment and couldn't secure nothing, and jobs weren't plentiful at all."* He then ran his own business for ten years, before he returned to teaching to ease financial pressure when he began a Master of Business Administration (MBA) course. Micheál believes that despite his many years out of the classroom, his identity as a teacher never left him, *"when I was at college, I was driven to be a teacher. I was really into it, I was really involved, still am, Jesus, that has never left me, I think you'll always be a teacher!"* Despite this, he admits he is a very motivated and driven individual and does not dismiss the possibility of changing career again. Throughout his interview, Micheál used the term 'drivers' frequently. *"I just use drivers. I have personal drivers and I flog those drivers to*

death until I find another driver to get me out on to the next."

Lindqvist, Nordänger and Carlsson (2014) hold that critical moments that contribute to career decisions are often influenced by an identity and interaction with others in the culture one lives in or has lived in. Micheál attributes his home parish and community as a main driver or influence on his career path. Image 5.9 is the image Micheál shared to represent his career change. This image serves as a reminder to h i m that despite where his career takes him, it is important to reflect back on where he came from, his identity and the value of that community that once surrounded him, grounded him, encouraged him and assisted him in formulating his personality and identity (Holland 1995). As he explains, *"You always come back to where you were born, to where you were reared, and you sort of stay aground that way."*

Image 5.9: Photograph Shared by Micheál (Interview Participant)

Micheál's description above echoes Lave and Wenger's (1991)'s theory of situated learning, discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.3. The family and local community are the first

social communities that many young people are exposed to and invited to participate in. Participation in these social communities contributes to the development of a person as a whole and provides a start point for an individual's learning and identity, which will further grow and develop throughout his/her life and career.

5.3.3.4 Personal wellbeing as an influential factor in assisting retention in the profession

The sentiment that teaching is all about learning both on the part of the teacher, and the student was discussed by Aoife. She shared a photo of an orchid growing in her kitchen which she admits reminds her very much of teaching. She recalled how caring for an orchid, like teaching is a tricky balance and as a teacher you must care for yourself as well as your pupils and acknowledge that you too will make mistakes but you too will learn from them, and the results will be so rewarding.

"It's not an easy road and you have to tend to the teaching, and you have to tend to yourself as you would have to tend to an orchid plant. It's about finding this really tricky balance between, am I watering it? Am I over watering it? Look, I have killed it. Right, here we go again.... next plant! You're learning as you go as well, but that the flowers are very, very beautiful and very striking and very unusual, and that when you do get them, it makes a lovely show and I think that that's the thing with teaching which is I think you have to do an awful lot of minding of yourself as well in teaching, and I think a lot of people aren't aware of that, but I think if you do cultivate all the teaching and the pupils, you can get the lovely show like the flowers. It's not always easy, like minding an orchid isn't always easy" (Aoife).

Image 5.10: Photograph Shared by Aoife (Interview Participant)

Aoife's consideration for teachers attending to their own wellbeing echoes what Acton and Glasgow (2015) say in that, a focus on the wellbeing and wellness of teachers will help to better retain and sustain teachers in their professional work. This will in turn enhance and enrich the work that they do in the classroom with their students.

5.8 The Possibility of Further Career Change for CCTs

The online survey also asked participants if they would consider changing career again and forty-one of the ninety-seven CCTs (42%) who have remained in teaching answered yes as displayed in Figure 5.16. One participant, still working in the teaching profession did not answer Q.37 'Do you think you will change career again?'
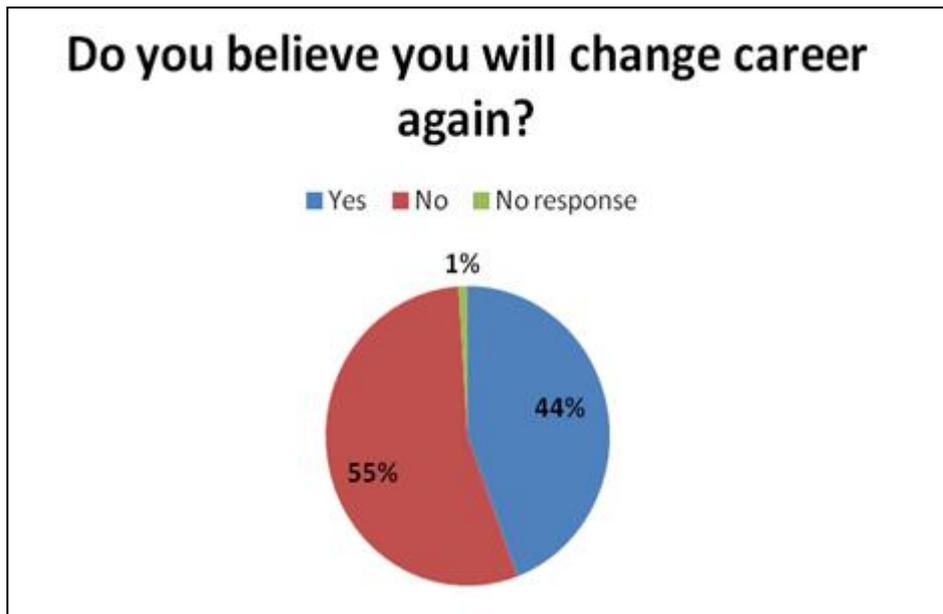
Figure 5.16: Likelihood of CCTs Changing Career Again
(Online Survey Participants)

Fifteen of these respondents (37%) that answered yes outlined that the changing nature of teaching, burnout, the increasing workload, and the impact this has on their health and wellbeing would be factors in their decision to change career again. One respondent stated, *"The changes in teaching being forced on teachers are going to ramp up as the years go on so I can't say for sure that I won't change"* (OSP #51) which was agreed with by another CCT, *"The profession has changed immensely since I started teaching, a mere 17 years ago. Schools and teachers must solve all societal problems. The pace of work has hugely increased. The new Junior Cycle has created* (sic) *untold amount of stress and still is"* (OSP #35)

As discussed throughout this research study, Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) classified CCTs into three categories: the 'Homecomers', the 'Converted' and the 'Unconverted'. The first two categories were discussed in Theme 1: Motivations for Changing Career. The final category, the 'Unconverted' describes CCTs that are no longer interested in teaching

but are using their teaching qualification to move into an area of educational reform. Although the participants of this study do not fall neatly into this category, there are some characteristics of the 'Unconverted' that were echoed in the findings of this study. Crow, Levine and Nager (1990) highlighted that the CCTs in this category had a strong desire to make a difference in education, but not necessarily through teaching. Although CCTs in this research study have opted to remain in the profession, they have also not ruled out a move out of the classroom into a different area of education. Ten online survey respondents (9%) stated that they would consider moving to a different area of education other than teaching, as one respondent explains, *"I may go into management or lecturing I can't see myself working as a classroom teacher in my 50s or 60s"* (OSP #14).

Several interview participants expressed a similar consideration, "*I'm happy to stay in teaching, I might in the future go on, later in my career, go to the [educational support service] or something like that, I don't see myself going back, definitely not into the private sector. No way. Whatever I would do, it'll be educational linked, but where I am at the moment, I'm very happy"* (Aoife).

"I don't know if mainstream is 100% what I want to do forever. I'm only one year in it, not even, so I can't say that for sure. I'll definitely give it more time, but I don't know if I've fully discovered my niche. I went into teaching initially as well with the thought of teaching children with disabilities. I loved working with disability, and I would've volunteered a good bit in disability. That was my initial thing as well. That was one of my key goals I suppose to do that" (Sinéad).

"No, I'd say I'll always teach. I love teaching. I'd say to my husband constantly, "If we won

the lotto -- He's always like, if we won the lotto, what would you do? I was like, I'd still teach. Probably go part time, [laughs] but I couldn't see myself giving it up completely. I love the classroom. I love my job. If I did do something else, it would be open a business in conjunction with teaching. I don't know. Maybe making educational resources or something but it would be in conjunction with teaching" (Fionnuala).

"I don't see myself leaving the school environment, but I think I might go (sic) *upscale. Like I said into chaplaincy, or career guidance or even management would be something that I'd look at. That I can be more on the ground and not so much in the classroom environment"* (Déarbhla).

Because of their experience in completing a career change, it is plausible that CCTs would not feel daunted in changing career again. As suggested by Richardson and Watt (2005) the range of skills developed in a previous career provides CCTs with an option of returning to their previous career if teaching does not prove satisfactory. Alternatively, the new skills developed through teaching enables CCTs to utilise their resourcefulness and new skills, should they wish to change to a new career again.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of this research study. The first section of the chapter outlined the details of the online survey participants, including details of gender, age, teaching sector, length of teaching career and their previous job(s) before qualifying as a teacher. Similar details of the fifteen interview participants were also provided before the themes which emerged from the data were presented and discussed. The first theme, CCTs' *Motivations for Changing Career to Teaching* presented

information provided by participants as to why they left their previous job and chose teaching as a new career. Under this theme the specific factors of a long-held desire to become a teacher, family influences, crucial events, prior positive teaching and learning experiences, the loss of employment, loss of interest in a previous job and job security were all identified as significant motivating factors for CCTs in this research study.

The second theme, *Expectations of Teaching as a New Career*, highlighted that some CCTs' expectations of teaching were largely influenced by their own personal memories of school. Other CCTs admitted that their expectations of pupil behaviour and the workload of teachers were somewhat unrealistic before they commenced teaching, while others held more realistic expectations based on their own personal and professional experiences of working with young students and children. The third theme focused on the *Transition to a New Career as a Teacher*. Although student behaviour and classroom management are often cited as challenges of transitioning to the teaching profession (Powers 2002; Tigchelaar, Brouwer and Korthagen 2008; Wilcox and Samaras 2009; Wagner and Imanuel-Noy 2014), it did not emerge as a finding in this research project. The majority of online survey participants in this study did not find the transition challenging and attributed their prior job and life experience as significant in assisting the career transition. However, interview participants articulated some challenges they experienced in their career change. The most cited were financial challenges and family commitments, adjusting to a new work context and collegial relationships and the unexpected workload associated with teaching.

Theme 4 explored *The Development of Teacher Identity and its Influential Factors*. The findings show that the majority of participants felt they had developed a new professional

identity as a teacher. Participants identified personal factors, previous career identities and experiences, relationships with colleagues and pupils and accrued teaching experience as strong influencing factors in developing a professional identity as a CCT, congruent with each facet of the theoretical framework, comprised of Stryker's (1968) theory of identity, Holland's (1995) theory of vocational choice and Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning.

Finally, the factors which participants believe contributed to their attrition from or retention in teaching were presented. Thirteen of the 112 participants are no longer teaching. A lack of employment emerged as the strongest reason for teacher attrition among the online survey participants while costs and benefits, goals and interests, employment opportunities, lack of promotion possibilities and family circumstances emerged as significant factors among the interviewees. In discussing the retention of CCTs in the teaching profession, positive relationships with school staff and pupils emerged as a significant factor in supporting CCTs to remain in the teaching profession. Although the majority of participants were satisfied with their decision to qualify as a teacher, many CCTs remain open to the possibility of changing career again.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, will outline recommendations for teacher education programmes, school administration and teaching staff of CCTs. It will also outline further research opportunities in relation to CCTs in Ireland.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the experiences of primary and post-primary career change teachers (CCTs) in Ireland and the factors which influenced their attrition from teaching. Data was gathered from 112 research participants through both an online survey and fifteen semi-structured interviews. A mixed method approach was adopted to examine CCTs' motivations for changing career, their expectations of teaching as a new career, the challenges of changing career and the development of a new professional identity as a teacher. The factors which influenced their attrition from the teaching profession were outlined and the role that professional identity played in that decision. This chapter will present the conclusions garnered from this research and will outline a number of recommendations based on these conclusions and finally will identify areas for further research in this area.

6.2 Research Questions

To date there has been a dearth of research conducted in Ireland on the topic of CCTs and this study sought to bridge this gap through posing these questions:

- What are the main factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which influence their decision to join the teaching profession?

- What are the main challenges, identified by CCTs, in transitioning to a new career as a teacher?

- What factors support the development of a teacher identity among CCTs?

- What are the main personal and/or professional factors, identified among CCTs in Ireland, which impact their attrition from the teaching profession?

- What role does professional identity as a CCT play in the decision to leave the profession?

These research questions will form the basis for the conclusions and are organised below using each relevant research question as a heading.

6.2.1 The Main Factors Identified Among CCTs in Ireland which Influence Their Decision to Join the Teaching Profession

This research study highlighted several motivating factors among CCTs in choosing teaching as a new career. The predominant motivations included a long-held dream of becoming a teacher, the influence of family members who were also teachers, a crucial life event, positive prior teaching and learning experiences, loss of employment, loss of interest in their previous job and a desire for better job security.

Thirty-one online survey participants (29%) and nine interview participants (60%) stated that they had always considered teaching as a career but for various reasons had opted to pursue a different career path. These participants were categorised as the 'Homecomers' (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990) and mirrored findings from other research studies (Chambers 2002; Anthony and Ord 2008). Family members also proved a strong influential factor as again, nine interview participants (60%) had close family members who were teachers. This finding is in line with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning. Growing up in a family where parents, older siblings or other significant adults such as aunts, uncles or grandparents worked as teachers, immersed CCTs in the profession of

teaching and familiarised them with the environment of teaching before ever setting foot in a classroom. Therefore, when choosing a new career path, teaching was an option that CCTs understood and were somewhat confident that they had good knowledge of the job in advance.

CCTs categorised as the 'Converted' (Crow, Levine and Nager 1990) highlighted that a crucial life event such as the death of a parent or a medical illness prompted a change in career for them. Crucial events in a person's life will most certainly inspire a re-evaluation of one's own life and encourage the identification of areas that are not providing fulfilment in their lives. Changing jobs is one way to respond to a crucial event, allowing CCTs to achieve a new start and perhaps a more fulfilling aspect of their lives.

Participants' prior teaching and learning experiences also influenced the decision to pursue teaching as a new career, as forty-seven online survey respondents (44%) and six interviewees (40%) had prior teaching experience in a school context many as unqualified substitute teachers. This acted as a 'pull factor' (Watters and Diezmann 2015) to enrol on an ITE programme. Alongside the positive teaching experiences which gave CCTs confidence in their ability to teach, many participants reminisced about playing school and teacher as a young child, as well as recalling teachers from their own primary and post-primary schooling who were influential figures in their career choice. This finding echoes other research studies down through the decades, which hold that former teachers act as significant influences among those considering teaching as a career change (Fielstra 1955; Richards 1960; Robertson, Keith and Page 1983; Watt, Richardson and Klusmann, et al. 2012) as CCTs aspired to emulate the educators that inspired them throughout their formative years.

Although only fourteen survey participants (13%) cited loss of employment as a motivating factor, six interview participants (40%) described how the loss of employment was the catalyst for their career change. Loss of interest in a previous job emerged as a stronger motivation for forty-five online survey participants (42%) as many sought to find a more fulfilling career in teaching. Again this finding mirrored other research findings, which also highlighted this motivating factor (Powers 2002; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant 2003; Richardson and Watt 2006; Bunn and Wake 2015).

Although one might expect job security and the favourable work hours of teaching to emerge as a motivating factor for CCTs, only twenty-eight online survey respondents (26%) listed the need for greater job security as a motivating factor and similar results emerged from the interviews. However, two interviewees shared their experience of choosing teaching for better job security predominantly as a result of the economic recession in Ireland in 2008, which had also attributed to their loss of employment.

6.2.2 The Main Challenges Identified by CCTs, in Transitioning to a New Career as a Teacher

There were three main challenges identified by CCTs in this research study in changing career to teaching. These included the challenge of financial issues and family commitments, the challenge of the school context, and the challenge of adjusting to the workload of teaching. Changing career can impose a financial burden on many CCTs as many participants in this study highlighted the financial challenge of completing an ITE programme without a source of income. They highlighted that this was especially difficult if they had dependent family members. Participants outlined that their family commitments or the financial challenges of changing career to teaching were not

acknowledged during their ITE. They felt they were treated like undergraduate students who had just completed the Leaving Certificate. There were no provisions made for the fact that they were mature students with family, travel, and financial commitments. CCTs in this study found that the workload of the programme was very intense, and the school placements were quite stressful. Many also felt that their previous work and/or life experience was not taken into consideration during their ITE.

When discussing their experiences of working in a school as a teacher, the teacher's workload was also identified as a challenge for CCTs in their new career. Many participants had not anticipated the amount of paperwork involved in teaching and found that this increased their workload dramatically. Another challenge highlighted by CCTs was the absence of teamwork and collegiality among teachers in some of the schools they worked in. As many participants had previous jobs/careers which involved a lot of teamwork and collaboration, they expressed a feeling of isolation and loneliness especially if they were employed as a temporary or substitute teacher. Positive relationships with colleagues and school leadership were found to be fundamental to promoting a new teacher's sense of wellbeing and in fact encouraging their retention in the profession.

6.2.3 The Factors which Support the Development of a Teacher Identity among CCTs

When discussing the development of a new professional identity as a teacher, 101 online survey CCTs (94.4.%) and twelve interviewees (80%) believed they had developed an identity as a teacher. Although participants in this research study struggled to concisely provide a definition of professional identity, they were quite clear of the factors that assisted the development of their teacher identity. These included personal factors and relationships with school colleagues and pupils. Personal factors emerged as the most

predominant influential factor, and CCTs' personal family circumstances and parental influences played a significant role. The values and teachings received from their parents and their own individual experiences from their childhood were carried through to adulthood and formed a foundation for their teacher identity and how they interact with others as a teacher. For others, the skills and identity they had developed in a previous career played a role in forming their teacher identity as they transferred many of the skills from their previous career to teaching.

Fifty-four CCTs (68%) who completed the online survey admitted that they still retained their previous career identity as they maintained contact with their former colleagues and while others still work in their previous role even on a part-time or voluntary basis. However, given the fact that such a high percentage of CCTs believe they have developed a teacher identity, it does not appear that retaining a connection to a previous career identity hinders its development.

A significant factor identified by CCTs in assisting the development of their teacher identity was the relationships formed with school colleagues and pupils. This factor was highlighted in particular among the interview participants as they explained that their interactions and engagement with the pupils enabled them to feel more like a teacher and in turn supported their identity as a teacher. Similarly, their interactions with school colleagues and school leadership played a role in their teacher identity development. It is clear that the school context plays a crucial role, not only supporting new teachers to learn the fundamental practice of teaching but also to assist in the development of their teacher identity. By encouraging CCTs to play an active role in the school community of

practice (Wenger 1998), school colleagues and leadership encourage a CCT's sense of belonging and professionalism. These elements are necessary to assist the development of a teacher identity among CCTs and promote the retention of these new teachers who have made personal and financial sacrifices to change career to teaching.

6.2.4 The Personal and/or Professional Factors Identified Among CCTs in Ireland Which Impact their Attrition from the Teaching Profession

Of the 107 survey respondents, ten (9%) outlined that they were no longer working as teachers. Two of these respondents were also interviewees. Five interviewees, (33%) are no longer working as full-time teachers, bringing the total number of CCTs who have departed the teaching profession to thirteen (12%). Personal factors such as caring for a sick parent, re-location to another country were cited among survey respondents, while other personal factors outlined during the interview process included the desire to spend more time with family. Professional factors such as the lack of permanen/t teaching contracts and issues around school culture were discussed. Difficulties experienced within the school environment around promotion opportunities were also cited as a primary factor in the decision to leave teaching.

In line with other research studies (Struyven and Vanthournout 2014; Glazer 2018), lack of employment also emerged as a strong reason for attrition from teaching among two of the interviewees. In their interview they explained further their online survey response. Difficulties experienced with the Teaching Council affected employment opportunities for some CCTs. Teaching qualification obtained abroad that are not fully recognised by the Teaching Council in Ireland added to the challenge in CCTs obtaining a full-time teaching

contract. For other CCTs who qualified in Ireland, the lack of permanent teaching jobs influenced the decision to leave teaching as well as other financial reasons such as the lower salary that CCTs receive in comparison to a previous job/career. Teachers qualified after 2011 were placed on a different, lower pay scale to their pre-2011 colleagues. Newly qualified CCTs are also placed on the same salary scale as newly qualified first career teachers, despite the fact that they may have worked in a different industry for many years. It is understandable that this factor would influence a CCT's decision to leave the profession, if as a mature CCT with family commitments and/or mortgage commitments; the teaching salary does not sufficiently meet the needs of their personal financial situation. Therefore, the return to a previous career that is familiar and better paid is a validated decision.

6.2.5 What Role Does Professional Identity as a CCT Play in the Decision to Leave the Profession?

Although professional identity did not emerge as a significant contributing factor to attrition, it certainly played a role in the decision to leave the teaching profession for some participants. Only six online survey respondents (5%) believed that they had not developed their teacher identity, and two of these participants were also interviewees. During the early stages of a CCT's new teaching career, it is possible that retaining a connection to a previous work identity, along with personal factors and the school environment could hinder the development of a new teacher identity and add to feelings of uncertainty that teaching is the right career choice.

Of the six survey responses, two are no longer in the teaching profession and cited professional identity as a factor in this decision. Teachers born and qualified abroad who

have not received an education in the Irish language do not achieve full registration with the Teaching Council and cannot teach in a primary school setting until the Irish language requirement is fulfilled. One CCT cited this issue as a significant factor in developing a professional identity as a teacher as it is only possible to work as a part-time substitute teacher in this situation.

Other CCTs agreed that working as a substitute teacher in schools in Ireland encouraged the feeling of being an outsider, rather than a true teacher, which in turn impacted the development of a teacher identity. Another reason provided by one CCT was that qualifying as a mature teacher, perhaps with an already established career identity in another field adds to the challenge of developing a teacher identity. The formation of a teacher identity is a fundamental part of becoming a teacher. However, if one's personality and career identity are already fixed, CCTs may find it a struggle to adjust to a new teacher identity.

6.3 Recommendations

Emerging from the findings and conclusion of this research study are several recommendations. I have organised the recommendations to match the route a CCT takes to teaching, beginning with recommendations for prospective CCTs, followed by recommendations for ITE programme providers and recommendations for school leadership and teachers who may work along CCTs when they qualify. Finally, there are recommendations for the Department of Education and other education partners which may assist in the recruitment of CCTs to the profession to address the teacher shortage in Ireland, particular in the post-primary sector.

6.3.1 Recommendations for Prospective CCTs Before Committing to a Career Change

- A good knowledge of the role of teaching, the operations of a modern-day classroom or primary school/post-primary school is essential before deciding to choose teaching as a new career. A period of work experience in one's chosen sector – e.g., two or three weeks of continued placement in a primary or post-primary school setting would enable a CCT to acquire a realistic understanding of teaching and ensure their personality is compatible to the role of teaching.

- Consideration needs to be given to the long-term job opportunities in the primary and post-primary education sector areas CCTs wish to qualify in, before enrolling on an ITE programme.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Teacher Education Programme Providers

- An acknowledgement of CCTs' backgrounds, life commitments, financial issues and the sacrifices undertaken to pursue a teacher education programme would encourage and facilitate CCTs in their career change.

- Provision of supports such as flexibility around timetabling and class attendance may be advantageous to CCTs during an ITE programme and should be considered by ITE programme providers.

6.3.3 Recommendations for School Leadership, Teaching Staff and School Support Services

- A continuation of mentorship beyond the first year, post-qualification, would assist the retention of CCTs. Many CCTs do not remain in the same school for concurrent years due to their temporary or substitute teaching contracts. While the focus in year one is the completion of induction, the subsequent years involve learning and

perfecting the craft of teaching as well as establishing one's teacher identity. Therefore, the level of support received during induction should be continued for CCTs if they feel it is needed.

- Access for CCTS to specific support structures outside of the school they work in would assist CCTs' wellbeing and resilience and in turn their retention. Opportunities for peer support meetings or a buddy system to assist CCTs during the initial stages of their teaching career would further encourage the development of their teacher identity, confidence, and competence.

6.3.4 Recommendations for the Department of Education, Teaching Council, ITE providers and post-primary education providers

- To combat the insecurity around job prospects and teaching contracts for post-primary CCTs, a collaborative needs analysis should be conducted every 3-5 years to highlight the subject areas in post-primary, where there is presently or will be a projected shortage of teachers. The education partners involved in this review and analysis would include post-primary schools, the Department of Education (DE), the Teaching Council and ITE providers. Once the areas of need are identified, the provision of ITE courses needs to be tailored to meet this demand. The shortage of teachers in certain subject areas means schools cannot offer these subjects for the Leaving Certificate, which will have a knock-on effect for third level courses and in turn the employment sector. An analysis of this nature would avoid an oversupply of certain subject teachers and an undersupply of others in the post-primary sector.

- An incentive for those choosing to change career would assist any CCT that may have to give up job to complete an ITE programme. Loss of wages impacts family commitments, and there is no option of completing an ITE programme part-time.

Therefore, some form of grant would assist CCTs in making the career transition and provide an incentive to attract prospective CCTs in the subject areas of most need.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

It is important to note one limitation of this study; the sample set for this research project is not representative of the population of CCTs and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. However, this research study indicates potential areas in which future research may be undertaken to examine further the experiences of CCTs in Ireland and the areas that contribute to their attrition and retention. One particular area of interest is the necessary job security for post-primary qualified CCTs and the availability of long-term teaching contracts.

Possible areas for further research are:

1. Undertake a similar research project with a broader, purposive sample of CCTs in post-primary schools.

2. Explore the subjects that CCTs are choosing to qualify in at post-primary level and if there is any relationship between subject area and attrition.

3. Explore further the impact of school context and collegial relationships on attrition rates among early career CCTs in Ireland.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

This study set out to explore the experiences of CCTs changing career into the teaching profession in Ireland. This research has provided a valuable insight into the motivations of CCTs when choosing teaching as a new career and the challenges they experience in the

process. The most interesting part of this research was the centrality of identity in the decision of CCTs. Teacher identity does not begin when one assumes a teaching role but can begin at a very early age and is influenced by many factors, including family members, former teachers and prior teaching and learning experiences.

Teacher identity also played a role in CCTs' attrition from the profession. However, it is clear from this study that there are many factors alongside identity that contribute to attrition, including personal factors, employment factors and the school environment and context. This study also highlighted that the same factors; the school context, a strong teacher identity and personal and family factors can also assist in a teacher's retention in the profession. It is hoped that this research will inform in particular the teacher education programmes and school personnel who will interact with CCTs as they change career to teaching. It is hoped that this research study will also encourage teacher education and school personnel to acknowledge the skills and experiences that CCTs bring to teaching and as a result provide the necessary supports that will assist the retention of this diverse cohort of new teachers in their new career.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Email from Teaching Council – Teacher Registration Statistics 2020/2021

From: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ <sdeegan@teachingcouncil.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 5 May 2021 16:13
To: ANNETTE GEOGHEGAN <annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Registered Teachers

WARNING
This email originated from outside of Maynooth University's Mail System. Do not reply, click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.
Dear   Ms   Geoghegan,

Thank you for your mail.

The up-to-date registered teacher numbers are as follows:

Male   25,547
Female   83,653

The Teaching Council has no information relating to the employment / teaching status of any/all registered teachers. Some teachers may maintain their registration but are not employed teaching.

I hope this is of assistance to you.

Regards

▮▮▮▮▮▮
Registration Section
The Teaching Council | Block A, Maynooth Business Campus | Maynooth | Co Kildare
An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta| Bloc A, Campas Gnó Mhaigh Nuad | Maigh Nuad | Co. Chill Dara | W23 Y7X0
W: www.teachingcouncil.ie

Follow us on Twitter @TeachingCouncil and @ FÉILTE

The Teaching Council may record calls for verification and training purposes

Appendix 2: JISC Online Survey - 14th February 2020 - 30th June 2020

An exploration of the experiences of career change teachers in Irish schools

Page 1 Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this survey is to explore the experiences of career change teachers (CCT) in Irish primary and/or post-primary schools and the reasons for their retention or attrition within the teaching profession. For the purpose of this study a career change teacher is defined as a teacher who has worked in a previous career for a minimum of three years prior to qualifying and working as a teacher. This research is being conducted by Annette Geoghegan, Doctoral student in Maynooth University under the supervision of Dr Celine Healy.

What will the study involve?

The study will involve completing an online survey, which will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The first part of the survey will ask you for some background information about yourself, your school, your teaching career and your previous job/career. The second part of the survey consists of questions about professional identity and the final section of the survey will ask questions on your experience of teacher attrition and/or retention.

Who has approved this study?

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics committee.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part in this study because you have the knowledge and experience of being a CCT (career change teacher) in Ireland.

Do you have to take part?

No, you are under no obligation to take part. I hope you will agree to participate but it is your choice. If you decide to complete the survey, you will be asked to give consent. You are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason up until the point of clicking "submit" on the final page of the questionnaire. Since data are collected anonymously, it is not possible to withdraw afterwards.

Will participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. You will not be asked to provide your name. All data collected will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer and will only be accessed by the researcher Annette Geoghegan and supervisor Celine Healy. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party.

It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

What will happen to the information which you give?

All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. Electronic data will be encrypted, and hard copies of the data will be kept in a secure cabinet. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the MU server. After ten years, all data will be destroyed. Manual data will be shredded confidentially by me, and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by me in Maynooth University.

What will happen to the results?

The research will be written up and presented as a thesis. It may also be presented at National Conferences and/or written and presented for publication.

What if there is a problem?

If you feel that the research has not been carried out as described above, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in sensitive manner.

Any further queries?

If you require any further information, you may contact me or my supervisor,
Researcher: Annette Geoghegan,
Email: annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie
Supervisor: Dr. Celine Healy, Education Department, Maynooth University,
Email: celine.healy@mu.ie
If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. Please tick each statement below: ☐ *Required*
Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row. Please select at least 8 answer(s).

	Yes	No
I confirm that I am a career change teacher (CCT).	☐	☐
I have understood the purpose and the nature of the study, and I have been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.	☐	☐
I am participating voluntarily.	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating.	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to clicking "submit".	☐	☐
It has been explained to me how my data will be managed.	☐	☐
I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information above.	☐	☐
I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below.	☐	☐

Personal details

2. What is your gender?   ☐ *Required*

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3. Please select the appropriate age category for you?   ☐ *Required*

○ 20-30   ○ 31-40   ○ 41-50

○ 51-60   ○

4. Did you qualify as a primary or post-primary teacher?   ☐ *Required*

○ Primary

○ Post-primary

5. In what year did you qualify as a teacher? ☐ *Required*

6. Do you currently hold a teaching position? ☐ *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

6a. If yes, how long have you been teaching?

6b. If no, for how long after qualifying were you teaching?

Previous job(s)

7. What was your previous job(s) before qualifying as a teacher? ☐ *Required*

8. How long did you work in that role? ☐ *Required*

9. What were your reasons for leaving that job(s)? Please select all that apply. ☐
   Required

☐ ☐ Loss of employment

☐ ☐ Lack of promotion opportunity

☐ Other

9a. If you selected Other, please specify:

10. Please elaborate further on your reason for leaving that job. ☐ *Required*

Teaching choice

11. Why did you select teaching for a career change? Please select all that apply. ☐
    Required

☐ Desire to work with young people

☐ Job security

☐ Favourable work hours

☐ Holiday time

☐ Other

11a. If you selected Other, please specify:

12. Did you work in a school prior to beginning initial teacher education (ITE)? ☐
Required

○ Yes

○ No

12a. If yes, in what capacity?

13. Before you qualified as a teacher, what were your perceptions of classroom teaching? ☐ *Required*

14. Before you qualified as a teacher what were your expectations of teaching as a new career? ☐ *Required*

15. In your opinion was it an easy transition from your previous job(s)? ☐ *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

15a.Please explain ☐ *Required*

16.Which of the skills you developed in your previous job(s) were most beneficial to you as a
te

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

17.In what year did you complete your ITE?   ☐ *Required*

18.Where did you complete your ITE?   ☐ *Required*

19.How satisfied were you with your ITE programme?   ☐ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row. Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Extremely dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Extremely satisfied
ITE programme	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. What aspects of the ITE programme did you find most/least beneficial to you as a teacher and why?

Induction

20. Please select which best describes your induction.   ☐ *Required*

Probation and induction workshops
Droichead programme
PQE and induction workshops
Other e.g. Induction completed abroad, probation only

20a.   If you selected Other, please specify:

21.In your opinion how well did your induction programme prepare you for teaching?
☐ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row. Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Extremely well	Very well	Somewhat well	Not very well	Not at all
My induction programme prepared me for teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22.Did you have an induction process in your previous job(s)?   ☐ *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

22a.If yes, how did it prepare you for that role?

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23.Did you assume a teaching role following qualification? ☐ *Required*

◯ Yes

◯ No

23a.Why/why not?

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24.Please select which of the following best describe(d) your employment status during your teaching career? ☐ *Required*

☐ Permanent

☐ Temporary

☐ Substitute

☐ CID

25. Which of the following best describe(d) the school(s) you worked in? Please select all appropriate.
□ *Require*

☐ Urban

☐ Rural

☐ Mixed

☐ Single sex

☐ Denominational

☐ Non-denominational

☐ Multi-denominational

☐ Gaelscoil

☐ Fee paying school

☐ Further Education College

26. If primary, which of the following best describe(d) your role?

☐ Mainstream class teacher

☐ SEN teacher

27. If post-primary, what subjects do/did you teach?

Teacher Identity

28. Do you believe you have developed a professional identity as a teacher? ☐
Required

○ Yes

○ No

28a. What do you believe assisted you in developing a professional identity as a teacher? Please select any that apply. ☐ *Required*

☐ Personal factors

☐ ITE

☐ School colleagues

☐ School environment

☐ Other

28b. If you selected Other, please specify:

29. Do you believe you developed an identity in your previous job? ☐ *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

30. If you answered yes to the previous question, do you still retain a connection to your previous job identity?

○ Yes

○ No

30a.Please explain

31. Are you still working as a teacher? ☐ *Required*
Attrition

○ Yes

○ No

32. In what year did you leave teaching?   ☐ *Required*

33. What were your reasons for leaving the teaching profession? Please select any that apply. ☐ *Required*

☐ Workload

☐ Stress

☐ Personal reasons

☐ School   context

☐ Lack of support

☐ Lack of employment

☐ Lack of teacher identity

☐ Other

33a. If you selected Other, please specify:

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34. How satisfied are you with your decision to leave the teaching profession?   ☐
Required

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.
Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Leave teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

35. Do you believe you will return to teaching again?   ☐ *Required*

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│  ○ Yes                                       │
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│  ○ No                                        │
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35a. Please explain your answer.

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Retention

36. How satisfied are you with your decision to remain in the teaching profession?   ☐
Required

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row. Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied

Remaining as a teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

37.Do you believe you will change career again? ☐ *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

37a.Please explain your answer.
Conclusion

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38.Overall, how satisfied are you in your decision to become a teacher? ☐ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row. Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Qualifying as a teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

38a.Please explain your answer

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Final page

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Thank you for completing this survey. If you are no longer teaching and you wish to participate further in this research study, in the form of a semi-structured interview, please contact me, I would appreciate your further input for the purpose of my study.

Annette Geoghegan
annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie

Appendix 3: Email Sent to Education Centres and Social Media Outlets to Share and Invite

CCTs to Participate in the Research Project 3rd March 2020

ANNETTE GEOGHEGAN
Tue 03/03/2020 20:08

To whom it may concern,

My name is Annette Geoghegan, and I am a primary school teacher in Navan, Co Meath. I am currently undertaking a research study as part of my Doctorate in Education in Maynooth University. The topic I have chosen to research is the experiences of second-career teachers or career change teachers who are currently working as teachers or who have subsequently left the teaching profession after this career change.

I am seeking participants for an online survey and I was wondering if you could forward this email with a link for the online survey to any teachers on your mail list, in particular those undertaking the NIPT workshops in your education centre as some of these teachers may match the criteria or they may know of suitable candidates to participate in the research.

I thank you in advance for your assistance and co-operation with this project

Yours Sincerely
Annette Geoghegan

Appendix 4: Email Sent to All Primary, Post-Primary and Special School Principals in

Ireland on April 2nd 2020

On Thu, Apr 2, 2020, at 1:41 PM ANNETTE GEOGHEGAN
<annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie> wrote:
Dear Principal,

My name is Annette Geoghegan, and I am a teaching deputy principal in a primary school in Navan, Co Meath.
I am currently in 3rd year of a Doctorate of Education programme specialising in Teacher Education in Maynooth University, and I am conducting a piece of research on attrition among career change teachers in Irish primary and post-primary schools.
This study has been reviewed and has received ethical approval from Maynooth University Ethics Committee and the Education Doctoral Research Committee.
I am writing to you to ask if you would share details of my research project among your staff in the hope that they might know of a career change teacher (a teacher who worked in a previous job before teaching) who has now left teaching.

I am looking for participants to complete an online survey and participate in a semi-structured interview. Some of your staff members may have friends/former colleagues who may fit the criteria.

The link to the survey is https://maynoothuniversity.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/an-exploration-of-the-experiences-of-career-change-teacher-2 and my contact details are below.

During this time of Covid19 it has become more difficult to access teachers and schools and I would kindly appreciate if you could assist me in any way with this matter.

Finally, I hope you and your staff are keeping well in the midst of this challenging time and I wish you all a safe, healthy and happy Easter.

Thanking you Yours Sincerely

Annette Geoghegan annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie

Appendix 5: Information and Consent Form for Research Participants

Information Sheet

Purpose of the study
My name is Annette Geoghegan, and I am a Doctorate of Education student in Maynooth University. As part of my course, I am undertaking a research study to explore the experiences of career change teachers (CCT) in Irish primary and/or post-primary schools and the reasons for their attrition from the teaching profession. For the purpose of this study a career change teacher is defined as a teacher who has worked in a previous career for a minimum of three years prior to qualifying and working as a teacher.

What will the study involve?

The study will involve you the participant, reading the information sheet, signing a consent form to partake in the study, then participating in a 60-minute online video interview with me, organised at a time convenient to you.

Who has approved this study?

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Ethics Committee and the Education Doctoral Research Committee. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part in this study because you have the knowledge and experience of being a CCT in Ireland.

Do you have to take part?

No, you are under no obligation to take part. I hope you will agree to participate but it is your choice. If you decide to take part, you will be provided with an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You will also be provided with a schedule of the interview in advance of the interview. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any stage without giving any reason. You are also free to withdraw your information up until such a time as the research findings are reported.

What information will be collected?

The information that will be collected will include your name on the consent form and email address for the purpose of organising an interview. The interview will collect data of your experience and knowledge as a CCT in Ireland.

Will participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identifiable at any time. All hard copies will be locked in a secure cabinet at the researchers' home. Electronic information will be encrypted/password protected and stored securely on the Maynooth University server and will be accessed only by me, Annette Geoghegan and my supervisor, Dr Celine Healy.

'It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation

by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you wish, a copy of the data you provide can also be made available to you.

What will happen to the information which you give?

All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. Electronic data will be encrypted, and hard copies of the data will be kept in a secure cabinet. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the MU server. After ten years, all data will be destroyed. Manual data will be shredded confidentially by me, and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by me in Maynooth University.

What will happen to the results?

The research will be written up and presented as a thesis. It may also be presented at National Conferences and/or written and presented for publication. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

I do not envisage any possible disadvantage to you taking part in this research study. If you feel that the research has not been carried out as described above, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Any further queries?

If you require any further information, you may contact me or my supervisor,
Researcher

Annette Geoghegan,

Email: annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie

Supervisor

Dr. Celine Healy
Education
Department
Maynooth University
Email: celine.healy@mu.ie

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form

overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Consent Form

I……………………………………agree to participate in Annette Geoghegan's research study titled 'An exploration of the experiences of career change teachers in Irish primary and/or post-primary schools and the reasons for their attrition from the teaching profession'.

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily. ☐

I am participating voluntarily. ☐

I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview which will be video recorded through Microsoft Teams.

☐

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to data reporting. ☐

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request.

☐

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet. ☐

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format may presented at National Conferences and in any subsequent publications if I give permission: ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my assignment. ☐
I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my assignment. ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview. ☐
I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview. ☐

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Participant Name in block capitals: _____

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed……………………………………. Date……………….

Researcher Name in block capitals …………………………………………...

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at ann.mckeon@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection.

Two copies to be made: 1 for participant, 1 for researcher

If you require any further information, you may contact me or my supervisor,
Researcher

Annette Geoghegan,
Email: annette.geoghegan.2015@mumail.ie

Supervisor

Dr. Celine Healy
Education Department
Maynooth University
Email: celine.healy@mu.ie

Appendix 6: Schedule of Interview

<u>Personal background</u>
- Your own education experiences
- Your memories of schooling, teachers

<u>Previous career/job</u>
- Details of previous job/career
- Most/least enjoyable aspects
- Factors that influenced your decision to leave this job
- Skills developed that transferred to teaching

<u>Transition to teaching</u>
- Perceptions of teaching
- Expectations of teaching
- Prior experience in schools
- Concerns about changing career.

<u>Initial Teacher Education/Induction/Probation</u>
- Details of your ITE experience
- Enjoyable/useful aspects, not so enjoyable/useful aspects
- Experience of the Induction/probation process

<u>Teaching career</u>
- Teaching experiences
- Previous job/career skills beneficial to you in the classroom environment
- Teaching experiences match/differ from your perceptions

<u>Professional identity</u>
- Understanding/description of a professional/career identity?
- Previous job/career identity
- Teacher identity
- Influencing/hindering factors in its development
- Challenges experienced in developing a new professional identity as a career change teacher

Attrition & Retention
- Current job/career situation?
- Factors that contributed to your decision to leave/remain in teaching?
- What could have assisted with/supported your retention in the teaching profession?
- What supports do you think should be put in place to assist a career-change teacher during the initial teaching phase (0-5 years)?

Further topics
- Is there anything else you would like to add?