

The Secondment of Teachers to Continuing Teacher Education  
Transitions and Tensions

By

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## **Dedication**

*To Paul, whose beautiful soul, kindest of hearts and  
utterly selfless spirit brings out my 'best self'.*

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## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b>	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	ii
<b>Table of Contents</b>	iii
<b>List of Figures and Tables</b>	x
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	xi
<b>Abstract</b>	xii
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 A study and a story.....	1
1.2 Broad context, rationale and significance.....	2
1.3 The PDST: the location of the study.....	4
1.4 Secondment and teacher education.....	6
1.5 Continuing teacher educators: an under researched group.....	7
1.6 Seconded teacher educators: another forgotten group?.....	9
1.7 Towards a research question.....	10
1.8 Theoretical Framework.....	13
1.9 An original and timely study.....	13
1.10 Synopsis of chapters.....	15
<b>Chapter Two: Irish Policy Context</b> .....	18
2.1 Introduction .....	18
2.2 The PDST and the wider Irish CPD landscape.....	18
2.3 A renewed focus on CPD and the birth of support services.....	21

2.4 Staffing of the services.....	23
2.5 The role and work of the PDST advisor.....	27
2.6 Evolving policy and a changing profession.....	28
2.7 CPD for the CPD providers!.....	30
2.8 Returning to the research question.....	31
<b>Chapter Three: Career Dynamics, Theoretical Framework and Research Design .....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	33
3.2 Teacher career development and career phases.....	33
3.3 Career transitions.....	35
3.3.1 Nicholson’s model of career transitions.....	36
3.3.2 Kelly’s GLAD model of job change.....	38
3.4 Theoretical Framework.....	38
3.5 Research Design: embracing induction and deduction.....	40
3.5.1 Structured Thematic Inquiry: a compatible approach.....	41
3.6 The Theoretical Framework and the Research Design.....	44
<b>Chapter Four: Review of the Literature.....</b>	<b>46</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	46
4.2 Searching the literature.....	46
4.3 Overview of sections.....	48
4.4 Parameters of the review.....	49
4.5 Identity and the teacher educator.....	51
4.5.1 Towards an inclusive definition for teacher educators.....	51
4.5.2 Defining the continuing teacher educator.....	53
4.5.3 Defining the seconded teacher educator.....	54

4.6 From teacher to teacher educator .....	54
4.6.1 A trilogy of identity shifts .....	55
4.6.2 From expert to novice.....	61
4.6.3 Struggle of the selves.....	63
4.7 The third space: a hybrid identity.....	63
4.7.1 Defining the third space.....	64
4.7.2 Secondment: a unique third space.....	65
4.8 Teachers seconded to teacher education: from entry to exit.....	67
4.8.1 Entry.....	68
4.8.2 Experience.....	72
4.8.3 Exit.....	76
4.9. The return to school.....	80
4.10 Towards the inquiry phase.....	86
<b>Chapter Five: Methodology.....</b>	<b>89</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	89
5.2. Epistemology.....	89
5.2.1 A compatible methodology.....	91
5.2.2 The qualitative interviews.....	93
5.2.3 A semi-structured approach.....	94
5.3 An unexpected event.....	96
5.4 The research sample.....	96
5.5 Data Analysis.....	100
5.5.1 Coding and the identification of themes.....	101
5.5.2 The Code Book.....	104
5.5.3 Reflection on data analysis.....	106

5.6 Ethics.....	107
5.6.1 Informed Consent.....	108
5.6.2 Insider implications and power dynamics.....	110
5.7 Trustworthiness and Authenticity.....	113
5.7.1 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: the sample.....	114
5.7.2 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: data gathering.....	116
5.7.3 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: my role and identity....	117
5.7.4 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: my inner bias.....	119
5.7.5 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: data interpretation/analysis	120
<b>Preamble to the Study Findings .....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Findings and Discussion Part 1,</b>	
<b>Entry to Secondment .....</b>	<b>127</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	127
6.2 The <i>Preparation</i> phase.....	127
6.3 Discussion.....	130
6.4 The <i>Encounter</i> phase.....	132
6.5 Discussion.....	139
<b>Chapter Seven: Findings and Discussion Part 2,</b>	
<b>Experience of Secondment .....</b>	<b>144</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	144
7.2 The <i>Adjustment</i> phase.....	144
7.3 Discussion.....	146
7.4 <i>Adjustment</i> towards <i>Stabilisation</i> : continuing attachment gains.....	147
7.5 Discussion.....	151
7.6 The <i>Stabilisation</i> phase.....	154
7.7 Discussion.....	156

7.8 <i>Stabilisation</i> : to connect or disconnect?.....	158
7.9 Discussion.....	159
7.10 Year three: a turning point .....	161
7.11 The second <i>Preparation</i> phase.....	162
7.12 Discussion.....	165
7.12.1 The Paradox of <i>Stabilisation</i> .....	167
7.12.2 Taking back the control.....	169
7.13 Secondment tenure: hidden team tensions.....	171
<b>Chapter Eight: Findings and Discussion Part 3,</b>	
<b>Exit from Secondment and</b>	
<b>Early Experiences of Post-Secondment Destinations</b>	175
8.1 Introduction.....	175
8.2 The second <i>Encounter</i> phase.....	176
8.3 Influence of acquired experience, knowledge and learning on post-secondment roles.....	178
8.4 Harnessing by others of participants' experience, knowledge and skills in the post-secondment work place.....	180
8.5 Discussion.....	183
8.5.1 Transfer of knowledge and skills to post-secondment roles....	184
8.5.2 Knowledge transfer and sector specific implications.....	187
8.5.3 Harnessing by others of participants' experience, knowledge and skills in the post-secondment work place.....	188
<b>Chapter Nine: Study Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	192
9.1 Introduction.....	192
9.2 Conclusions.....	194
9.2.1 Career transition phases /Career gains and losses.....	194
9.2.2 Knowledge and learning.....	196



9.2.3 Identity.....	198
9.2.4 Organisational culture and dynamics.....	200
9.2.5 Secondment policy: the conclusive unifier.....	202
9.3 Recommendations.....	204
9.3.1 Career pathways for teachers seconded to continuing teacher education.....	205
9.3.2 Professionalisation of the CTE.....	211
9.4 Significance and contribution of the study.....	215
9.4.1 Addressing the gaps in research.....	215
9.4.2 Secondment policy.....	217
9.4.3 What is it about schools?.....	218
9.4.4 A systemic reconceptualisation of CPD.....	219
9.4.5 Transferable frameworks.....	220
9.5 Study limitations.....	220
9.6 Future Studies.....	222
9.7 Personal reflection and final remarks.....	224
 <b>Bibliography</b> .....	 226
 Appendix A: Professional Development Service for Teachers: Organisational Chart.....	  269
Appendix B: Professional Development Service for Teachers: Induction and Mentoring programme .....	  270
Appendix C: Professional Development Service for Teachers: Continuing team development supports 2016-2018....	  273
Appendix D: Professional Development Service for Teachers: Team research supports 2016-2018 .....	  280

Appendix E: Secondment and teacher education:	
Overview of previous studies .....	284
Appendix F: Interview questions: categories and rationale.....	286
Appendix G: Illustrative extracts from the code book.....	290
Appendix H: Information for study participants and consent form....	302
Appendix I : <i>Cosán</i> Framework for Teacher Learning.....	309

## List of Figures and Tables

<i>Figure 3.1: Nicholson’s Career Transition Cycle.....</i>	37
<i>Figure 3.2: Theoretical Framework.....</i>	39
<i>Figure 3.3: Theoretical Framework and the Research Design.....</i>	44
<i>Figure 5.1: Study’s Conceptual Framework for Data Analysis.....</i>	101
<i>Figure 5.2: Representation of findings (themes and a selection of subthemes across the theoretical framework.....</i>	105
<i>Figure A: Representation of findings (themes and a selection of subthemes across the theoretical framework.....</i>	125
<i>Figure 9.1: Representation of findings (themes and a selection of subthemes across the theoretical framework.....</i>	192
<i>Figure 9.2: Transposed theoretical framework with study themes and conclusions.....</i>	193
<i>Figure 9.3: Study recommendations.....</i>	205
<i>Table 3.1: Kelly’s GLAD model of job change.....</i>	38
<i>Table 3.2: Mirror features of Structured Thematic Inquiry and this study</i>	41
<i>Table 5.1: Post-secondment destinations of PDST staff.....</i>	98
<i>Table 5.2: Sample of study participants and their post-secondment destinations.....</i>	100
<i>Table A: Participant pseudonyms and details.....</i>	126

## Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTE	Continuing Teacher Educator
DE	Department of Education*
DES	Department of Education and Science/ Department of Education and Skills*
DEIS	Delivering Equality in Schools
HEIs	Higher Education Institutes
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
LEA	Local Education Authority
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development
PCSP	Primary Curriculum Support Programme
PPDS	Primary Professional Development Service
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SDPI	School Development Planning Initiative
SDPS	School Development Planning Service
SLSS	Second Level Support Service
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
STI	Structured Thematic Inquiry
TES	Teacher Education Section

\* In the Irish education system 'DES' relates to the titles 'Department of Education and Science' from 1997-2010 and 'Department of Education and Skills' from 2010-2020. In 2020 a new title 'Department of Education' (DE) was adopted.

## Abstract

In Ireland state funded support services provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and school leaders. These services are staffed with teachers seconded from their schools on an annual basis for up to a maximum of five years. The policy rationale for this secondment arrangement is rooted in claims that the professional development of these teachers will be enhanced by the secondment experience and that the schools to which they belong will also benefit from this when the teachers return (Department of Education and Skills, 2002, 2006, 2018).

There is a significant dearth of studies exploring the professional experiences and learning acquired by teachers while working as teacher educators with Irish CPD support services including how this impacts their future career direction. Additionally, no existing research captures if and how this experience and learning accrues a benefit to the school on their return. Further with an increasing trend in such teachers choosing alternative career routes in the education system post-secondment, there has been no specific research into whether this learning and experience is utilised in other work environments.

This study investigates the knowledge, learning and experience acquired by teachers while seconded to Ireland's largest support service, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It also seeks to discover how this influences their post-secondment career. In interpretivist tradition, it employs qualitative interviews to explore this from the perspective of a purposive sample of eight teachers previously seconded to PDST who have since either returned to school or taken up another position in the education system. The researcher's position as insider is acknowledged given her role as National Director of the PDST.

The study's theoretical framework sets out key stages navigated by these teachers from their initial decision to join the PDST through to their onward post-secondment career destination. Scaffolded by relevant theories and conceptual models in the field of career dynamics, the framework facilitates an exploration of the dichotomies, paradoxes and complexities inherent to the **transitions and tensions** of this unique career journey.

In the context of a considerably under researched area both in Irish and international teacher education, the study's findings yield fresh insights into the transition from teacher to teacher educator and shifting identities while bringing much needed attention to the distinct role and learning needs of teacher educators working in the CPD sector. In relation to secondment, it exposes the transformational impact of what is intended as a temporary career route and its effects on career aspirations and agency. Findings pertaining to post-secondment shed light on the factors which influence knowledge sharing and construction in schools and in other education work settings. They present Irish secondment policy as a significant issue in its lack of provision for these realities while its implications for continuity and preservation of expertise in the PDST emerge as deeply problematic. Study recommendations centre on career pathways for teachers seconded to continuing teacher education and a review of current secondment stipulations. The recommendations are situated within the broader context of the professionalisation of continuing teacher educators and a need for a greater understanding of knowledge sharing and capacity building in the system.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

In the ongoing flux of life, man undergoes many changes. Arriving, departing, growing, achieving, failing - every change involves a loss and a gain. The old environment must be given up, the new accepted. People come and go; one job is lost, another begun; territory and possessions are acquired or sold; new skills are learned, old abandoned; expectations are fulfilled or hopes dashed - in all these situations the individual is faced with the need to give up one mode of life and accept another.

(Parkes, 1972, p.13 -14)

### 1.1 A study and a story

In 2010 Ireland's Department of Education and Skills (DES) established a support service charged with the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for the nation's teachers and school leaders at primary and post-primary level. The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) of which I am National Director since 2014, is an amalgam of several once standalone CPD support services and represents the country's first cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and integrated entity of its kind. As did its predecessor services, it employs practising teachers<sup>1</sup> to work as teacher educators on an annual secondment renewal basis. Over its ten-year lifetime people have arrived and departed. During the first five years, 53 teachers exited the organisation having spent at least five years on secondment both to the PDST and former support services. Over the next five years following a change to secondment conditions in 2015, 147 teachers departed the PDST with 55% of these leaving within their first three years in the job and an additional 10% leaving in their fourth year.<sup>2</sup>

This study is the story of eight teachers seconded to the PDST who left the service during the latter five-year period. It chronicles the experiences of four primary and four post-primary teachers who took a mid-career diversion from their classrooms into teacher education with the intention of returning to those classrooms. Some took that route following their secondment, others chose alternative ones in the education system. Captured through qualitative semi-

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers and school leaders are seconded to Irish CPD support services. In the secondment context the term 'teacher' is generally used collectively for both groups.

<sup>2</sup> Data sourced from PDST human resource records.

structured interviews, their experiences of transitioning into, through and out of the PDST are typified by relinquishment and retention, learning, unlearning and relearning, habit shedding and forming, role contortion and contradiction, private beliefs and public proclamations, all while they themselves remain purposefully present yet protectively pre-emptive.

More broadly, the study interrogates a dichotomous system of boundaries and binaries, cultural development and dissonance, mentalities of abundance and scarcity, where expertise is harnessed and haemorrhaged and where knowledge sharing is enabled and curtailed.

At its heart, this study explores ideas of belonging and not belonging, identity misalignment, recalibration and transformation, expanding horizons and contracting choices, going home and migrating to pastures new.

As indicated by the title of this thesis, the study exemplifies a journey of **transitions and tensions** characterised by a paradoxical blend of career proficiency and instability rooted in a drive for professional fulfilment, fresh possibilities and personal dreams for the future.

This introductory chapter sets the scene for the study with a broad overview of its context, rationale and significance while noting my motivation for, and positionality in, pursuing this research. The role of the PDST in the Irish education system, its work and organisational structure, are briefly described. The concept of secondment to teacher education is introduced with specific reference to Irish secondment policy in the context of CPD. The chapter signals the gaps in the field which informed the aims of the study and its research questions. The import of embarking on the study at this time is outlined and its theoretical framework is broadly presented. Finally, a synopsis of each chapter in this thesis is provided.

## **1.2 Broad context, rationale and significance**

As indicated in the opening lines above, the context of this research is the provision of teacher CPD in Ireland. Ireland's policy landscape in this regard comprises a host of structures and agencies concerned with serving the

ongoing learning needs of its teaching profession. Located centrally here are state funded support services all staffed with teachers seconded from their schools to work as full-time teacher educators. The PDST is the largest of these services providing CPD for all primary and post primary teachers and school leaders. A key function of the service is to assist and enable teachers and school leaders to implement curriculum and policy reforms. A sizable portion of its remit attends to the unique needs of schools as learning communities and within that the individual/collective growth of teachers as reflective and agentic learners. As the location for this study, an overview of the PDST's work and structure is explained below in Section 1.3 while Chapter Two provides an account of how its activities have extended and evolved over time, the work patterns of its teacher educator teams and the service's interface with other providers in the system.

Section 1.7 of this chapter sets out the aims of this study and accordingly the inquiry informing the research question. Generally speaking, the rationale for the study finds expression in the noteworthy lack of research on the role, work and career experiences of those teachers seconded to Irish CPD support services despite the fact that the majority of CPD in Ireland is provided by these services. The study's significance however lies not alone in addressing a very much neglected area of scholarship in Irish education, but internationally with regard to the role and identity of teacher educators working in the CPD sector where by comparison the literature pays considerable attention to teacher educators working in the pre-service part of the teacher education continuum. That said, the study's unique focus on secondment and on the policies underpinning secondment in the Irish context, extends this significance to all teacher educators across the continuum who operate under similar tenure conditions. To all of these ends the study poses important questions about the identity and work of an understudied group of teacher educators and indeed about secondment policy; key issues relevant to the professional lives of a significant number of education professionals both in Ireland and globally. Section 1.9. sets out the study's originality and timeliness in these respects with particular reference to current policy developments in Ireland.



The PDST in being Ireland's only cross-sectoral CPD support service with a remit that spans all curricular, pedagogical and policy domains is well placed as a site for this research. As its Director for over eight years and having held senior positions in Irish CPD support services since 2006 while leading teams of seconded teachers across multiple areas of national, regional and local priorities, I have immersed myself in the wealth of Irish studies and reports produced in the arena of teacher CPD which frequently reference its provision by the support services. Yet I have found little in any of these about the teachers who are seconded to these services; 'the people behind the provision' as it were, who they are, what they do, their impetus for entering teacher education, how they learn to become teacher educators and what this means for their future career. Further to the aforementioned study rationale, my professional motivation for this research is to uncover all of the above for a group of such teachers once seconded to the PDST while conscious of an underpinning Irish policy which as Section 1.4 later explains, makes certain assumptions about secondment's positive impact on their professional development and the subsequent gains for their parent schools. In undertaking this research I am situated as insider which advantages me with a deep and nuanced understanding of these professionals and their work but which simultaneously carries the characteristic scholarly challenge of being native. And so this dual identity I occupy in completing a professional doctorate as both PDST Director and impartial researcher, demands frequent moments of overt knowingness and reflexivity which I believe are evident not alone in Chapter Five's comprehensive attention to related ethical issues, trustworthiness and authenticity, but on the final pages of this thesis where this tension is laid bare in my closing reflection.

### **1.3 The PDST : the location of the study**

The PDST is a national CPD support service operating under the auspice of the Department of Education (DE) in Ireland. Its aim is "...to provide high quality professional development and support which empowers teachers and school leaders to provide the best possible education for all pupils/students" (PDST, 2015, p.1). Comprising a team of teacher educators, its mission in promoting the lifelong learning of the teaching profession, is to facilitate professional

learning experiences that support reflection, collaboration and evidence-based practice towards being “...widely acknowledged as an innovative, responsive and trusted provider of continuing professional development and support for teachers and school leaders” (ibid.).

The PDST’s work encompasses all aspects of curriculum, teaching and learning with specific priorities pertaining to school leadership, school improvement, wellbeing and digital technologies. Its remit, elaborated on in Chapter Two, has become increasingly extensive since its inception owing to an unprecedented level of curriculum and policy reform and associated demands for the profession to be pedagogically and digitally innovative. Although concerned with the introduction and implementation of milestone national reforms such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011) and School Self-Evaluation (DES, 2012; 2016), the PDST is equally focused on supporting teachers and school leaders according to their self-identified needs, the latter attached to more transformative, contextualised and local capacity-building CPD models.

The PDST’s organisational structure, detailed in Appendix A, comprises a National Director, Deputy Directors and a middle management group leading teams of advisors<sup>3</sup> assigned to priority areas. This full-time team of seconded teachers and school leaders is further supplemented by part-time associates<sup>4</sup>. The PDST reports to the DE’s Teacher Education Section (TES) which funds the service and approves its annual staffing allocation and programme of work. The PDST also comprises a team of public servants working in PDST Technology in Education, and reports to a separate section in the DE (ICT Policy Unit) regarding this team’s budget, staffing and programme of work. The PDST is managed by Dublin West Education Centre which oversees the governance, budgetary, legal and administrative elements of the organisation.

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<sup>3</sup> An advisor is a full-time member of the PDST team who works directly with teachers and school leaders in the provision of professional development. Advisors belong to different teams within the PDST and report to a team leader. As the front-line staff, advisors comprise the majority of the PDST team.

<sup>4</sup> An associate is a practising or retired teacher /school leader who works with the PDST on a part-time basis for up to 20 days per year.

## 1.4 Secondment and teacher education

Ireland's CPD support services employ experienced teachers and school leaders with eligibility conditions dictating that they must hold a permanent post in a recognised school. The policy objective of this arrangement is to ensure that those involved in this work have current knowledge of teaching and learning - a longstanding requirement in pre-service teacher education internationally where "...*skilled and well-regarded practicing teachers...*" (Costley *et al.*, 2007, p.6) are appointed to positions on the basis of "...*recent and relevant experience in teaching*" (Harrison and McKeon, 2008, p.164). The concept of employing such teachers in a secondment capacity to pre-service teacher education programmes has been commonplace in Canada (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000; Kosnik and Beck, 2008), Scotland (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992) and Australia (Perry *et al.*, 1999; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010), given that seconded teachers come from the heartbeat of schools (Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011) bringing with them "...*experiential knowledge...that reflects their classroom experiences...and personal philosophies of teaching and learning*" (Badali and Housego, 2000, p.328). Fullan and Connelly advised Ontario's Ministry of Education to fill vacancies in teacher education institutions with "...*outstanding teachers from the system [to] contribute strengths and perspective gained through successful and current classroom experience*" (1987, p.31). In the context of continuing teacher education, the concept of 'advisory teachers' employed by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the U.K. since the 1980s also involves the secondment of teachers directly from the classroom to assist practising teachers in reform related projects and to advise schools in advance of inspection.

Chapter Two's chronology of CPD developments in Ireland shows the secondment of experienced teachers to be policy's favoured approach to staffing CPD services like the PDST with a review of continuing teacher education in this country advising "...*that highly skilled teachers be seconded to act as supportive agents for their peers in the schools*" (Coolahan, 2007, p.35). Irish secondment policy posits that "*Secondment can also be an important element of a teacher's continuing professional development*" (DE, 2018, p.4) but it is principally legitimised by the claim that the temporary nature of the role

allows the expertise acquired by these teachers while working with CPD support services to recycle back into schools and classrooms. Accordingly the policy asks schools when considering teacher applications for secondment to be “...*cognisant of the benefit that will accrue to the employer on return of the secondee*” given that “*Secondments may also benefit schools and learners* (ibid.). Since their inception, Irish support service secondments have operated on an annual renewal basis subject to the approval of the DE and the teacher’s school. Notably since 2015, an additional condition stipulates that annual renewal cannot exceed a total of five successive years on secondment to the services.

### **1.5 Continuing teacher educators: an under researched group**

Positioned “...*at the core of good teacher education*” (Vloet and van Swet, 2010, p.149), teacher educators are long considered as key to education systems globally in strongly impacting the quality of our teachers while the connection between student achievement and teacher quality is well established (Wright, Horn, and Sanders, 1997; Darling Hammond, 2000; OECD, 2014). Yet, until relatively recently, who they are and what their work involves, has had limited profile in the field (inter alia Murray and Male, 2005; Loughran, 2007; Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen, 2014; Czerniawski, Guberman and MacPhail, 2017; Czerniawski, 2018). Accordingly they have been described as “*hidden professionals*” (Livingston 2014, p.219) and “...*an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group*” (Murray 2005, p.68).

In response, there has been a steadily growing corpus of literature in the field over the last two decades. This has been chiefly confined however to teacher educators in the first stage of the teacher education continuum, namely the pre-service sector who work with student teachers (Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006; Harrison and McKeon, 2008; Swennen, Volman and van Essen, 2008; Williams, Ritter and Bullock, 2012; Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen, 2014; Czerniawski, Guberman and MacPhail, 2017; Dolan, 2019) with complexities such as their transition from teacher to teacher educator and professional identity construction also becoming better understood (Murray and Male, 2005; Loughran, 2011; Williams, Ritter and Bullock; 2012; McAnulty and Cuenca, 2014). By comparison, their equivalents in the CPD stage of the

continuum present as “...*a significantly under-researched professional group*” (Thurston, 2010, p.2). This disproportionate focus was arguably highlighted by the European Commission in stressing that

Teacher educators are not only responsible for the initial education of new teachers, but also contribute to the continuing professional development of Europe’s six million serving teachers. They are present at every stage of the teacher’s career, they teach teachers how to teach...facilitate and encourage their learning...modelling in their own teaching what it means to be a professional teacher.

(2013, pp.6-7)

Consequently Livingston has claimed that “*More needs to be understood about who teacher educators are **across** a teacher’s career, how their roles differ and what their professional learning needs are*” (2014, p.218, emphasis mine). The lack of focus on teacher educators working in the CPD sector is surprising given that ongoing learning for teachers has long been championed by policy makers and leading educationalists (Putnam and Borko, 2000; Dam and Blom, 2006). In claiming that “*Teachers learn naturally over the course of their career*”, Day (1999, p.2) stresses the import of teacher “...*commitment towards and enthusiasm for lifelong learning*” while The Teaching Council of Ireland in citing Sherrington (2014), locates continuing professional learning as “...*part and parcel of a teacher’s working life*” (2016, p.2). Further, the changing world of the 21st century and the need to equip today’s children with a set of competencies for working and living in modern society, requires teachers to remain current in their knowledge and skills as educators while constantly and critically reviewing and adjusting it in light of students’ needs. Quite apart from this professional obligation, teachers’ entitlement to learning opportunities, support and renewal, posits CPD as a right as well as a responsibility (Teaching Council, 2011).

Notably and referenced frequently throughout later chapters, teacher audiences in the CPD arena are distinct from those at pre-service or induction career stages in bringing prior experience to the learning setting which is often accompanied by long held assumptions rooted in habitual practice. Exley (2010) positions teacher educators in this sector specifically as supporting and encouraging system change while facilitating the personalisation of knowledge, understanding and content with adult learners who are typically “...*challenged to examine their previously held values, beliefs and behaviours and...*”

*confronted with ones that they may not want to consider*" (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2012, p.106). Such "...*creation of dissonance with a teacher's current position*" (Timperley *et al.*, 2007, p.8), adds a significant layer of complexity to their role.

Studies on the work and identities of teacher educators in the CPD sector are equally sparse in the Irish context despite increasing attention to CPD in Irish educational literature (Sugrue, 2002; Coolahan, 2007; Harford, 2010; Conway, 2013; Parker, Patton and O'Sullivan, 2016). As further illustrated in Chapter Four, there is no formal definition or title for this group. Consequently, teacher educators working in the CPD sector will be referred to throughout this study as **Continuing Teacher Educators (CTEs)**.

### **1.6 Seconded teacher educators: another forgotten group?**

Equally lacking profile in the literature are teachers seconded to work as teacher educators at all stages of the continuum. It was acknowledged 20 years ago by Badali and Housego that "*Few studies specifically recognize seconded teachers for their contributions to teacher education programs*" (2000, p.327-328), while noting that "*The literature on seconded teachers' knowledge of teaching and their attitudes toward and beliefs regarding their roles as teacher educators is limited*" (ibid.). Almost a decade later, Kosnik and Beck similarly contended that "*While such instructors play a crucial role to teacher education, they largely toil in the shadows*" (2008, p.187) and so "...*receive very limited scholarly attention*" (ibid.,p.189). Analogised as the "Cinderellas" of teacher education (Zeichner, 2005), such limited status and visibility "...*metaphorically locates them on the devalued "practice" side of the theory/practice binary*" (Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011, p.29) citing Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway (2010).

A decade later as indicated in Chapter Four, little has progressed in this regard with a search of the literature yielding only a small number of studies exploring the work of those teachers temporarily redeployed from their school positions to work in teacher education. Furthermore, while much has been written about the transition into teacher education, far less research examines the transitioning experience back to the school/classroom which is inherent to the nature of

teacher secondment. Notably and as previously mentioned, the majority of these studies are located in the pre-service setting, again reflecting the lack of attention to the work of the CTE. Interestingly, one of the very few pieces of literature exclusively focusing on secondment to continuing teacher education, is situated in the Irish context. Research conducted by Tuohy and Lodge (2003) explores this from the perspective of teachers seconded to in-service programmes and other educational institutions. It yields insights about a time when teacher in-service in Ireland was relatively new and when teacher secondments up to that point were largely confined to other educational arenas such as the teacher training colleges or the Inspectorate. Almost two decades later, no further work of this kind has been published in Ireland despite the fact that seconded teachers occupy almost all of the country's CPD workforce.

### **1.7 Towards a research question**

Although the research has made great strides in exploring the work of pre-service teacher educators with a small number of studies pertaining to those seconded to the role, there remains a significant dearth of equivalent studies internationally firstly in relation to CTEs, and secondly with respect to those who are seconded to the role. While the aim of this study and its findings are intended as having international relevance, the Irish policy context for secondment briefly described in Section 1.4 and expanded upon in the next chapter, presents a unique opportunity to address this dual gap in the field through the lens of its underpinning rationale as I will now explain.

As already outlined, Ireland's policy on teacher secondment to CPD support services claims that secondment enhances their professional development. It also rationalises that the temporary nature of secondment allows the school to which the teacher belongs, to gain from that professional development when the teacher returns. In the first instance and with the exception of Tuohy and Lodge's (2003) research, there is little published about what is learned by teachers while on secondment to Irish CPD support services and how this impacts future career direction. More specifically there is no evidence available on **how** they learn or the influence that working as teacher educators has on their professional identities as teachers within the broader profession.

Secondly, no research has captured if and how their secondment and associated learning accrues a benefit to the school on their return as purported by Irish policy. Regarding the individual teacher's return to teaching from teacher education, apart from some broad indications of initial disorientation (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003), there are no Irish studies published which detail what they actually experience while making the reverse transition to, and while subsequently working again in, the school/classroom. Notably and as indicated in this study's opening paragraph, not all of these teachers return to school post-secondment, instead favouring different career routes. There has been no research at all into the transitioning to alternative environments and whether the learning and knowledge acquired during secondment is harnessed either by themselves or by others in these places.

This study is about a group of such teachers who were once seconded to such a service (PDST) as CTEs and who then either returned to school or took up positions in alternative education settings. The aim of this research is to investigate what these teachers experienced and learned while on secondment as CTEs to the PDST, how it shaped them as professionals, and the resultant impact on their work post-secondment whether they returned to teaching in their school or chose another career path. The main research question therefore asks;

**What knowledge, learning and experiences are acquired by teachers while on secondment as continuing teacher educators with the PDST and how does this impact on career direction and the positions they hold post-secondment?**

It is further supported by the following sub questions

- What motivates teachers to pursue a secondment with the PDST?
- What do they experience as they transition into, through and out of secondment with the PDST?
- What specific knowledge and learning are acquired during the secondment and how are these acquired?
- How does secondment to the PDST shape their professional identity, career motivations and future career directions?
- What knowledge, learning and experiences are transferred to, and harnessed in, the post-secondment work setting?



Although Irish secondment policy and its rationale provided a backdrop and context towards arriving at these questions, the aim of this study in its attempt to unearth all of the above is not to test the merits of policy's intention. That said, policy's rationale finds expression in the professional development and learning that teachers acquire while working with CPD support services. Indeed as the review of the literature later shows, despite possessing a priori experiential and pedagogical credentials, teachers choosing this route are still faced with taking the leap from teacher to teacher educator. A wealth of studies concur that this transition involves the acquisition of an entire new set of skills and a redefining of one's professional identity (inter alia Murray and Male, 2005; Loughran, 2011; McAnulty and Cuenca, 2014) with Swennen, Jones and Volman (2010, p.132) positioning teacher educators as "...a specialised professional group within education with...their own specific professional development needs". Indicating a significant learning curve, this corpus of literature adds further weight to the study's aim to investigate the learning acquired on secondment and indeed whether or not this supports Irish policy's claim to extended professional learning for teachers who take up a role as a CTE with the PDST. Additionally, it is difficult to divorce this line of inquiry from a policy which rationalises its temporary tenure stipulation by assuming that the expertise these teachers acquire during the secondment will filter back into their schools.

Finally, while appreciating the under researched plight of teacher educators generally, and as earlier sections of this chapter indicate, there is an emancipatory dimension to this study. I contend that its subjects are a particularly neglected group in the field owing to their belonging to two under represented sub groups of teacher educators; those in the CPD setting and those seconded as teacher educators. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the premise upon which Irish secondment policy stands (that these teachers will return to school), I believe that this adds to the uniqueness of their voices by virtue of a career journey which involves not only a transition into teacher education, but a transition out of it. This prompts a consideration firstly of the assumptions and motivations they bring to the secondment role and secondly of how the cumulative professional experience of the secondment influences their perspectives of their former role in school and future career ambitions.

## 1.8 Theoretical Framework

In line with its aim and research question, this study specifically seeks to capture the experiences of its participants at three stages of secondment; **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit**<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this study these are defined as follows;

- **Entry** pertains to the period when participants first make the decision to join the PDST, their induction and first few months in the job.
- **Experience** comprises the main body of the secondment itself from post-induction to pre-exit.
- **Exit** applies to participants' departure from the PDST and work commencement in their post-secondment destinations (i.e. base school or alternative education setting).

The theoretical framework for the study, fully described in Chapter Three, is structured according to these three pillars. It is further scaffolded by two models in the field of career dynamics which facilitate an exploration of career transitions (Nicholson, 1987) and associated tensions manifesting as career gains and losses (Kelly, 1980). The framework is situated within a **Structural Thematic Inquiry** (STI) approach (Berkeley, 2014) which embraces a complementarity of deductive and inductive philosophies which I considered appropriate to the study's twin tenors of transitions and tensions. The theoretical framework permeates all stages of the research and so is presented visually at key points throughout this thesis according to the progression of the study.

## 1.9 An original and timely study

The import of embarking on this study finds expression in how it stands apart from previous ones in the field of teacher education where there has been a dominant focus on the pre-service sector and where research examining the experiences of seconded teachers working as CTEs, is extremely rare. More specifically, it is the only study since Tuohy and Lodge's 2003 work to explore the latter in an Irish context which has changed immeasurably over the last two decades. Significantly, it is the first study located within a single cross-sectoral

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<sup>5</sup> The three stages **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit** are emboldened throughout this thesis to highlight ongoing fidelity to the theoretical framework.

Irish CPD support service where seconded primary and post-primary teachers work both in parallel and collectively across sectoral boundaries. The study is also uniquely conducted at a very specific time in Irish secondment policy where a maximum of five years tenure now applies to all teachers seconded to CPD support services. Finally and on an international level, whereby previous studies have examined the transition to a seconded teacher educator role along with aspects of the secondment experience itself, this study is the first to capture the transition from teacher education to, and subsequent experiences of working in, both former school **and** alternative post-secondment destinations.

While noting the wider implications of this study, it stood to reason when first proposing it to acknowledge current policy orientations in Ireland favouring a move towards a more coherent and sustainable policy for ongoing teacher professional development. Two high level imminent developments signalling a critical juncture in Irish policy making for continuing teacher education, rendered this study as particularly timely.

1. Ireland's Action Plan for Education prioritised the "*...development of a centre of excellence to oversee supports for the professional development of teachers*" (DES, 2017, p.40) towards capacity building, effective succession and sustainable professional development provision. The time was therefore ripe to tap into what could be empirically captured about the professional experiences of teachers seconded to the largest of these services while highlighting what works well, existing challenges and bigger issues requiring analysis such as structure, governance and human resources. At the time of this study's completion, high level steering and working groups were being established to oversee the integration of the PDST with three remaining stand-alone services<sup>6</sup> towards advancing this part of the Action Plan.
2. In 2016 the Teaching Council of Ireland launched 'Cosán: Framework for Teacher Learning' in line with its statutory remit under Section 39 of the Teaching Council Act to "*...promote the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers*" (Government of Ireland, 2001, p.26).The framework in echoing remarks made above

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<sup>6</sup> Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and the Centre for School Leadership (CSL).

regarding the changing nature of teaching and corresponding professional support required, asserts that

Teacher lifelong learning and career development is critical in ensuring that teachers are prepared to meet the challenges of expanding fields of knowledge, diverse student populations, higher social expectations of schools and new types of responsibilities.

The Teaching Council (2016, p.5)

The framework also stresses the importance of teacher reflection and collaboration as core to knowledge construction in the profession. At the point of finalising this study, *Cosán* had reached its developmental consultation phase where next steps would “*Explore and identify the mechanisms by which programmes of learning might be accredited, and to identify criteria pertaining to quality in accrediting teachers’ learning*” (ibid.). There are obvious parallels here with a study aiming to ascertain what learning is acquired by teachers registered to the Teaching Council when seconded to a national CPD provider and how their learning is used, shared and harnessed effectively whether they return to school or pursue other roles in the education system. It is also noteworthy that one of the key actions attached to the abovementioned DE integration of services is to champion and facilitate the embedding of *Cosán* into CPD provision and associated teacher learning dispositions, an intention re-emphasised in the *Cosán* Action Plan (DE, 2021).

### **1.10 Synopsis of chapters**

The study is organised according to the following chapters each of which are briefly summarised below.

#### *Chapter Two: Irish Policy Context*

This chapter provides the policy backdrop to continuing teacher education in Ireland and the birth of professional development support services. It describes the remit of the PDST has evolved in response to system reform and developments in the profession which in turn have informed the learning needs of the CTE. Particular import is afforded to the chronology of Irish secondment policy through successive policy circulars before arriving at the current conditions which govern teacher secondment to the PDST.

### *Chapter Three: Career Dynamics, Theoretical Framework and Research Design*

In recognition of the link between secondment and mid-career change, the first part of this chapter examines some theories in the field of career dynamics including those specific to the teaching profession. Particular attention is given to the area of career transitions while highlighting the applicability of both Nicholson's (1987) and Kelly's (1980) work to this study. The theoretical framework is fully described and illustrated according to the three stages of secondment and its twin scaffolds (Nicholson's model and Kelly's model). A comprehensive rationale for choosing Structured Thematic Inquiry (STI) as the basis for the research design is provided by mirroring the key features of STI with those of this study. The chapter concludes by illustrating the unity between the research design and the theoretical framework at every stage of the study.

### *Chapter Four: Review of the Literature*

The literature review begins by detailing the search conducted for existing research specific to CTE and secondment. The concept of teacher educator identity is explored wherein the lack of definitions for the CTE and those seconded to teacher education across the continuum, accentuates the understudied status of this group. The chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature pertaining to the transitioning from teacher to teacher educator and accordingly profiles what this study identifies as a 'Trilogy of Identity Shifts'. The review also highlights the complexity of the teacher educator role in relation to its hybridic nature with particular reference to how this applies specifically to the CTE and those seconded to the role. Aligned with the study's theoretical framework, a substantial body of the chapter adopts a sequential outline of what existing studies in the field of teacher education tell us about **Entry** to secondment, the **Experience** itself and the **Exit** out of secondment while spotlighting key transitions and associated tensions through the dual lenses of Nicholson's and Kelly's models. The chapter closes by signposting the gaps in the field thus presenting a natural segue into the inquiry phase.

### *Chapter Five: Methodology*

This chapter begins by setting out the study's epistemological orientation and its non-testing stance towards Irish secondment policy. The qualitative essence of the study is explained through its use of semi-structured interviews which were designed to reflect the theoretical framework and its three secondment stages. There is a key reference to the unexpected advent of Covid-19 and its impact on the data gathering phase along with the necessary adjustments made. The study sample and criteria for its selection are fully described. A new conceptual model for data analysis is presented which illustrates a relational congruence of theories supporting the study's use of deductive and inductive approaches. The data coding system used and the identification of themes are outlined before concluding with a reflection on the data analysis process. Due attention is afforded to ethical considerations addressing areas of consent and confidentiality as well as the power and insider implications specific to this study. The last part of the chapter gives ample scope to the concepts of trustworthiness and authenticity through the lenses of the study's sample, data gathering, research bias, and its processes of data analysis and interpretation.

### *Chapters Six, Seven and Eight: Findings and Discussion*

These three chapters are titled according to the three stages of secondment identified by this study (**Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit**). They are preceded with a segue 'Preamble to the Findings' which visually maps the themes generated from the data across the theoretical framework. Thereafter the three chapters observe the same structure where the findings are presented and discussed according to the structure of the framework and the career models supporting it.

### *Chapter Nine: Study Conclusions and Recommendations*

In this chapter the conclusions of the study are represented within a transposed version of the theoretical framework according to the generated themes. These are followed by recommendations for policy and the system. The significance of the study's findings and its contribution to the field are outlined along with its limitations and some suggestions for further studies. The final paragraphs of the chapter bring this study to a close by offering some personal remarks and reflections.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Irish Policy Context**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The Irish policy context for CPD forms an important backdrop to this study given the position of the PDST within the broader teacher education landscape, its relationship with other partner providers and of course the policy circulars which determine secondment tenure conditions. This chapter begins with a broad overview of current CPD provision in Ireland while describing how the PDST interfaces with other agencies who facilitate the professional development of teachers. Thereafter the chapter shifts its emphasis to the historical developments of CPD in Ireland since the 1990's and the related establishment of national CPD support services. Given the centrality of secondment to this research question, an entire section is devoted to outlining how this arrangement operates as a staffing model for the support services and how secondment policy has evolved over the last two decades. The same section also sets out the typical role and work of PDST advisors who were briefly introduced in Chapter One's description of the PDST's organisational structure. This is followed by an exploration of changes in Irish education policy and in the profession since the millennium which have prompted the PDST to move its focus from transmission models of CPD to transformative ones which activate self-sufficient learning patterns and agency. Crucially the implications that this has for the professional development of PDST's advisors themselves as teacher educators is afforded particular prominence. The chapter concludes by returning to this study's research question and its inevitable link with the policy governing the secondment of teachers to Irish CPD support services.

#### **2.2 The PDST and the wider Irish CPD landscape**

Chapter One has outlined the function and role of the PDST as Ireland's largest, cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary CPD support service while noting its existence as part of a wider systemic provision of CPD for Ireland's teachers and school leaders. In general, the TES of the DE at a central level leads on this provision and funds all of the main CPD providers. As detailed later in Section 2.3, a large proportion of CPD is designed and facilitated by the DE's

support services which are the main national system support available free of charge to all teachers and school leaders. The PDST is one of four support services currently operating under the direction of the TES alongside the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and the Centre for School Leadership (CSL). As signalled in Chapter One, plans are currently in train for the integration of all four services into a single integrated support service. Separately the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) as an independent statutory body provides CPD specific to Special Education Needs (SEN) and therefore works directly with special schools and mainstream schools with SEN classes/units. The PDST works closely with the NCSE in tailoring CPD designed for mainstream schools to serve the needs of teachers working in the SEN context. Also operating in a statutory capacity is the national network of 21 Education Centres which organise professional development opportunities for teachers at local level. Much of the PDST's national offerings of seminars and workshops are hosted by these centres which also employ staff to attend to PDST administrative duties and whose salaries are paid for by the PDST. The PDST also collaborates with the Education Centre network in relation to local innovative projects and professional learning communities while facilitating its advisors to facilitate evening workshops and webinars on behalf of the centres.

The DE also supports CPD interventions aimed at supporting and enhancing professional learning through a number of accredited programmes in collaboration with the university sector where teachers undertake postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and Doctoral studies largely in their own time and at their own expense. Over the last decade the PDST has partnered with several Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) on such programmes or on research projects of joint interest towards bridging practice between initial and continuing teacher education. At post-primary level a number of Teacher Professional Networks (TPNs) provide subject specific support to teachers at second level. The post-primary teams in the PDST collaborate with TPNs towards ensuring consistent messages in relation to subject specification review and are regularly invited to present at annual TPN conferences. At primary level Irish teachers have the option of attending courses during their summer vacation which are incentivised through the availability of up to five days additional annual leave. These courses



are facilitated by a variety of bodies including the PDST, the Education Centres, HEIs and commercial organisations through online, blended and face-to-face programmes.

The DE Inspectorate as part of its evaluative remit regarding the quality of education in schools, identifies CPD priorities to inform policy development in teacher education. In this regard the Inspectorate frequently guides teachers and school leaders towards the PDST's supports while also directing schools identified by the DE's School Improvement Group to contact the PDST for assistance. Management bodies funded by the DE provide professional supports for school leaders. The PDST advisors with specific responsibility for supporting school leaders collaborate with these bodies in relation to the unique needs of senior and middle school leaders. This is pertinent to the leadership and management structures in Irish schools where formal leadership roles comprise the school principal, deputy principal and middle management posts. The school principal is responsible for the leading of learning and the day to day management of the school with the deputy principal undertaking this role when the principal is absent as well as having other leadership/management duties. Shared and inclusive leadership is a feature of Irish schools. Middle leaders or Assistant Principals in line with the philosophies of distributed leadership, have special duties posts attached to leading particular areas of teaching and learning or overarching elements such as wellbeing, digital technologies, inclusion and staff development.

The work of the PDST and all others referenced in this section finds expression in the functions of the Teaching Council established in 2006 as the independent professional body for the regulation and promotion of the teaching profession in Ireland. The functions of the Council span the entire teaching career from entry to initial teacher education programmes, through the induction of newly qualified teachers into the profession and onward to the CPD of teachers. To that end the Council in 2011 developed a continuum for teacher education across the three phases which describes the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage as life-long learners during their teaching career (The Teaching Council, 2011). With specific reference to CPD and as referenced in Section 1.9, Chapter One, the Council launched the

*Cosán* framework for teachers' professional development in 2016 which is currently in its development phase (The Teaching Council, 2016). The aims of this phase include the exploration of mechanisms by which teacher's professional learning might be accredited. To support this, there is legislation not yet commenced, for the Council to review and accredit programmes of continuing education for teachers (Section 39, Teaching Council Act, Government of Ireland, 2001). It is important to note at this point that CPD in Ireland is not mandatory. Accordingly, teachers are invited to undertake CPD and the significant majority of them do so. The PDST's 2018/2019<sup>7</sup> annual report for instance showed that 98% of schools had availed of its national, regional and school based supports with the same year yielding 126,473 teacher CPD units<sup>8</sup>. Although there are no formal arrangements in place for CPD to be obligatory, there remains provision in law (ibid.) for registration with the Teaching Council to be dependent on satisfactory completion of continuing education accredited by the Council.

### **2.3 A renewed focus on CPD and the birth of support services**

The dawn of the 1990s marked the introduction of unprecedented educational reform in Ireland. Heavily influenced by international market ideology, education in this country was identified as a gateway to economic prosperity and social cohesion. A review of national policies for education conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1991, called for Ireland's education policy to be modified in line with rapid levels of societal change. Consequently education became a pivotal focus as government sought to harness it efficiently and effectively in response to these developments. Among a series of reform measures undertaken by Irish policymakers in this regard was the promotion of Ireland's teaching profession to include "*...a comprehensive programme of in-career professional development for teachers, related to the long-term development of the teaching profession...*"(Government of Ireland, 1995, p.126).

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<sup>7</sup> Selected as this was the last annual report produced pre-Covid and represents a typical year. Data for Covid period was impacted by emergency provisions for e-learning needs.

<sup>8</sup> A PDST CPD unit is defined as a minimum of 2.5 hours CPD received in a single sitting.

In-career professional development (now commonly referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD)) in positively impacting teacher quality, can have direct benefits for student outcomes (inter alia Kennedy, 2010; Fletcher *et al.*, 2013; Lynch *et al.*, 2019; Sim *et al.*, 2021) and so as previously referenced, career long learning is considered an essential and expected component of a teacher's professional life (Day, 1999; Putnam and Borko, 2000; Slegers, Bolhuis and Geijsel, 2005; Dam and Blom, 2006). Further, the success of policy's intended reforms requires teachers to be equipped to implement them. Indeed Ireland's proliferation of policy and curricular reform since the turn of the century became synonymous with the large-scale provision of CPD. National support services were established to assist schools in the introduction and implementation of policy imperatives and curricular changes at a specific point in time. The Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) was set up to lead out on the design and delivery of subject by subject CPD for the 1999 Primary School Curriculum and the School Development Planning Service (SDPS) was formed to support schools with curricular planning. An equivalent in the post-primary sector, the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), was established in 1999 followed by the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) in 2001 to provide subject-based and staff development support. Thereafter, several other services were set up to respond to the growing needs of the system, including Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) and the Special Education Support Service (SESS) in 2002 and 2003 respectively. With this swell in services for the profession, a career development unit of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), called the Teacher Education Section (TES), was established in 2004 to oversee the professional development of teachers across the continuum of teacher education. To this day the unit manages and directs the support services in relation to policy formulation, management structures, recruitment and finance.

As explained above, CPD support services in Ireland were established for specific purposes or policy interventions. Further, an understanding that "...*professional development provision was a 'moving target'*" (Sugrue, 2002, p.313) meant that their life spans were finite, after which they were either disbanded or amalgamated with other services. For example the PCSP was deemed to have completed its task of supporting the introduction and

implementation of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum by 2008 and with reported concerns about some ‘doubling up’ with the SDPS (Murchan, Loxley and Johnston, 2005; De Paor, 2007), both services were merged in 2008 to form the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS). Around the same time a number of evaluation studies identified the need for greater coherence and integration across the plethora of supports (Granville, 2004; Loxley *et al.*, 2007; Conway *et al.*, 2009). To address this, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) was established in 2010 as a single integrated, cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary organisation charged with the collective remits of former stand-alone services<sup>9</sup>. The PDST went on to absorb an additional three services, thus becoming the largest single support service to date with staff numbers exceeding 200 by 2020.

## 2.4 Staffing of the services

Chapter One has already highlighted that the staffing of Irish CPD support services operates on a secondment basis within a practitioner driven model. An arrangement in place since the inception of support services, it was “...*designed to facilitate the temporary release of a permanent teacher from his/her teaching post*” (DES, 1, p.2002) for a finite period to work with the services. The superseding 2006 circular elaborated on this as the “...*assignment of a teacher to a short-term position in an external organisation...to meet a short term specialised human resource requirement*”, reflecting the aforementioned timebound nature of policy and curricular implementation ‘deliverables’.

Chapter One has explained why teacher education secondment policies across jurisdictions have historically advocated the benefit of injecting practical experience into teacher education programmes. Similarly the literature argues that “*A primary focus of professional development activities should be teachers teaching teachers. Teachers hold fellow teachers’ expertise in high regard...*” (Sandholtz, 2002, p.827) with Taylor *et al.* concluding that experienced teachers present as a “...*savvy source of professional development*” (2011, p.93).

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<sup>9</sup> Leadership Development for Schools; Second Level Support Service; Junior Cycle Physical Education; Religious Education Support Service; Leaving Certificate Applied; Transition Year; T4; School Development Planning Initiative; Junior Certificate Schools Programme; Primary Professional Development Service; Reading Recovery; Maths Recovery; The National Centre for Technology in Education.

Notwithstanding the credibility that comes with a successful back catalogue of practice, the secondment of skilled teachers to Irish CPD support services in line with their establishment, has been largely attached to supporting schools and teachers through the implementation of policy and curricular change. Although this has featured mainly since the millennium, the Report of the Committee for Inservice Education referenced the state's need to call upon the services of experienced teachers "*...to direct courses...and take charge of workshops, discussion groups, etc*" (Government of Ireland,1984, p.51). Almost a decade later, the Green Paper advised that "*...teachers with recognised competence and commitment might be seconded to support and advise teachers and schools...they could help schools develop new or improved approaches to specific subjects, methods of assessment and teaching techniques...*" (Government of Ireland,1992, p.168). Although not overtly referencing policy reform as an underpinning rationale, all three DES policy circulars pertaining to secondment emphasise that "*...the work to be carried out by the seconded teacher is of clear benefit to the education system and/or is in the public interest*" (Circular 11/2002, p.1; Circular 107/2006, p.2; Circular 29/2018, p.4) with the most recent asking schools "*...to consider national education objectives and policies and to facilitate, where possible, the release of teachers to national programmes for the benefit of the wider education system*" (ibid.). Section 1.4 of the previous chapter has already drawn due attention to policy's underpinning rationale which posits benefits for the professional development of the seconded teacher and resulting gains for the school and its learners when the teacher returns.

While noting policy's explicit reasons for privileging secondment as a way of staffing the services, the conditions of tenure would also suggest implicit motives associated with system budget and mobility. Indeed before the CPD support services were ever set up, the Report on the accounts of the public services defended the idea of secondment in this very regard;

The educational environment has become increasingly complex in recent years involving a wide range of initiatives and new programmes and there is a corresponding requirement for flexible and innovative approaches to meet short term skills needs. The secondment arrangement has significant strengths in meeting these requirements in a cost effective and flexible manner.

(Government of Ireland,1996, p.47)

According to McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992), secondment allows a workforce to be turned over in accordance with changing organisational or professional needs in education. Similarly the system of annual contracts to Irish CPD support services since their inception has been rooted in the need for flexibility according to shifting policy priorities and fluctuating budget allocation along with an overarching eye to ongoing capacity building in the system. Certainly an analysis of Ireland's secondment policy circulars issued over the last 20 years shows a strong fidelity to system manoeuvre with increasing rigidity of tenure being introduced to ensure such fluidity. All three circulars (DES, 2002, 2006, 2018) have stipulated that secondments are granted on a yearlong basis only, while conceding that "... *the period may be extended by periods of one full school year*" (DES, 2018, p.5) "...*where the seconding body/organisation requires the services of the teacher for a period longer than one school year*" (DES, 2002, p.1). Although annual approval has always been a condition, the most recent circular is the first to state clearly that "...*in all cases the secondment arrangement remains subject to annual application and Department of Education /Board of Management approval*" (2018, p.6). Notwithstanding the needs of policy and the support services, successive circulars also outline the school authority's right to terminate a secondment "...*to ensure that the educational needs of the school are given priority...*" (DES, 2006, p.3) and further "...*at any time if the secondment arrangement is not operating in the best interests of the pupils*" (DES, 2018, p.9).

Policy's gradual tightening of tenure conditions is most stark however in relation to the maximum period for which consecutive annual secondments can be sought for each teacher. Circular 11/ 2002 allowed "*A maximum period of ten school years for secondments to Department of Education and Science*" (DES, 2002, p.1) where in the case of "...*an extension in excess of ten school years, an application for a further extension may be considered*" (ibid.). Four years on, a revised circular also permitted "*A maximum period of ten school years for secondments to Department-approved national programmes*" (DES, 2006, p.2) but with no reference to an extension beyond that period. Over a decade later, further policy refinement to yearly secondments stated that "...*approval shall be subject to a maximum period of five school years for secondments to Department funded national services*" (DES, 2018, p.6). This is the current

policy and in the context of annual approval by both the TES and the governing body of the teacher's school, it equates to five successive annual renewals. The same circular however allows for exceptional extensions beyond five years known as derogations<sup>10</sup> "*...in limited circumstances where the Department determines that retention of the secondee is necessary for leadership, continuity, quality planning or management purposes*" (DES, 2018, p.6). For those not granted derogations, policy's efforts to avoid their premature return to the services and to ensure sufficient time for practitioner replenishment back at base, is evident in the following statement;

Where a former secondee subsequently serves as a teacher in an approved teaching post, he/she shall only be eligible for a further secondment where the period of that teaching service is equal to, or greater than, the previous secondment period.

(ibid.)

Although the five-year rule was not written into policy until 2018, it was first employed in 2015 when the secondments of a large portion of the PDST's staff who had been seconded to previous services were terminated. The rule has been applied annually ever since across all TES support services and applies to all PDST advisor and management positions. The transience of secondment has always led to staff departing the services as schools recall their teachers or as teachers themselves choose to leave for various reasons. However since the imposition of the five-year ceiling there has been unprecedented staff attrition not only as individuals reach the five-year point, but predominantly as they dictate their own departure before that point to take up permanent positions elsewhere throughout the system, the latter mirroring similar trends documented in the literature (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007). While the allocation of derogations to some positions has helped the PDST to retain some of its experienced staff for longer, these remain subject to annual approval and renewal. The absence of a set time each year for sanctioning new, continuing or derogated secondments,

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<sup>10</sup>Derogations are contractual extensions for one year at a time granted to some seconded staff who have reached the five-year ceiling and whose skills cannot be readily replaced. PDST management is required to make business cases for retaining such teachers while outlining how policy priorities will be compromised if their contracts are terminated. When the volume of these submissions is considered across the services, derogations are granted for a further year according to TES adjudication of policy priorities and their relative urgency.

means that future planning for all concerned (support services, seconded teachers and their schools) proceeds only when such information is released by the DE.

## **2.5 The role and work of the PDST advisor**

The multi-faceted role and work of PDST advisors who work as full time CTEs, reflects the equally multi-faceted tapestry of the PDST itself with diversity and flexibility highlighted as key expectations in the advisor job description.

Teachers are recruited as advisors to specific teams and report to a Team Leader (See Appendix One). Their front-line work spans the continuum of CPD models (Kennedy, 2005, 2014), and so includes national seminars, workshops, webinars, communities of practice and bespoke school support. In this regard and as later explained in Section 2.6, the work of the advisor in recent years reflects the PDST's conscious efforts to lessen the focus on traditional transmission forms of professional learning to ones that mobilise sustained change and teacher agency while also recognising the purpose of different models. For instance where there is a focus on reform, the PDST designs three-year frameworks for the teachers involved which include an assortment of inter-related CPD opportunities over a sustained period ranging from national events to contextualised school support. Whether reform orientated or otherwise however, a significant proportion of advisors' work involves tailored on-site school support which schools seek through the PDST's online application system.

PDST advisors are also directly involved with the design of all CPD material and resources and so there is allowance in their calendars for attending to this in small expert groups. Similarly time is factored in for collective research or projects with other agencies such as those referenced earlier. Internal team professional development takes place within specific teams or on an inter-team basis which facilitates primary/post-primary cross fertilisation. In the same vein advisors work across teams for the mutual enhancement of different but inextricably linked priorities such as curriculum, digital technologies, well-being or school leadership. Premium however is afforded to direct contact with schools, teachers and school leaders. Accordingly advisor diaries are populated with the facilitation of CPD across the continuum of models described above.



Outside of scheduled events the advisors have autonomy over their diaries to which their Team Leader also have access. The diversity of their work and its local/regional/national dimensions means that advisors have no fixed place of work and complete their individual desk-based tasks from home. Online engagement with teachers or with PDST colleagues also takes place from their home offices. PDST advisor's working hours are on a nine to five basis with flexibility required to work during evening, weekend and school holiday periods. Accountability and quality mechanisms include on-site observation of their work by their Team Leader who provides coaching style professional feedback towards assisting advisors to reflect on their professional goals.

## **2.6 Evolving policy and a changing profession**

As signalled in Section 2.3, Ireland's educational landscape has been noticeably buffeted over the past two decades by an unprecedented level of reform with the assertion that "*Investment in education is a crucial concern of the State to enhance Ireland's capacity to compete effectively in a rapidly changing international environment*" (Government of Ireland, 1995, p.7). Since then, policy making in Irish education has taken this global market orientation into the next millennium with successive policy and curricular changes mimicking public management models of target setting, outcomes and consequential answerability systems. The conception of Irish CPD support services as part of a renewed focus on teacher education, was also located within the country's overall strategic investment in education towards economic competitiveness. Consequently there has been an inextricable link between these developments and the ever-evolving remit of CPD support services, extending to their very *raison d'être* and longevity while determining their establishment or dismantlement according to the introduction of the next new priority. Despite the fact that the PDST was intentionally set up as a multidisciplinary service encompassing the combined remits of its primary and post-primary predecessors, its early work was largely dictated by the provision of targeted professional development in relation to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DES, 2011) and took the form of transmissive and large-scale literacy and numeracy seminar events. The parallel introduction of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) serving as an accountability measure to scaffold the twin towers of literacy and numeracy, added another appendage to the PDST's

stipulated priorities. Another feature of the strategy was the shift towards 'learning outcomes' "...to be incorporated into all curriculum statements at primary level and in all new syllabuses at post-primary level..."(2011, p.45). Over the following years, the PDST's CPD work programme expanded and diversified in accordance with a slew of further policy priorities and action plans<sup>11</sup> related to digital technologies, STEM education, wellbeing, child protection, the introduction of new and revised Leaving Certificate specifications and a national framework for primary curriculum reform, all adding considerably to the PDST's remit.

Quite apart from this expanding catalogue of policy reforms, it is widely appreciated that "*Teaching is not what it was; nor is the professional learning required to become a teacher and improve as a teacher over time*" (Hargreaves, 2000, pp.152 -153). Indeed the last two decades have seen the essential knowledge base for teaching grow dramatically to include metacognition, cooperative learning, digital competencies and formative assessment practices. Further, the pedagogic sophistication needed to effectively address special education needs and multicultural diversity requires many teachers to draw on expertise that they do not always have themselves (Wilson,1983; Cummins, 1998). Consequently, pedagogical competences in occupying priority space within the PDST's programme of work, steer its CPD provision away from reductionist models of mass knowledge transmission, to constructivist and facilitative learning settings for teachers. Indeed modern discourse on what constitutes effective continuing teacher education locates it within the deeper and richer purpose of professional growth and reflection (inter alia Timperley et al.,2007; Guskey and Yoon, 2009; Livingston and Shiach, 2010; Cordingley and Bell, 2012). Correspondingly there has been criticism of Ireland's "...*empirical-rational approach that puts its faith in knowledge generation and dissemination as widely as possible throughout the system*" (Sugrue, 2002, p.318) and its over-reliance on traditional once-off training models in decontextualised learning

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<sup>11</sup> Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020; Looking at our Schools 2016; Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017; Plans for Education 2017, 2018, 2019; STEM Education Implementation Plan 2017-2019; DEIS Plan 2017; School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016 - 2020; National Strategy; Literacy and Numeracy Interim Review 2017; Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta 2017–2022; Languages Connect 2017-2026; The Migrant Integration Strategy 2017; Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice 2018-2023.

settings (Coolahan, 2003; Granville, 2004; Loxley *et al.*, 2007; Conway *et al.*, 2009; Harford, 2010). In response and in an effort to counteract managerialist underpinnings to CPD provision, the PDST privileges transformative modes of professional learning beyond that of wholesale, episodic CPD offerings. In acknowledging the power of context (Guskey, 2002; Opfer, 2016) and in recognition of CPD as a process not an event (Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 1998; Guskey and Yoon, 2009), its professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders are sustained, collaborative and tailored to their self-identified needs. The PDST, towards enabling schools to develop as independent learning communities, primarily concerns itself with the more substantial role of developing teachers as local curriculum makers, reflective practitioners and school-based researchers, thus positioning teachers as shapers of reform rather than merely its implementers. Internationally recognised models such as on-site school support, local communities of practice, class-based action research, and lesson study, now feature prominently in PDST's long-term, bespoke and coherent learning opportunities in line with what many key thinkers espouse (Garet *et al.*, 2001; Desmione, 2009; Kennedy, 2014).

In summary, Ireland's reform explosion, the increased specificity of CPD needs and critically the kind of professional learning experiences required for that CPD to be effective not alone to effect reform, but to facilitate professional growth, has obliged the PDST to respond accordingly to the more sophisticated and discerning nature of teacher, school leader and whole school demands.

## **2.7 CPD for the CPD providers!**

Unsurprisingly, what is described in Section 2.6 has significant implications for the internal preparation and ongoing development of the PDST's seconded staff if they are to be sufficiently equipped to execute their roles as teacher educators and change agents within such a dynamic and changing landscape. Their job in this respect requires them to be at the cutting edge of all emerging educational policy, curricular thinking and pedagogical practice towards fully informing the professional development experiences they design and provide for their colleagues in schools. At the very least, in possessing sound subject content

knowledge, their pedagogical expertise must encompass a range of cross-disciplinary teaching and learning components such as inclusion, use of digital technologies and assessment, which need to be seamlessly stitched into all professional learning provision. Content and pedagogical prowess aside, the vast corpus of literature reviewed in Chapter Four, argues that “...*simply being a good school teacher is not enough for being a good teacher educator*” (Swennen, Jones and Volman, 2010, p.138) with the role involving much more than teaching other teachers to reproduce what worked well for the teacher educator in their classroom. Rather, as a second-order practitioner (Murray, 2002), it entails better understanding of how to use that past experience in order to enact a pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran and Russell, 2007). Crucially in this context, PDST teacher educators must become highly skilled facilitators of adult learning where assumptions and habitual practices are often disturbed and reworked. Chapter Four explores how CTEs are set apart from their counterparts in earlier phases of the teacher education continuum by working with audiences of established and seasoned teachers, wherein they frequently confront entrenched practice and resistance to system change. The confidence and skills required to manage such dynamic and sometimes uncomfortable learning environments, finds expression in the challenging shift from teacher to teacher educator. Consequently the PDST’s induction of its staff towards enabling this shift, is intense and multi-faceted involving substantial time and investment. Thereafter, the PDST’s capacity to support teachers in implementing successive reforms and to navigate the challenges that modern life brings into schools and classrooms, requires continuing attention to the learning of its team. Immersion in current research and frequent review of material are also vital for PDST staff to respond effectively to policy and schools’ expectations. Appendices B, C and D respectively detail the PDST’s internal programme of induction and mentoring, team CPD and research supports.

## **2.8 Returning to the research question**

This chapter has provided a policy backdrop to the development of Irish CPD support services since the 1990s. The original remit of these services was finite and compatible with short term annual secondment policy conceived at a point in time. These contractual arrangements since tightened by a stipulated

maximum of five years tenure, now co-exist with a dramatically expanded remit attached to longitudinal policy imperatives and a much-changed face of teaching and teacher professional learning. This in turn has demanded a greater investment in, and intensification of, the learning and development of the teachers seconded to the PDST. As argued in Chapter One, while the primary aim of this research is to explore the experiences, knowledge and learning acquired by such teachers while seconded to the PDST, how this influences their career choices and the work they undertake post-secondment, such a study cannot ignore the policy context within which these teachers operate; one which legitimises its enduring tenure conditions by envisioning the recycling of said knowledge and learning back into their schools. In any case and in eschewing either a proving or disproving of this particular rationale, this study's epistemological orientation privileges the perspectives of its participants and therefore seeks to discover what they learn while on secondment and how it is harnessed thereafter within a theoretical framework which scopes out the career transitions and tensions inherent to this unique career journey.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Career Dynamics, Theoretical Framework and Research Design**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As outlined in Chapter Two, the staff of Ireland's teacher CPD support services are drawn from its population of established teachers. The research participants were such teachers who, having taught in the classroom for a number of years, opted for a mid-career change from school into the PDST with most embarking on a further career change post-secondment. This study specifically aims to capture the experiences of this group at three stages of secondment: **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** as well as exploring how the secondment influenced their career choices thereafter. Given the link between secondment and mid-career change, this chapter begins by exploring some theories in the field of career dynamics including some seminal work relating to mid-career and the teaching profession towards assisting an analysis of the particular secondment experience explored in this study. An understanding of what constitutes career transition generally is afforded some import in advance of describing the two career models chosen to support the study's theoretical framework which itself is fully set out and explained. The chapter also introduces Structured Thematic Inquiry (STI) as a suitable research design for the study while illustrating this in relation to all of its aspects (Table 3.2). The location of the research design at this juncture of the thesis as opposed to later on in the Methodology chapter is rooted in the congruence between STI and the theoretical framework at every stage of the study as the final part of this chapter demonstrates.

#### **3.2 Teacher career development and career phases**

Career development is traditionally associated with upward trajectory and promotion. Schein (1990), in challenging this singular view, presents a more holistic perspective of what individuals seek in career progression. He identifies eight career anchors which locate career development within a range of other forces and motivators; the expansion of skills and expertise, ability to have greater influence, making a difference, experimentation, challenge, autonomy, stability and lifestyle. Echoing the literature exploring the teaching career

generally (Johnson,1990; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009), Taylor *et al.* (2011, p.85) reference teaching in New Zealand “...as a profession offering a relatively flat career trajectory [while] lacking adequate recognition...for classroom teachers who demonstrate expertise...[and who in seeking]...professional advancement are forced in educational management roles”. By the same token Irish schools have little scope for vertical career movement except if one pursues a position as a school principal or secures a remunerated special duties post. Consequently, it is not surprising perhaps that teacher career motivations are often attached to alternative anchors. Indeed a body of research over the years has found a number of other factors to impact on teacher career development and satisfaction such as autonomy and collaborative learning opportunities (Rosenholtz and Simpson,1990; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Morgan *et al.*, 2010). Other studies have shown that monetary ranking structures can in fact deprofessionalise teaching (Firestone and Bader,1992) or attract different kinds of people into the job who may lack many of the intrinsic drivers that make teachers good at what they do (Firestone and Pennell, 1993). Gouldner (1957, 1958) posits two specific anchors for teachers which can determine whether or not they decide to remain in school with neither attached to climbing the career ladder. Firstly *Locals* are identified as those teachers unlikely to leave schools while privileging loyalty to the profession and reliance on internal levers for success. On the other hand, *Cosmopolitans* seek external skills development towards either using these in school (Cosmopolitan Empire Builders) or if frustrated with school life, towards making their mark beyond the classroom (Cosmopolitan Outsiders).

A corpus of literature examining teacher career stages and patterns (Sikes, Measor and Woods,1985; Nias,1989; Bolam,1990; Huberman,1993; Day *et al.*, 2007) offers other insights into teacher career motivation and teacher identity. These studies also appear to reject vertical structures as the only factor in career progression leaning more strongly towards other teacher career anchors such as those outlined above. Huberman’s seminal study characterises the career development process for teachers as a series of “...plateaux, discontinuities, regressions, spurts, and dead ends” (1995, p.196) and is a key reference point for researchers in this field world-wide. In claiming that teachers have different aims and dilemmas at various moments in their professional

cycle with their desire to acquire knowledge and expertise varying accordingly, he maps out a nonlinear five-phase teaching career cycle. The second phase aligns to mid-career (6-20 years teaching) when teachers look to either harness their expertise through new avenues (*Experimentation*) or develop doubts having reflected on their levels of satisfaction with school routines or their effectiveness as practitioners (*Reassessment*). Day *et al.* (2007) build on Huberman's work and identify key career influences within six professional life phases with implications for motivation, agency, resilience, and identity. In relation to mid-career, their Professional Life Phases 8 -15 years and 16 - 23 years straddle Huberman's second career phase. Phase 8 -15 years typified by identity tension and transitions, is considered to be a "...key watershed in teacher professional development" (ibid., p.82) with the next phase 16-23 years associated with having reached a perceived point of peak or stagnation, either which can prompt a career transition. Motivational theorists use terms such as 'push' and 'pull' factors in relation to career decision making (Thornton, Bricheno and Reid, 2002; Muller, Alliata and Benninghoff, 2009). Factors which 'pull' someone towards a career change are attached to positive aspects of a prospective workplace or role whereas 'push' factors pertain to negative situations of a workplace or role. It could be concluded therefore that push and pull factors arise in the various dilemmas presenting to teachers during their career cycles and are characterised by the presence and /or absence of certain career anchors.

### **3.3 Career Transitions**

Bruce claims that in order to understand the concept of career transition, it is important to differentiate a career transition from a career change or event. He makes this distinction in situating a career event as "...changes in the work role demands of the individual (1991, p.5) which in turn evokes a career transition; "...a process that unfolds over time, before and after the career event" (ibid., p.6). By similar token, Ibarra citing Levinson (1981), describes career transition as a process of "...simultaneously leaving one thing without having fully left it while at the same time entering another without yet being fully part of it" (2004, p.10).



According to Ibarra (ibid, p.6) “*Identities affect career change by their impact on a person’s perception of fit between their sense of who they are and their current career*”. Taking it a step further, Markus and Nurius (1986) frame identities as existing in people’s minds as ‘possible future selves’ representing who they would like to become or equally who they fear becoming. A common factor prompting a career change is a disturbance brought about by a mismatch between one’s identity and work tasks, relationships or conditions (Louis, 1980; Brett, 1984). Employees respond by acting to reduce the disturbance by undergoing the process of a career transition (Nicholson, 1987). Consequently Bruce concludes that viewing a career transition as simply a change in one’s career without considering the complex identity processes underlying the change, ignores the essence of what a career transition is and so he defines a career transition as “... *the entire period prior to and following a career event*” (1991, p.7).

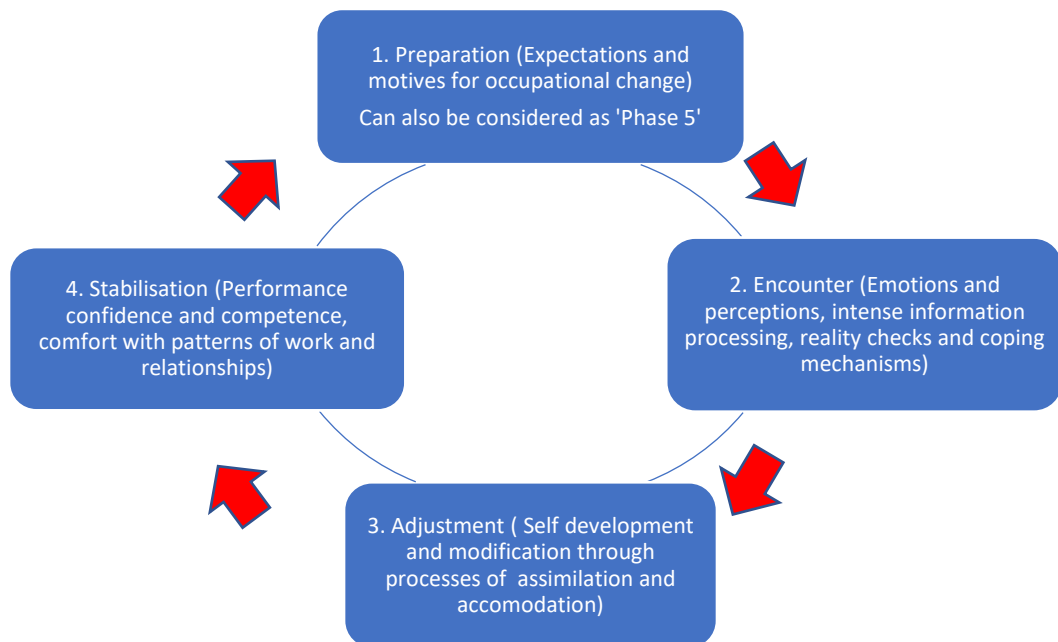
### 3.3.1 Nicholson's model of career transition

Nicholson (1987, p.171) proposes a career transition cycle “...*as an analytical building block for the study of [career] changes and patterns*”. While emphasising a non-prescriptive approach, he identifies four phases spanning the time from when individuals first consider a career change while still in one job, to reaching proficiency in the next job as follows; *Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment* and *Stabilisation*<sup>12</sup>. In support of the claims set out by the theorists above, Nicholson believes that individuals begin transitioning as soon as they begin rethinking their current role. The first phase *Preparation* refers to this period when individuals reflect on their current career position, question its fit with their current identity, develop expectations for alternative roles and actively investigate these while driven by specific motivational factors. Having made the career move, the next phase *Encounter* marks a realisation of what the new position entails informed by unexpected aspects of the job (good and bad) and resulting socio-psychological experiences. The *Adjustment* phase concerns adaptation during which efforts are made by the transitioner through processes

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<sup>12</sup> The four phases *Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment* and *Stabilisation* are italicised throughout this thesis to highlight ongoing fidelity to the theoretical framework.

of assimilation<sup>13</sup> and accommodation<sup>14</sup> to eliminate disruption brought about by the change. Finally, *Stabilisation* is the phase during which people feel comfortable and proficient in the role. In arguing that “ *Even the most stabilised conditions contain the possibility of future change ...*” (1987, p.179), Nicholson contends that stability and equilibrium reached in one career cycle prompts the onset of another transition. For this reason the *Stabilisation* phase of a cycle equals the *Preparation* phase of the next one. Figure 3.1 illustrates the four phases of Nicholson’s career transition cycle and including some cognitive and behavioural characteristics typical of each phase.



*Figure 3.1: Nicholson’s Career Transition Cycle with cognitive and behavioural characteristics of each phase (Adapted from Nicholson, 1987)*

<sup>13</sup>The process where the individual modifies the new environment/role to fit with their existing knowledge/understanding.

<sup>14</sup> The process where the individual modifies their existing cognitive structures to better fit the new environment/role.

Source :Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development (Huitt and Hummel, 2003)

### 3.3.2 Kelly's GLAD model of job change (1980)

Kelly's (1980) job change model of Gains, Losses, Attachment and Detachment (GLAD) presents a matrix of four categories of **attachment** and **detachment gains** and **losses**<sup>15</sup> as illustrated in Table 3.1 below. With respect to career transition, **attachment gains** pertain to the benefits accruing within the new job while **detachment gains** pertain to the benefits of leaving the previous job. Corresponding losses arise from the undesirable characteristics of the new job and relinquishing desirable features of the previous job.

Table 3.1 Kelly's job change model of attachment/ detachment gains and losses

	<b>Gains</b>	<b>Losses</b>
<b>Attachment</b>	Positive aspects of new job	Negative aspects of new job
<b>Detachment</b>	Benefits of leaving previous job	Costs of leaving previous job

### 3.4 Theoretical Framework

Because this study investigates the knowledge, learning and experience acquired by teachers while on secondment to continuing teacher education and its influence on post-secondment career choices, the theoretical framework of the study is located within the unique career journey of a teacher on secondment as a CTE. Headed by the three pillars **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit** as defined in Chapter One, the framework tracks this journey from the teacher's commencement of secondment, through to their onward post-secondment career destination ( i.e. a return to school or onto another setting). The theoretical framework is scaffolded by the two career transition models already detailed above in Section 3.3. Notwithstanding that there are other and more current transition models available, an investigation into these revealed a primary focus on early transitional concepts such as triggers for career change, decision making processes and coping mechanisms employed when first in new positions (Doer, 1995; Janse, Rensburg and Ukpere, 2014). These did not extend to completing the career transition or moving beyond into a subsequent

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<sup>15</sup> The four components of Kelly's model are emboldened throughout this thesis to highlight ongoing fidelity to the theoretical framework.

cycle of transition which was required to address the questions asked in this study. In summary, the relevance and ‘fit’ of the two models chosen here took precedence over their age.

**a) Nicholson's model of career transition (1987)**

In the context of this study, Nicholson’s cyclic phases of *Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment* and *Stabilisation*, facilitates a sequential and logical analysis of a seconded teacher’s journey across the three junctures of **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**. McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992) employed this transition model to explore the experiences of teachers seconded to a variety of education settings including pre-service teacher education.

**b) Kelly’s GLAD model of job change (1980)**

Kelly’s model serves to further granulise the narrative of secondment wherein the peaks and troughs (tensions) of the journey are described as **attachment** or **detachment gains** and **losses** at each of the three stages **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**. The model was also used by McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992) in the context of their aforementioned study.

The collective use of both models throughout the study facilitates the treatment of dichotomous ideas often presenting simultaneously at various points of change and therefore underscores the applicability of **Transitions and Tensions** as the twin overarching concepts of the framework.

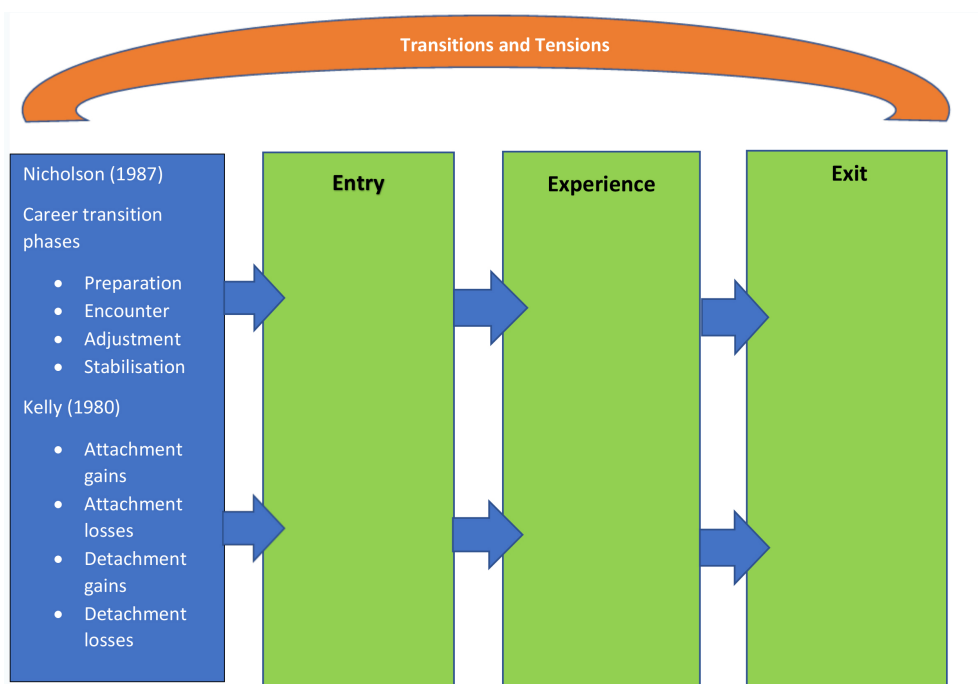


Figure 3.2: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework therefore sets the scene for a study which not alone explores the tensions and transitions of secondment, but exposes the paradoxes and complexities associated with this unique career journey. Beginning at **Entry** with the steep learning curve synonymous with the transition from class teacher to teacher educator, the **Experience** is characterised by a number of further transitions in adjusting to the role coupled with hybridic identity issues and the negotiation of professional boundaries. The most precarious of boundaries and identity struggles arguably manifests as the **Exit** approaches when new tensions emerge between the transformational effects of secondment on personal and professional identities and the limits of secondment tenure. This point in the journey signposts the seductive pull of the dynamic role of the seconded teacher educator which in potentially transforming one's professional identity, conflicts with the push of its uncertain contractual conditions which for many, mobilises alternative career orientations that do not involve a return to school. Irrespective of returning to school or otherwise, it is also the point where the study turns its attention to the next career change where Nicholson's and Kelly's models are brought back into sharp focus unearthing a new set of tensions in the context of a new transition cycle.

### **3.5 Research Design: embracing induction and deduction**

The theoretical framework and its interrelated elements guide this qualitative study which although rooted in an interpretivist tradition, embraces an interplay between deductive and inductive processes. In distinguishing between these processes, Hyde describes the former as "*...commencing with an established theory and seeking if that theory applies to specific instances*" (2000, p.83) and the latter as "*...a theory building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under investigation*" (ibid.).

Qualitative research being dynamic and open-ended, is chiefly associated with inductive methods where new theories are built from the data (Myers, 2000) and where data sets are not limited to predetermined categories as is typically the case in more positivist deductive approaches. However a body of literature over the years (Parke, 1993; Hyde, 2000; Kirk and Miller, 2011), argues that the qualitative researcher can adopt inductive and deductive processes claiming

that such a balance is required in all studies. Indeed according to Parke (1993), an over-reliance on induction can ignore theoretical perspectives often needed to explore certain concepts and likewise extreme deduction potentially precludes the development of fresh theories. In advocating for flexibility, Hyde concludes “...*that most research endeavours proceed by an iterative alternation of induction and deduction, and it is important for researchers to recognise and formalise these processes*” (2000, p.83).

### 3.5.1 Structured Thematic Inquiry: a compatible approach

Structured Thematic Inquiry (STI) (Berkeley, 2014) comprises an approach to research design which concurs with the above school of thought in challenging the presupposition that qualitative research is necessarily entirely inductive in nature. As my research design evolved and matured, I found many of its features to be compatible with key tenets of STI as illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 : Mirror features of Structured Thematic Inquiry and this study

Features of STI (Adapted from Berkeley, 2014)	This study
Berkeley (2014, p.3) uses the term 'structured' to describe a “... <i>well-defined ordered process depicting the organization of a structure or a phenomenon within which common categories, concepts and constructs are explored</i> ”.	This study tracks the career journey of a teacher on secondment to teacher education; a process characterised by three stages ( <b>Entry, Experience Exit</b> ) at which concepts such as identity and constructs such as career stages are explored.
The research is guided by a theoretical framework and supporting <i>concepts</i> . Its aim “... <i>is not mere falsification...but discovery or contemporizing [of] a phenomenon</i> ” (ibid., p.7).	This study is steered by a theoretical framework constructed according to three stages ( <b>Entry, Experience, Exit</b> ) and further scaffolded by two models of career transition which are used to explore the transitions and tensions of the secondment experience. In potentially validating or challenging some of the existing research in the field of teacher education, it aims to 'contemporise' and add to what is known internationally and in the Irish context about the under researched phenomenon of secondment.

<b>Features of STI (Adapted from Berkeley, 2014)</b>	<b>This study</b>
<p>Before data collection, a review of previous studies identifies some main themes considered to be of “...<i>significance to a particular social problem or group of respondents</i>”. As a result, initial ideas in being “...<i>derived from renowned sources</i>” (ibid.,p.4) are used as a springboard for exploration of the phenomenon.</p>	<p>As well as identifying gaps in the field, the review of the literature for this study presents a number of common themes which formed starting points for lines of inquiry.</p>
<p>STI uses interviews as a method where a quasi-deductive approach explores some pre-determined or older themes in sufficient depth to unearth new themes or variation on older ones while also including sub-concepts perceived to be of significance to those themes.</p>	<p>This study employs semi-structured interviews where older themes arising from the literature are used to create avenues of inquiry towards yielding fresh themes in new contexts (i.e. the transition of teacher to teacher educator which is an older concept largely studied at pre-service, is explored in the domain of continuing teacher education and more specifically in the secondment context). Similarly concepts explored in the pre-service literature, such as adult learning and role hybridity, are considered equally worthy of investigation in the context of CTEs.</p>
<p>STI uses a purposive sample of respondents allowing the researcher “... <i>to find out more about a set of specified themes or issues experienced by a particular group of individuals</i>” (ibid., p.6).</p>	<p>This study uses a purposive sample of former CTEs seconded to the PDST who had a particular career experience at a particular time in Irish teacher education policy and are therefore well placed to provide the information and insights required to answer the research question.</p>
<p>STI requires the researcher to be aware that findings are context specific and are not generalisable.</p>	<p>The sampling technique of this study is openly non-probable where the trustworthiness of its findings does not hinge on their being applicable to all teachers ever seconded to the PDST and who subsequently left the service.</p>

<b>Features of STI (Adapted from Berkeley, 2014)</b>	<b>This study</b>
STI uses deductive coding techniques during data analysis in relation to some established themes. The analysis also facilitates the search for new themes using inductive coding until all raw data has been “... <i>categorized in meaningful (thematic identification) ways</i> ” (ibid., p.6).	Deductive analysis is guided by the three pillars of the theoretical framework, two career models and common themes stemming from the literature. Inductive analysis unearths new themes driven by the data themselves. Reflexive thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) is employed as a compatible approach within STI given its openness to both essentialist and constructionist paradigms.
The chief goal of STI is the induction of a systematic body of evidence from respondents that substantiates the relevance of the themes identified.	While accommodating deductive approaches, this study’s overriding epistemology of interpretivism dictates the search for new knowledge where inductive themes are created not only from the data themselves but also generated from deductive analysis.
STI privileges the essence of trustworthiness in qualitative research through the lenses of credibility and authenticity.	Given the qualitative and highly contextualised nature of this study, concepts such as authenticity and trustworthiness were adopted in lieu of validity and reliability orientations.
STI favours the presentation of data in a way that best links new information to the old themes while isolating newly discovered themes.	The study findings are presented according to the three stages of secondment within which new information is detailed as it relates to old themes but also as it stands independently to form new ones.

These mirroring features present STI as a suitable research design for the study where each of its stages observes fidelity to the theoretical framework while embracing the interplay between deductive and inductive perspectives as described now in the next section.



### 3.6 The Theoretical Framework and the Research Design

All stages of the study from the review of the literature to the presentation of findings, adopt the sequence and structure of its theoretical frame while embracing the principles of STI.

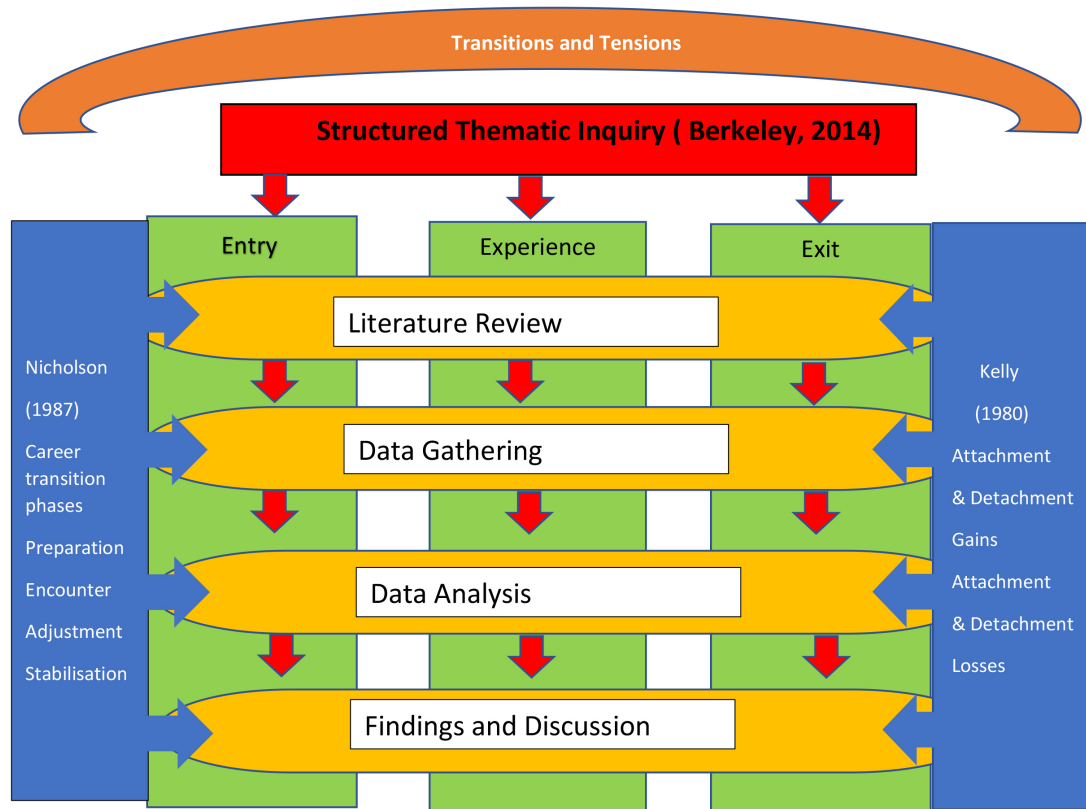


Figure 3.3: Theoretical Framework and the Research Design

#### *The Literature Review*

The main body of the literature review is guided by the theoretical frame in adopting a sequential outline of what existing studies in the field of teacher education tell us about **Entry** to secondment, the **Experience** itself and the **Exit** out of secondment while taking the reader through key transitions and associated tensions through the dual lenses of Nicholson's and Kelly's models. Therefore it signals deductive themes while exposing gaps in the field thus preparing the ground for inductive themes to be later generated.

#### *Data Gathering*

The qualitative interviews investigated the actual secondment journeys of former PDST teacher educators into (**Entry**), through (**Experience**) and out of (**Exit**) the PDST. Three categories of questions were headed accordingly

**(Entry, Experience, Exit)** while exploring breadth (transitions) and depth (tensions) through the application of Nicholson's and Kelly's models respectively. The use of semi-structured interviews reflects STI's quasi-deductive stance where there is latitude for the emergence of inductive data.

### *Data Analysis*

During the data analysis stage, the theoretical framework provided a template for constructing the code book headed by the three pillars, **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** and sub headed by Nicholson's and Kelly's models. This facilitated deductive coding and the generation of themes according to Nicholson's four phases and the inherent tensions presented as Kelly's **attachment /detachment gains** and **losses**. The use of interview for data gathering enabled the inductive identification of codes and themes in line with the study's interpretative stance.

### *Findings and discussion*

The ongoing fidelity to the theoretical framework extends to the final stage of the study where the findings are presented and discussed in three separate chapters titled according to the **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** stages. These chapters provide a new narrative describing the secondment journey from the perspective of the study participants through the lens of Nicholson's four transition phases with the tensions encountered framed within Kelly's **attachment /detachment gains** and **losses**.

## Chapter Four

### Review of the Literature

#### 4.1 Introduction

As foregrounded in Chapter One, despite their vital role in the education and support of teachers, there was a paucity of literature in relation to teacher educators are and what they do until the end of the last century. There has been increased focus on this group over the last two decades but as also outlined in Chapter One, available studies across jurisdictions predominantly pertain to the pre-service sector (inter alia Murray and Male, 2005; Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga 2006; Swennen, Volman and van Essen, 2008; Loughran, 2011; Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen, 2014; Czerniawski, Guberman and MacPhail, 2017; Dolan, 2019). In comparison there is significantly less captured in the field about teacher educators in the CPD sector including their transitioning to the role, identity formation and how they develop as professionals. Studies exploring the experience of those temporarily redeployed from their schools to work as teacher educators for a period of secondment with the intention of returning to school, are equally sparse. The subjects of this research occupy both CPD and secondment categories and so represent a significantly under researched group in teacher education not alone in Ireland, but internationally.

#### 4.2 Searching the literature

The search of the literature for this review included articles, books, book chapters, published web pages, conference proceedings and reports as well as traditional library searches. The electronic databases *Academic Search Complete* and *Web of Science* were consulted, with *Google Scholar* serving as both an additional and back up checking resource. The research question itself guided the search of the literature which employed key terms to locate relevant material; *teacher education, teacher educator, professional identity, secondment, mid-career change teachers*. Overall the search across all key terms reflected the dominance of studies exploring pre-service teacher education over the CPD stage of the continuum. When 'pre-service' was excluded from the search criteria, five papers emerged, but with reference to

the broader teacher education continuum and none that were exclusive to CPD or to secondment. A search for mid-career change in teachers yielded a wealth of studies in relation to second career teachers but none specifically presenting for teachers moving into teacher education.

The search for insights on the experiences of seconded teacher educators proved challenging not only due to its limited prevalence, but also due to the variance in terminologies across systems. Whilst use of the term 'secondment' and 'secondee' is de rigueur in Ireland across the public and private sectors, Canadian studies use the term "non-tenured instructors" (Kosnik and Beck, 2008) when referring to seconded teacher educators with Australian studies adopting the terms "joint appointments" (Costley *et al.*, 2007) and "shadow" or "adjunct faculty members" (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). A total of eleven published articles relating to jurisdictions in Scotland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada emerged across the search engines in relation to secondment to teacher education with nine of these situated exclusively in the pre-service sector, one which crossed pre-service and secondment to government offices and one pilot study in the CPD sector. The aforementioned published research exploring secondment to teacher education in the Irish CPD sector (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) was sourced from one of its authors and this further directed me to a published study in Northern Ireland and another in the Republic (unpublished masters study).

Finally whereby many studies found in relation to teacher educator identity explored the transition from teacher to teacher educator with secondment studies also referencing entry into the field, far less was available about the reverse process of returning to teaching from teacher education. Not surprisingly any studies capturing this aspect were those specifically situated in the secondment context where the imminent return to school was discussed. Five of these studies mentioned teachers moving to alternative career destinations post-secondment with none detailing the transition or eventual outcome of these onward journeys apart from Sutherland and Sloan (1990) who briefly reference the interpersonal and communication skills that the teachers had developed on secondment as benefitting them when working in these other environments. As stated in Chapter One, this highlights a particular gap in the

field and accordingly what this study's research question seeks to explore in relation to transitioning out of a seconded teacher educator role to a destination other than back to the teacher's base school. Appendix E provides a tabular overview of all relevant secondment studies located and consulted for this review.

### **4.3 Overview of sections**

This review draws on all studies gleaned from the above outlined search as well as the literature relating to overarching areas such as teacher educator identity, adult learning and teacher professional development. Notwithstanding the differences between working as a teacher educator in the pre-service sector and the CPD sector, this review draws substantially on pre-service based studies owing to the absence of equivalent research in the CPD arena.

However, there is an acceptance in the field of transferability across the teacher education continuum. Exley (2010, p.8) reminds us that “...*all teacher education has the common denominator of developing outstanding teaching practice in teachers and trainee teachers through the understanding and application of how to engage learners with learning*”. Therefore, it is reasonable in the context of this review to harness the rich vein of knowledge in the field of pre-service teacher education which indicates plausible parallels for CTEs.

The review begins with an exploration of teacher educator identity. Drawing firstly on existing definitions which pertain largely to pre-service teacher education, it advances to highlight some more inclusive understandings of teacher educators as a composite group. At this point the lack of definitions and specific references to the identity of CTEs and those who are seconded to the role emerges clearly, further highlighting the need for their work and identities to be defined and made more visible in the field. The next section explores the transition from teacher to teacher educator which unearths early experiences of the role. The knowledge and skills expected of teacher educators and their implications for professional identity formation, is discussed with specific reference to unique requirements of the role that distinguish it clearly from the role of class teacher. Common disturbances associated with the transition and mechanisms employed by teachers for surviving these are explored across

various studies. It is here where what this study refers to as the 'trilogy of identity shifts' involved in making the transition from teacher to teacher educator, is examined in detail. The blurring of teacher and teacher educator identities gives rise to an additional discussion on how teacher educators typically occupy a 'third space identity' with the unique position of seconded teacher educators also highlighted in this context.

Given the centrality of secondment to my research question, a substantial part of the review is devoted to interrogating the available studies which are largely located abroad and also in the pre-service sector. Not surprisingly much is derived from the aforementioned Tuohy and Lodge (2003) study given its focus on teacher secondment to the CPD sector in Ireland. This section of the review observes a sequential outline of what the literature tells us about **Entry** to secondment, the **Experience** itself and the **Exit** out of secondment; a chronology mirrored throughout this study in line with its theoretical framework described in the previous chapter. Accordingly the literature relating to career dynamics also explored in that chapter, is incorporated into the text where it finds meaning throughout the secondment journey with particular attention to Nicholson and Kelly's models given their status within the theoretical framework. With regard to the latter part of the journey, the tensions arising from uncertainty of tenure and termination of secondment contracts are afforded significant import here given their influence on life after secondment which constitutes a crucial part of the research question. The chapter concludes with an outline of themes and thoughts prompted by the literature review which further informed the data gathering phase and lines of inquiry pursued.

#### **4.4 Parameters of the review**

The corpus of knowledge that already exists in relation to pre-service teacher educators, who they are and what they do, has been acknowledged many times so far in this thesis and is liberally referenced throughout the key themes of this literature review. These themes outlined above in Section 4.3, pertain to teacher educator identity, the shift from teacher to teacher educator, third space identity while in the role and the journey of secondment into, through and out of secondment as a teacher educator. Such elements were prioritised within the limited scope of this review according to their transferability to the CTE and in

particular their relevance to the discourse of career transitions and tensions. Chapter Three has foregrounded the concept of identity and related career disturbances as central to this discourse generally and more specifically in relation to the teaching profession. Reasons for affording an extensive part of the review to the secondment experience across the three stages **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit** have been provided in Section 4.3.

Notwithstanding these choices, I do wish to acknowledge the ongoing swell of literature in relation to teacher educators in the pre-service sector firstly regarding the professional learning needs of pre-service teacher educators and secondly in relation to the emerging sub group of school-based teacher educators. Much has been studied and written about the learning needs of higher education-based teacher educators (Czerniawski *et al.*; 2017; MacPhail *et al.*, 2018) and professional learning pathways throughout their career (Guberman *et al.*, 2021) with international comparisons also available (Van der Klink *et al.*, 2017). A body of research conducted through the lens of expansive learning (Engeström, 2001) examines their learning outside the workplace (Murray *et al.*, 2020), the extent to which working with schools contributes to their learning (Postholm, 2020) and their acquisition of research competence (Smith, 2020). Of particular note here is the contribution of the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED), a group of established teacher educators set up nine years ago towards promoting “...*more coherent national infrastructures for the professional development of teacher educators, in whichever education setting they work, and the diversity of their roles in supporting the initial education, induction, and career-long learning of teachers*” (International Forum for Teacher Educator Development, 2019, p.6). InFo-TED’s work to date includes the development of a conceptual model for pre-service teacher educator professional learning (Vanassche *et al.*, 2021) and a set of related principles encompassing ownership over content, working as learning communities and workplace learning (Tack *et al.*, 2021). There has also been greater profiling of school-based teacher educators defined by White, Dickerson and Weston (2015, p.445) as “...*experienced teachers taking on more responsibility for teacher education whilst remaining in their school as teachers, rather than entering the higher education sector to become teacher educators*”. A body of literature in the field explores their career trajectories and

learning needs as a distinct group of teacher educators (White, 2019), their “*poly-contextualised identities*” (Czerniawski, Kidd and Murray, 2019, p.171) and the professional boundaries they span between schools and universities (Parker, Zenkov and Glaser, 2021). The aforementioned scope of this review does not facilitate a detailed exploration of these other themes not least because they are rooted in the pre-service sector. Whereby the review draws on studies in the pre-service sector in relation to identity, hybrid third spaces, career transition and secondment, that is because such themes were considered to be particularly relevant and transferable to the subjects of this research; teachers seconded as full time CTE’s to a national CPD support service. The next four sections will explore these themes in turn.

#### **4.5 Identity and the teacher educator**

In the context of its main actors (teachers seconded as CTEs), this study views identity as a “...*socially and culturally constructed ‘self’ formed through a life’s experiences and through communication about these experiences*” (McKeon and Harrison, 2010, p.27) while also noting Gee’s generic framing of identity as “*Being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’, in a given context*” (2000, p.1). Flores and Day (2006, p.220) in discussing the identity formation of teachers, posit it as “...*an ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one’s own values and experiences*” with Maclure (1993, p.313) framing it as a “...*continuing site of struggle*” given the particular influence of work contexts. This struggle is considered to be compounded when applied to the professional lives of teacher educators (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Vloet and Van Swet, 2010) due to the multifaceted nature of their identity and so, forming an identity as a teacher educator “...*is best understood as a process of becoming*” (Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006, p.6).

##### **4.5.1 Towards an inclusive definition for teacher educators**

Despite the work of teacher educators holding significant import for education systems worldwide and while it has received greater attention in recent years, there is broad agreement that the profession of teacher educators is neither well defined nor understood (inter alia Khan 2011; Tryggvason, 2012; Flores, 2017).



According to Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2016), this paradox between the recognition of teacher educators' importance yet limited profile in research, can be partly explained by assumptions that teacher educators simply teach student teachers in universities instead of pupils in school. The literatures' weighted attention towards pre-service teacher educators to the neglect of teacher educators in the CPD sector, arguably results in narrow definitions such as the following which appears in a systemic literature review of teacher educator identity;

Teacher educators instruct, guide, teach and support student teachers Koster *et al.*, 2005); and their roles include teaching and supervising student teachers, designing curriculum, working with school-based mentors and contributing to scholarship and research (Murray, Swennen and Shagrir, 2008).

(Izadinia, 2014, p.426)

Data gathered from 18 European countries represented in the Thematic Working Group 'Teacher Professional Development' (Caena, 2012) show that in half of the surveys, the teacher educator profession is conceptualised narrowly with the term 'teacher educator' being applied only to staff in higher education. Whereby Livingston (2014, p.218) refers to teacher educators more broadly as "...*those who teach teachers*", this attempt to broadly define what they do could be viewed as "...*a somewhat curious distant mutation of a teacher into a 'teacher at arm's length'*" (Compton *et al.*, 2019, p.5). Lainer and Little on the other hand, signal the need for a wider definition in arguing that "*While it is known that a teacher educator is one who teaches teachers, the composite of those who teach teachers is loosely defined*" (1986, p.528). In the same vein there are many possible connotations and complexities attached to the different constructed roles of 'teacher educator' dependent on the specific remit of the teacher educator and the audiences with whom they work. Boyd and White bring some unity to the term by defining teacher educators as "*All those who have a formal active role in the facilitation of professional learning by student teachers and teachers*" (2017, p.126) with an earlier definition by Dengerink, Lunenberg and Kools (2015) acknowledging the work of teacher educators in the teacher induction and CPD settings. In expanding on Swennen and Van der Klink's (2009) description, Exley and Ovenden-Hope (2013, p.12) embrace both formal and informal learning opportunities while explicitly

referencing the CPD teacher educator in their definition;

Teacher educators are not only the ‘teachers of teachers who are engaged in the induction and professional learning of future teachers’ but also those involved in mentoring, instructing and supporting the professional development of practicing teachers outside of a formal course or programme of study.

#### **4.5.2 Defining the continuing teacher educator**

Specific definitions for CTEs in the context of their unique role in teachers’ career-long professional learning, are seriously lacking throughout the literature despite the unique features of their work. Although the work of all teacher educators involves the teaching of adults, the target group in the CPD sector are practising teachers, discernible from pre-service or inductee teachers in bringing years of experience and in particular long held assumptions, to the professional learning setting. In this respect and as already signalled in Chapter One, the CTE is charged with challenging fixed beliefs and entrenched practices often rooted in robust school cultures which “... *do not change by mandate, [but] change by the specific displacement of existing norms*” (Elmore, 2004, p.11). Furthermore, the work of CTEs is frequently concerned with the implementation of top down policy and curriculum reform thus bringing an added appendage of complexity in confronting established teachers with ideas they may not want to entertain. For this reason, Villeneuve-Smith, West and Bhinder locate CTEs as having the unique task of guiding their experienced teacher colleagues through the messy process of reform while supporting them “...*to negotiate the changes in the “policy weather”*” (2009, p.12). Crucially however, lest the motive for CPD be solely attached to slavishly implementing policy change, its core essence is rooted in the notion of career- long learning where teachers seek and develop the knowledge and skills essential to maintaining effective practice. To this end, change is identified with learning and adopting “...*a disposition to examine one’s own practice critically and systematically*” (Schön, 1983, p.156). Effective teacher professional development in this setting often creates synergies by disturbance in daring teachers to go beyond purely inward scrutiny to shared critical engagement. This locates the work of the CTE within constructivist learning settings where they are comfortable with creating professional dissonance while skilfully scaffolding the knowledge then built among teachers.

### **4.5.3 Defining the seconded teacher educator**

Scant attention to seconded teacher educators in the literature also renders limited the pool of available definitions for this group and as already outlined in relation to the literature search, the term 'secondment' is not a universal one across education jurisdictions. A small number of studies consulted however yielded some meanings considered to be appropriate to the subjects of this research. According to McMichael, Draper and Gatherer "*The term 'secondment' is generally used to refer to the short-term assignment of a professional person from one institution or organisation to another*" involving "...*some significant changes in conditions of employment...accountability and professional commitment*" (1992, p.6). Research in Australia (Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011, p.40) defines seconded teachers as "...*members of a school who have agreed to work in an education faculty for limited time...while they are still being employed by a school body...after which they are expected to return to their school positions*". Despite the short-term secondment of teachers being the preferred mode of supporting the professional learning of established teachers in Ireland for decades now, policy's definition is less than comprehensive simply referring to the seconded teacher as "*An employee who is on temporary assignment under the terms of a formal secondment arrangement*" (DES, 2006, p.2). However as explored later in Section 4.7.2, the temporary and uncertain nature of secondment renders identity development for this group particularly complex given their belonging to both their base school and the seconding body. Furthermore, developments discussed in Section 4.8.3 relating to the transformative influence of secondment not only raises for them the question of 'Who am I now?', but also, 'Who do I want to be in the future?'

### **4.6 From teacher to teacher educator**

There is general agreement that experience as a school teacher is desirable for those entering the field of teacher education given the pedagogical experience and knowledge that many teachers have to offer the role (Badali and Housego, 2000; McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Williams, Ritter and Bullock, 2012). That said, studies exploring the transition from teacher to teacher educator warn against "...*a common taken for- granted assumption that a good teacher will also make a good teacher educator*" (Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005, p.110). Requiring knowledge and skills very different to that required in

the classroom, the role of teacher educator privileges a pedagogy of teacher education as distinct from a pedagogy of teaching, and a deep understanding of what it means to teach *about* teaching (Loughran, 2006; Williams and Ritter, 2010). Also on a fundamental level, teacher education involves the teaching of adults not children. Although thinking in the field of andragogy has long eschewed a crude dichotomy between the ways adults and children learn, it does however present a continuum along which some distinct adult learning orientations lie with implications for those who teach them (Hartree, 1984; Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2012; Loeng, 2018). Consequently, Murray and Male (2005, p.3) assert that becoming a ‘teacher of teachers’ “...*entails the learning of new social mores...and the creation of a new professional identity*”. Accordingly, several studies tracking the journey from class teacher to teacher educator characterise it as fraught with role conflict and identity challenges (inter alia Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006; Bullock and Christou, 2009; Wood and Borg, 2010; Loughran, 2011). In particular, specific issues arise from teachers’ enduring attachments to their core identity as classroom practitioners where as teacher educators, they continue to rely on their capabilities and successful histories as classroom teachers, often to the neglect of developing the new skillset required for ‘the teaching of teachers’ (Murray and Male, 2005; Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006 ; Martinez, 2008; Swennen and Van de Klink, 2009; Boyd and Harris, 2010; McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Carrillo and Baguley, 2011). At the heart of this matter is an identity misalignment between teacher educators’ “substantial selves” (Southworth, 1995), that is who they are given their prior teacher professional identity, and their “situational selves” (ibid.), that is who they need to be in the new teacher education context. Hence a duality between the selves emerges often resulting in unanticipated tensions between what they are and what they are to become during this transition.

#### **4.6.1 A trilogy of identity shifts**

Having consulted the literature, I have identified three key shifts involved in the particular career transition being explored here. Each of these are afforded a specific sub-section below headed by single quotes from the literature which I believe capture their essence. Although the studies referenced predominantly pertain to the pre-service setting, these shifts are equally relevant to teachers

taking up roles in continuing teacher education given that “*We are all teachers of teachers’ and can identify difficulties in the transitions into this role*” and so “*It is expected that colleagues across teacher education will see resonance here with their own experiences*” (Exley and Ovenden-Hope, 2013, p.5). Similarly, with regard to seconded teacher educators, Kosnik and Beck argue that many of the issues affecting the general body of teachers transitioning to teacher education “*...have application to the situation of non-tenure-line instructors, often to an even greater extent. They too need to make the transition from school teaching to teacher education, and from the identity of teacher to that of teacher educator* (2008, p.189).

#### *4.6.1a From Pedagogue to Andragogue*

*“No teacher-training college hen can lay an adult education egg”*  
(Mackaye, 1931, p.294)

While the daily work of the class teacher concerns the teaching of children and young people (pedagogy), the teacher educator works with adults who are either preparing or practising teachers. The concept of adult learning or andragogy (Knowles, 1980) is founded on a number of key principles also acknowledged by other thinkers in this field (Brookfield, 1986; Savicevic, 2008; Henschke, 2015). Three of these principles are highlighted here in relation to teacher education.

Firstly, adults are self-directed learners. As far back as 1926, Lindeman hallmarked the role of the adult educator as facilitative, wherein they are not “*...the oracle who supplies answers...[their] function is not to profess but to evoke, to draw out, not pour in*” (p.219). Adult learners typically resist learning when they perceive ideas or actions to be imposed on them (Fidishun, 2000). In this respect andragogy privileges collaborative approaches emphasising more equality between the teacher and learner (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2012). These points collectively posit the role of the teacher educator as engaging in a process of mutual inquiry with teachers while skilfully and non-intrusively crafting the learning environment for the teacher audience who ultimately decide the content.

Secondly while adults possess a reservoir of knowledge and life experience that can be richly applied to the new learning setting, Knowles, Holton and Swanson remind us that *“As we accumulate experience, we tend to develop mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking”* (2012, p.65). As previously discussed in relation to the unique role of the CTE and supported by a wealth of studies, this is evident among teachers during periods of policy or curricular reform in their resistance of practices considered to be unnecessary or out of step with their habitual and accepted hegemonies (Hargreaves 1994; Stoll and Fink, 1996; Cuban and Usdan, 2002; Elmore, 2004). Consequently, it demands sophisticated enablement approaches on behalf of the CTE towards supporting them to interpret, make meaning of, manage and enact changes in policy and curricular expectations.

Thirdly and closely linked to the previous point, adults become ready to learn when *“...they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems”* (Knowles, 1980, p.44). For many practising teachers this accompanies the process of change. CTEs specifically, are charged with raising awareness of change, encouraging it, and guiding it towards growth. Therefore, in facilitating the personalisation of knowledge, whether as experience, understanding or content, *“Teacher education could be said to exist for the facilitation of change in adults becoming effective teachers”* (Exley, 2010, p.26).

Studies have shown that problems arise from a lack of attention to adult learning processes in teacher educator development programmes with beginning teacher educators claiming to *“...have never received education and training...[regarding]...learning appropriate for adult learners (student teachers and professional teachers”* (Buchberger *et al.*, 2000, pp.57-58). Badali and Housego (2000) reported that misjudgements about ways adults learn became a major issue for teachers seconded to the university setting where they *“...expected that it would be easier to teach adults than children”* (p.335). Similarly, in the CPD context, teacher educators were surprised to discover a marked difference between teaching children and working with groups of adults

with power dynamics in particular emerging as a new challenge with the latter (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003).

#### *4.6.1b From instructor to facilitator*

*“The image of teaching as telling permeates every move we make as teachers far more deeply than we would ever care to admit to ourselves or others”*

(Russell, 1999, p.222)

A wide body of literature about teaching and teacher education illuminates the myths of teachers and teacher educators as the founts of knowledge on which learning depends (inter alia Britzman, 1986; Labaree, 2000; Berry, 2008; Garbett, 2012; Beeman Cadwallader, Buck and Trauth-Nare, 2014). Studies show that over-attachment to teacher identity often leads new teacher educators to behave as instructors rather than as facilitators of teacher learning (Maclure, 1993; Loughran and Berry, 2005; Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006; Williams, 2014). A self-study (Allen, Rogers and Borowski, 2016) reported a tendency for the teacher educator to direct student teachers to teach as they did themselves while offering solutions that worked for them. In another self-study, Bullock (2007) found that he embraced didactic approaches and assumptions that jarred with supporting student teachers to craft their own practices. Murray and Male's (2005) research similarly concluded that transmissive and biographical practices were common in beginning teacher educators. In the first instance this is problematic in modern learning environments where there is *“... preference for an approach that focuses on ‘helping learners to learn, as distinct to teaching them’* (Sotto, 2007, p.125). Secondly as outlined above, it is contrary to the principles of andragogy which acknowledge adults as self-directed learners and which recognise the knowledge they bring to the learning setting. This notion of all-knowing specialist set against the learning facilitator, highlights *“... the tension between informing teachers about what they ‘should’ know and encouraging them to analyse practice and be self-directed”* (Beeman Cadwallader, Buck and Trauth-Nare, 2014, p.73). Accordingly, Loughran in situating teacher education beyond the realm of recounting one's backstory or providing teachers with a

catalogue of tried and tested ideas, contends that “*Knowledge and practice of ‘teaching’ requires much more than the simple delivery of information about teaching, or sharing tips and tricks that have accumulated through school teaching experience*” (2014, p.275). Similarly, in confronting biographical attempts to have learners reproduce the practices once used by the teacher educator, Berry asserts that “*Learning to teach does not mean learning to teach like me*” (2008, p.46). While critiquing some teacher educator induction programmes for focusing on “tricks of the trade”, Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006, p.1021) claim that what new entrants to the role need is guidance in “...*how to connect theory and practice in such a way that teachers [are] able to handle the problems of everyday teaching through theory-guided action*”.

The research is clear that the purpose of teacher education is not to indoctrinate teachers to behave in prescribed ways. In the context of CPD specifically, Timperley *et al.* (2007, p. xxi) assert that “*Professional Development is not something that is ‘done’ to teachers...it must engage teachers as thinking professionals rather than... technicians who merely need to be taught what to do*”. At the most fundamental level a philosophy of teacher enablement eschews the notion of “expert”. Wisdom gathered in the field of transformative learning across the professions tells us that effective professional development focuses less on telling and more on unlocking peoples’ potential through facilitative inquiry towards self-construction of their own knowledge and growth (Mezirow, 1991; Rogers and Freiberg, 1994; Levinson, 1996; Whitmore, 2017). Further if “*Experience is the adult learner’s living textbook*” (Lindeman, 1926, p.10), then teacher learning environments should also allow them to delve into those experiences, develop a deeper understanding of them, and in doing so, assume ownership of their own professional development. Telling however, is a powerfully seductive notion as in the first instance it appears the right thing to do, and secondly it is easier (Berry, 2008). Telling means avoiding the vacuum in dialogue created by “Wait time” (Rowe, 1974), the silence that may expose gaps in one’s knowledge and the discomfort of withholding judgment. Therefore, breaking free from the ‘trap of telling’ and casting off the role of perceived expert, requires a leap of faith where “...*withdrawing the authority of experience*” (Berry 2008, p.33) opens up a space where unknowns are likely to



arise in the absence of a pre-planned presentation or narrative. "*None but the humble become good teachers of adults*" (Gessner, 1956, p.166) and the ability to allow for fluid and unpredictable exchange comes with a confidence to "...willingly abandon their own status and power in order to enhance the capacity and independence of their audience" (Labaree, 2000, p.233).

#### *4.6.1c From first-order practitioner to second-order practitioner*

"Teacher educators distinguish themselves from teachers because they are practising second-order professionals" (Swennen, Jones and Volman, 2010, p.141).

Fundamental to making the transition from teacher to teacher educator is the shift from first-order to second-order practitioner. This idea was first conceptualised by Murray (2002) who describes first-order knowledge as teachers' knowledge of the two inextricably linked areas of subject and pedagogical knowledge, and second-order as being knowledge and understanding of teacher education and teachers as learners themselves. All school teachers teach in a first-order setting and use first-order knowledge to teach their pupils. While this is indeed an asset to being a teacher educator, "...difficulties with respect to identity and to expertise almost always arise" while moving from "...a position of expertise in their subject disciplines to a novice position as teacher educator" (Dolan, 2019, p.189). The conflict presents when new teacher educators recognise that first-order practice alone is not sufficient for a role that requires a new body of knowledge and expertise that, in part, draws on first-order experience as a schoolteacher, but also concerns additional skills associated with the second-order domain of 'teaching teachers'. Murray and Male contend that "...it is achieving this double focus, which makes the transition from schoolteacher to teacher educator particularly unique" (2005, p.21). Studies of beginning teacher educators in the pre-service sector found that they continued to call upon their first-order proficiency and so perceived their effectiveness as teacher educators accordingly (Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005; Murray and Male, 2005; Livingston and Shiach, 2013). The literature therefore indicates that whilst content and experiential knowledge provide a solid foundation for beginning teacher educators, the role demands an

additional ability to develop teachers' understanding and pedagogical competencies coupled with the range of facilitative and communicative skills inherent to the two other components of the 'trilogy'.

#### **4.6.2 From expert to novice**

The literature exploring the transition from teacher to teacher educator presents many ideas that rationalise why beginning teacher educators continue to consciously or unconsciously persist with behaviours described so far in this section as antithetical to their new roles (Loughran and Berry, 2005; Swennen, Volman and van Essen, 2008; Wood and Borg, 2010; Livingston, 2014). It also provides insights into the relative impermeability of their parent identity or "substantive selves" (Southworth, 1995) as they negotiate the identity shifts explored above. Beginning teacher educators as former teachers have identities that form the starting point for their development as teacher educators (Maclure, 1993). The literature shows that in believing classroom teaching to be their key strength, they explicitly proclaim their first-order identity when working with teachers (Badali and Housego, 2000; Cuenca, 2010; Williams, 2014). Williams, Ritter and Bullock (2012, p.248) state that prior identity and practice is of extreme importance to them because "*...many beginning teacher educators perceived this as part of their professional credibility in the eyes of teachers in schools*". Studies also attribute teacher educators' reliance on their former teaching experiences to mechanisms for outwardly indicating authority or status in their new role (McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Murray and Male, 2005) while teacher educators in a study by Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga (2006) used their class teacher biographies to portray an assured professional stance. Others such as Ritter (2007) reported that resistance to shifting identities was rooted in a fear of 'selling out' on his former school colleagues thus indicating a loyalty to his origins as class teacher.

Studies have also shown that beginning teacher educators' propensity to dictate rather than facilitate finds expression in teachers' beliefs that the duty of teacher educators is to tell or show 'how it's done' (McDiarmid, 1990). Louie *et al.* (2002) for example found a common compulsion among beginning teacher educators to keep their audience satisfied by presenting immediate solutions even if it was to the detriment of the teachers taking responsibility for their own learning.

Some studies found this to be particularly the case in accountability contexts where teachers' own mode of classroom instruction was being dictated by high stakes student exams (Trumbell, 1999; Berry, 2008). This suggests that teacher educators in these scenarios believe their credentials to be evaluated according to the extent to which they 'fix things' for teachers and that resisting the lure to acquiesce risks unpopularity with their audience.

Novice teacher educators' quest to find some sense of competence and comfort in their work correlates with a very vulnerable time in career transitioning where "*...emotions that accompany feeling unprepared, incompetent, and unsure of belonging, can affect the willingness or ability to take on a teacher educator identity*" (Newbury, 2014, p.172). Studies exploring this transition are replete with references to the shock experienced by beginning teacher educators in discovering the reality of the role and its required skillsets (Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006; Wood and Borg, 2010). In moving from a classroom role executed with relative ease and confidence, they can perceive themselves as experts becoming novices again (Murray and Male, 2005; Dolan, 2019). Kosnik and Beck (2008) found that newly seconded teacher educators felt deskilled and inadequate when first navigating the second-order context. Commonly known as Imposter Syndrome (Clance, 1985), they viewed themselves to be fraudulent newcomers which can lead to a practice of 'masquerading' (Murray and Male, 2005), essentially "*...faking it, trying to look as though they know what they doing*" (Brookfield, 2017, p.227). Efforts to disguise the veil of novice were evidenced in beginning teacher educators who "*...having to start again to gain the respect that [they] once had when working in schools, [used] their teaching experience and status as a basis from which to 'prove' [themselves]*" (Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011, p.37). However the literature acknowledges early teacher educators' efforts to assert credibility and present a proficient exterior at this juncture as somewhat understandable, not least "*...because they feel most confident and competent in their primary role*" (Livingston, 2014, p.226). Indeed Rust (2018, p.52) reminds us that

We can no more expect of beginning teacher educators that they have a broad and deep understanding of professional learning and the whole dynamic of teacher education than we can expect beginning teachers to have deep understandings of their content and of pedagogy appropriate to that content.

### **4.6.3 Struggle of the selves**

It is clear from the research that new teacher educators search for meaning during a transition where their 'situational and substantive selves' (Southworth, 1995) are in tension. Ibarra describes this as a process of trying on and rehearsing various roles where those new to a job "...*experiment with provisional selves that serve as trials for possible but not yet fully elaborated professional identities* (1999, p.764). She points out that the greatest threat to progressing the transition is the individual themselves. Applying this to teachers transitioning to teacher education, and where the two selves are distinctly out of step, the research indicates that the substantial self is a set of embedded beliefs relatively impervious to change (Southworth, 1995), often acting as a constraint on the evolution of one's practice (Berry, 2007) and therefore a barrier to a successful transition (Allen, Rogers and Borowski, 2016). Wood and Borg (2010, p.17) add that this is further compounded by "*An assumption of a seamless transition from the classroom and an inability to predict a struggle in the alignment of selves...*". In relation to career transition, the simultaneous shifts required of beginning teacher educators bring to mind what Nicholson calls 'complex career transitions' where "...*multiple adaptations must be made...conceived as nested transition cycles - wheels within wheels*" (1987, p. 205). Not surprisingly and as further discussed in Section 4.8.2, it has been concluded that it can take up to three years to establish an identity as a teacher of teachers (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Murray and Male, 2005).

### **4.7 The third space: a hybrid identity**

The literature is united in concluding that the transition from teacher to teacher educator is neither straightforward nor unproblematic. In particular it highlights the complex challenge concerning the tenacity with which beginning teacher educators cling onto their role as first-order practitioners. Some studies in fact show that the power of the first-order identity is such that most teacher educators never completely shed their initial identity (Badali and Housego, 2000; Kosnik and Beck, 2008). As discussed in the last section, overplaying that identity constrains professional growth as teacher educators with Boyd and Harris (2010) further contending that excessive long-term attachment to teacher identity risks conservatism in teacher education. However, others caution against the abandonment of first-order experience and identity. Williams, Ritter

and Bullock (2012, p.249) citing Law, Meijers and Wijers (2002), argue that “...*individuals in the process of establishing a new career identity need to develop a personal narrative that incorporates past experiences into their learning in new professional contexts*”. In the case of new teacher educators, their previous identity as a teacher is an essential part of that narrative with Jordan, Hawley and Washel (2016, p.239) asserting that we “...*never disconnect from our teacher selves...*” and so “*We must remember and deeply reflect on the issues that concerned us as teachers*”. This indicates that beginning teacher educators need to examine their beliefs and values grounded in past experience while discerning their compatibility with their new roles and identities as teacher educators. It also suggests that for teacher educators generally, a wholesale move to second-order practice to the complete neglect of first-order practice, is not desirable. In this respect, Davey (2013) signals a need for teacher educators to navigate both first and second-order practices simultaneously involving “...*an ongoing negotiation or dialogue among one’s past history and experiences and one’s current socio-cultural and politico-historical context*” (p.143). Emerging here is a hybrid identity (Klein *et al.*, 2013) where teacher educators need to privilege “...*practices and discourses of both school teaching and teacher education*” (Murray and Male, 2005, p.2, emphasis mine).

#### **4.7.1 Defining the third space**

Engeström (2004, p.16) locates the third space, or hybridity (Bhabha,1996), as the overlap or interaction between two main sites of professional practice claiming that this “...*puts a heavy emphasis on bridging, boundary crossing...and negotiation...*”. The literature applies the concept of a third space to teacher educators who need to develop boundary practices in managing their dual professional identities as teachers and teacher educators (Zeichner, 2010; Williams, Ritter and Bullock, 2012; Davey 2013; Pereira, Lopes and Marta, 2015). Efforts to manage this third space are illustrated by Williams’ (2014) study of teacher educators in Australia, The Netherlands, and United Kingdom who occupied roles in a university and in a school. Third space conflict manifested in promoting policy ideals as teacher educators on one hand while appreciating the reality of classroom practice on the other having been teachers

themselves. Williams observed that *“As teachers transition to become teacher educators...their views on learning and teaching broaden and deepen, even though they maintain a strong empathy for the work of teachers in schools”* (ibid, p.325). The teacher educators in the study, in realising the need to remain cognisant of first-order classroom challenges while still working full time as a second-order practitioner, had to tailor their approach to meet the needs of teachers without compromising the expectations of policy.

The situational /substantive self-dichotomy discussed earlier typically requires the negotiation of third space boundaries in straddling the trilogy of transitional shifts explored in Section 4.6.1. In fact Williams (2013, p.128) concludes that *“The challenges and tensions involved in developing these boundary practices are essential elements of the evolving identity and practice as a teacher educator”*. Crucially this requires an acceptance that their work comprises a number of opposing forces and a willingness not alone to straddle both, but to carve out third spaces by rejecting practice binaries (Zeichner, 2010). Thereafter there is a need for them to *“...enact the boundary by addressing and articulating meanings and perspectives of various intersecting worlds”* (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p.141). According to Rust (2018, pp.9-10), *“...the very complexity of the field [teacher education] requires a powerful shift in practice and in thinking - a shift that enables a commitment to experimentation at every level, a tolerance for multiple, even seemingly conflicting models”*. For teacher educators this suggests an agentic identity reconstruction (Flores and Day, 2006) where they actively craft alternative spaces where they can accept binary tensions while continuing to be effective in the two main spaces. Consequently and in the context of broader system adaptivity, it is closely aligned to the concept of ‘harnessing complexity’ which involves *“... living with it and even taking advantage of it, rather than trying to ignore or eliminate it”* (Axelrod and Cohen, 2000, p.9).

#### **4.7.2 Secondment: a unique third space**

The foregoing discussion outlines the unique identity and role boundary challenges faced by teacher educators generally, but it would be remiss to ignore additional issues facing seconded teacher educators that can militate against third space construction. In their study of teachers seconded from their

base school to a university, Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway (2010) highlight the tensions associated with belonging to cultures of both school and institution, thus locating them as “*neither fish nor fowl*” (p.51). The same study found status to be an issue for seconded staff who enjoyed less privileges than full time staff, were not privy to inside knowledge and resources and who “...*remain on the periphery unable to become fully absorbed in the “culture of practice”*” (ibid., p.41). Kosnik and Beck (2008) in exploring professional identities of non-tenure teacher educators in universities, found that the development and/or realignment of identity becomes yet more complicated as secondees know that they will probably return to their school environments. By the same token, Badali and Housego concluded that “*Seconded teachers do not appear to develop secure identities as teacher educators*” (2000, p.336). This suggests that negotiating a third space boundary is either delayed or retarded given the limited time they have to develop stable identities as teacher educators in the first instance. Indeed, research into seconded teacher educators (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993) points to the uncertainty of their temporary contracts as further compounding this issue. A study of pre-service seconded teachers (Kosnik and Beck, 2008, p.195) observed that in waiting for contracts to be renewed, many “...*kept a foot in both camps*” and consequently “*They could not begin to reframe their identity as teacher educators because they might not have a long-term future at the university*” (ibid.). Findings in the Irish context (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Sugrue, 2011) and elsewhere (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Taylor et al., 2011), show that annual anxiety regarding contract renewal drove secondees to seek alternative ‘third space careers’ in education settings beyond their base school and seconded positions. This is discussed in detail in Section 4.8.3.

While the literature clearly distinguishes the professional identities of teacher educators from those of classroom teachers, it also shows that they are not mutually exclusive. Consequently, it highlights the unique challenges faced by teacher educators in shifting professional identities as teachers and teacher educators, and as a result having to not alone inhabit, but construct third space identities. However an acceptance of this and having permission to “...*deliberate about alternatives rather than making choices*” (Nicol, 1997, p.96), facilitates teacher educators to operate as hybrid professionals. Seconded

teacher educators encounter additional hybrid complexities. In remaining employed as teachers by their schools while working in another organisation as teacher educators and in holding temporary contracts of uncertain renewal, they are tasked with brokering more complex third space identities than the general teacher educator population. And so if identity formation as a teacher educator is a process of 'becoming' (Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006), then "*...for instructors working in shadows (seconded teacher educators), what are **they** becoming? What identity could, or should, **they** construct?*" (Kosnik and Beck, 2008, p.198, emphasis mine).

#### **4.8 Teachers seconded to teacher education: from entry to exit**

As stated from the outset of this chapter, while there has been an increased understanding of the work and identity development of teacher educators as a group, the stories of teachers seconded to teacher education are relatively rare with almost all of those available focussed on the pre-service sector. In appreciating that many of the pre-service experiences of transitioning and of the work itself can be transferred to CTEs and also to secondees in either sector, the stories of teachers seconded to teacher education differ considerably from those transferring to the field in permanent capacities. The nature of their short-term appointments while still employed by and belonging to their parent school, means that seconded teacher educators experience a unique career journey of entering, experiencing and exiting, resulting in multiple career adaptations (Nicholson, 1987) and complex hybrid identity issues with career uncertainty and instability emerging as a particularly serious issue.

Studies examining the professional experience of teachers seconded to teacher education tend to adopt a linear approach in tracking the journey from entry to secondment through to the return to school (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000; Kosnik and Beck, 2008; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2010; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). In keeping with the study's theoretical framework, this section adopts a similar chronology through the stages of **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**. The two career models supporting the framework facilitate richer



exploration of these stages through the lenses of transitions (Nicholson,1987) and related tensions featuring as career gains and losses (Kelly,1980).

#### **4.8.1 Entry**

Chapter Three has outlined how the process of career transition begins as soon as employees reflect on their current job and take initial steps to investigate other options (Nicholson,1987; Bruce,1991). Likewise, studies exploring the movement of teachers into teacher education show transition commencing before they actually leave their teaching role. With reference to the previously discussed flat career structure of teaching, the studies report that such teachers seek secondments having exhausted the limited career avenues available in school (inter alia McEachern and Polley,1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Wood and Borg, 2010). Costley *et al.*'s (2007) findings further indicate that the quest for change was not financially driven as teachers in their study accepted a secondment despite a reduction in income, which supports the broader aforementioned literature showing that salary prospects feature relatively low on teachers' list of career satisfiers (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Morgan *et al.*, 2010).

Chapter Three's exploration of career motivation referenced that a number of unique push and pull factors influence decisions to change career. Classified by Costley *et al.* as "...very good teachers with a desire to contribute more broadly" and as having "...a vision that extends beyond their classrooms" (2007, p.50), teachers seeking career enhancement through secondment to teacher education are considered to be "...powerfully motivated to escape from their teaching job, the limitations of the role and associated environmental constraints" (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer,1992, p.2). Significantly all studies consulted converged on the push factor associated with school culture and leadership. Tuohy and Lodge (2003, p.39) reported frustration at the disparity "...between their vision for specific needs they identified in their school and the views or attitudes of colleagues and management" with the same study highlighting school leader lack of recognition of their abilities and peer resentment of their career aspirations. Research participants of Wood and Borg (2010) and Holme, Robb and Berry (2016) similarly felt removed from their peers, describing the school environment as stale, toxic and lacking intellectual challenge. Not surprisingly the studies show that the pull factors in favour of a

shift to teacher education were considered antidotes to these perceived shortcomings with common attractions being greater intellectual stimulation and challenge in the context of working alongside like-minded people and exposure to the wider world of education (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Wood and Borg, 2010; Taylor *et al.*, 2011). Desires for more autonomy and levels of influence were associated with working in a less rigid, less hierarchical workplace (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Holme, Robb and Berry, 2016). Some studies found that opportunities to either offer or develop further expertise in a particular subject discipline as an attraction of the role (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993). With specific reference to secondment, McEachern and Polley (1993) found that for many of these teachers, a move into teacher education was a natural progression in their career having successfully executed their roles in school and so they anticipated secondment as a step in the right direction. McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992) frame secondment as a low risk way of exploring other career options with Tuohy and Lodge's research revealing it as "*...providing opportunities for teachers to take a break from classroom duties to explore different aspects of career – yet maintaining the relative security of the current position in school* (2003, p.24).

Revisiting the theoretical framework for this study, the research pertaining to the **Entry** stage correlates with Nicholson's transition phase of *Preparation* where the push/pull tensions driving the career change correspond respectively with speculated **detachment gains** from leaving their school role and **attachment gains** to a new one in teacher education. Within the specific discourse of teacher career dynamics, it is also reasonable to assume that many teachers involved in these studies occupied Huberman's Experimentation and/or Reassessment phase and Day *et al.*'s (2007) equivalent professional life phases 8-15 /16-23 (See Chapter Three, Section 3.2).

The very early experiences of seconded teacher educators when first embarking on the role, are described by studies as largely positive reporting a number of **attachment gains** which include meeting people from different education settings (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) and intellectual stimulation from likeminded colleagues (McEachern and

Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). Gaining a fresh perspective on the system and experiencing a world beyond the classroom, emerged in pre-service research (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith, 2010) whilst in the CPD sector, Tuohy and Lodge's sample saw their secondment into teacher education as "...a chance to engage in curriculum development or to influence policy and thus become a player on a wider education stage" (2003, p.67). Immediate **attachment gains** were also evident where aspects and rhythms of daily routines contrasted to those in school (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). Freedom to work from home, and having scope to manage their own diary within flexible work hours meant that unlike school, they were "...not dictated by bells" (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010, p.44). **Detachment gains** lay in escaping "...the *triviality* [of classrooms] where they felt they were becoming stagnant" (ibid., p.34) and the associated "...limited exposure...[to] ...new understandings regarding pedagogy, evidence-based assessment practices and leadership..." (Taylor et al., 2011, p.89).

**Attachment losses** referred to unanticipated isolation, longer hours and new line management adjustments while having an autonomous diary incurred guilt as to whether what they were doing 'real work' (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). None of these losses however were quite as stark those pertaining to the teacher to teacher educator transition already discussed in Section 4.6. Parker and Lewis (1981, p.17) refer to very early experiences of commencing a new job as "... a state of euphoria, the 'rosy positive picture', whereby individuals do not actually recognise the negative aspects potentially associated with the new position". The literature discussed in Section 4.6 revealed practices and behaviours of early teacher educators as often rooted in preconceived assumptions about the role resulting in the direct applicability of their previous skills and experience. Corresponding findings in relation to teachers seconded to teacher education evidence the despondency that follows the initial euphoria when discovering the reality of the new role. For participants in Badali and Housego's study "*The first few months of secondment were particularly challenging as they tried to reconcile personal expectations for the*

*role...in a sink or swim situation*" (2000, p.334). Imposterism was evident where research showed many grieving their proficiency as teachers at school where staff often looked to them as experts (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011). The experiences described here and previously in Section 4.6 are synonymous with Nicholson's depiction of the *Encounter* stage where people struggle with the unexpected challenges of a new job and the emotions it evokes.

Induction supports reported to be poor for teacher educators generally (Buchberger *et al.*, 2000; Korthagen, Loughran and Russell, 2006), are equally lacking for teachers seconded into teacher education (Badali and Housego, 2000; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Exley and Ovenden-Hope, 2013). Gatherer and Edwards (1988) found that seconded teachers received no formal training with McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992) concluding that few were satisfied that adequate introductory information about the job was provided. Studies highlight practices of "...*learn[ing] by osmosis...*" (Costley *et al.*, 2007, p.78), uncoordinated induction processes and poor mentoring (Kosnik and Beck, 2008) or none at all (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010) while in Ireland Tuohy and Lodge concluded that "...*these teachers were frequently left to their own devices...depending to a large extent on informal support from other colleagues on secondment...*" (2003, p.69). Regarding the shift from pedagogue to andragogue and as referenced earlier, Badali and Housego (2000) reported a negligence in preparing teachers seconded as teacher educators for the teaching of adults.

Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg (2005, p.110) in suggesting that "...*many good teachers became teacher educators by being 'thrown in at the deep end'*", warn that supports for their transition may have been more concerned with their proficiency as a subject teacher rather than developing their knowledge, skills or ability as a teacher of teachers. Essentially and as remarked in Tuohy and Lodge's report, because the job "...*was considered a continuation of work [at school], it was assumed no induction was required*" (2003, p.58). In this respect, Kosnik and Beck (2008) highlight the need for training in the pedagogy of teacher education, which while valuing the seconded teachers' practical experiences as teachers, develops it rather than simply transferring it directly

into teacher education. While this positions induction models as extending and celebrating the practical knowledge and experiences that teachers seconded to teacher education have to offer (Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011), Martinez also emphasises the need to support them through appropriate guidance and mentoring “...*rather than treating them as self-basting turkeys to do it themselves*” (2008, p.41). Indeed in outlining what support is needed for any employee commencing a new role, Nicholson (1987) sets out a ‘toolkit’ comprising a map (clarity of role, protocols and direction), a bicycle (“...*psychological freedom to explore and pathfind in the new environment*” (p.187)) and ‘good weather’ (“...*a climate of psychological safety and supports*” (ibid.)).

An observation worth noting at this point is an emerging conflict between a role that demands a rigorous induction on the one hand, and the short-term nature of secondment on the other. Tellingly and perhaps worryingly, McMichael, Draper and Gatherer posit a necessary baptism of fire for seconded teachers’ initiation as teacher educators where new knowledge and skills are swiftly developed, arguing that “*If [new entrants] spend a considerable period becoming orientated...then an inappropriately large part of their limited period may be spent in finding their feet*” (1992, p.3).

#### **4.8.2 Experience**

The literature describing the experiences of seconded teacher educators as they adapt to the role, reflect Nicholson’s *Adjustment* phase believed to be a more gradual and conscious process than the *Encounter* phase. In absorbing more information about the role and in realising that further learning is required, “...*these teachers found themselves challenged to go beyond the introductory steps...[and]...discovered the needs for new skills and personal research to connect their work to a body of credible theory*”(Tuohy and Lodge, 2003, p.63). Nicholson’s concept of *Adjustment* also involves efforts to eliminate the disruption brought about by change and therefore modify cognitions to increase consonance with the new career. Agentic behaviours intended to blend previous abilities and identities with the new role are evident in studies where “*Drawing on the strengths and experience for which they were appointed, secondees*

*actively develop and shape the post they are filling*” (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992, p.4). It could be said that this heralds some peace being made between their situational and substantive selves where ingredients from competing teacher/ teacher educator identities are combined to arrive at a hybridic truce as already explored in Section 4.7.1.

As seconded teacher educators settle more into their roles, the research indicates that **attachment** gains feature strongly as extensive learning opportunities and exposure to the wider world of education become part and parcel of daily work. The literature evidences significant **attachment gains** associated with rich professional development opportunities (inter alia Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011). Ongoing immersion in training across multiple facets of education, critical dialogue and “...*chances to talk about and look at the attributes of teaching in ways that are not generally available in school*” (Costley et al., 2007, p.88) meant that “...*seconded teachers understood more clearly their own teaching practice* (Badali and Housego, 2000, p.331) with other studies citing renewal of that practice through involvement in cutting edge projects and national programmes (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011). With reference to timetable flexibility, Badali and Housego (2000, p.335) conclude that “...*the secondment experience provided teachers with frequent opportunities to reflect on their own practice*”. Developing as andragogues and facilitators of learning positioned them in professional stretch zones (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010) while this steep learning curve also equipped them with skills in budgeting, administration and management (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003).

Contact with colleagues from the wider education landscape, expansion of networks and exposure to a variety of school systems, provided fresh perspectives on the teaching profession and the role of education in society (inter alia Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith, 2010). Tuohy and Lodge’s study reveals that some distance from school had given these seconded teachers “...*a deeper appreciation of the tensions of teaching and what they felt needed changing*” (2003, p.44), thus viewing themselves as key players in shaping the system’s

direction. Studies report that regular team work, shared problem solving and collaborative resource development cemented professional relationships underpinned by common values and mutual appreciation of expertise (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). Affective **attachment gains** also manifested where “*Seconded teachers all believed that they had become more confident because of their secondment*” (Badali and Housego, 2000, p.338). The research indicates that this lay in having greater currency in educational theory and systems (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) as well as becoming more comfortable with addressing large groups of adults (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010).

Despite these benefits, the studies report some **attachment losses** in relation to excessive travel and isolation with corresponding **detachment losses** manifesting in missing the community of school life and a shorter, more structured working day (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993). Mirroring inadequate induction provision referenced earlier, Tuohy and Lodge (2003, p.58) reported that continuing learning for seconded teachers predominantly comprised solo learning ‘on the job’ with many of them criticising the “...‘*ad hoc*’ approach and the wasted effort that often went into learning by making mistakes”. The same study found that opportunities for small groups to co-design CPD helped to reduce isolation, as well as nurture collective, constructivist and reflective work settings.

Gatherer and Edwards (1988, p.31) while acknowledging these drawbacks, concluded that “...*the majority made it clear that the benefits far outweighed the problems*” in that secondment as a teacher educator “...*broadened their horizons, extended their expertise and gave them time to reflect upon their work as teachers*”. Similarly, Sutherland and Sloan (1990) found that although secondment involved hard work and long hours, it was overall “...*enjoyable and stimulating...[yielding]...great rewards in working with teachers and in seeing schools making progress*” (p.35) while other gains included a deeper knowledge of curriculum and education, enhanced interpersonal skills and access to high order policy conversations.

According to Nicholson (1987), when a settled view of the demands and possibilities of a job is achieved along with a sense of comfort and proficiency, a person reaches the final stage of career transition, *Stabilisation*. Referencing the need for teachers seconded to teacher education to reach this phase promptly due to their limited time in the role, McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992, p.28) assert that

People feel that they can give all their talents, enthusiasm and effort to a new job when no longer spending anxious moments (even hours) in adapting to it. It is therefore to employers' advantage for their new seconded employees to stabilize soon.

Such a fast-tracked approach seems much at odds with the complex transition from teacher to teacher educator and not least with the host of identity issues that accompany it. Crucially, the research tells us that this transition takes considerable time, time not afforded by secondment schemes where limits and unpredictability of tenure are key features. In this respect Costley *et al.* cite the main disadvantages of short-term secondment as “...*the lack of continuity and that fact that the secondee is always on a very steep learning curve with no opportunity to consolidate learning experiences*” (2007, p.97). For example, Gatherer and Edwards (1988, p.29) observed that “...*the first year of the secondment was experimental*” and that colleges would not benefit from the optimum performance of the secondee for two years, although several participants in Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith’s study claimed that “...*two years was not long enough...a three to five-year programme would be better*” (2010, p.624). Similarly, Murray and Male (2005) found that although the first year was identified as most difficult, teacher educators continued to face challenges in their second and third years. In this case the career transition was considered complete when the two aspects of self (situational and substantive) were aligned, and where “...*the new entrant feels confident and competent in his/her job, thus experiencing feelings of ease and effectiveness with regards to the demands of the position*” (ibid., p.3). Further, the time frame for reaching this varied from ‘...*the beginning of the second year ...*’ to “...*the middle of the third year ...*” (ibid., p.15) with some “...*still asserting their first-order identities as school teachers, and rejecting professional identity as an HE-based teacher educator, after almost three years in the second-order setting.*” (ibid., p.17). Interestingly and as noted by Murray and Male (2005), studies of other



occupations in education also show that reaching *Stabilisation* typically requires at least three years (Parkay and Hall, 1992; Day and Bakioglu, 1996; Reeves, Moos and Forrest 1998; Weindling, 2000).

#### 4.8.3 Exit

Secondment contracts for teacher educators across jurisdictions are typically renewed on an annual basis. This arrangement is advantageous to policy as it meets the need for flexibility in the system allowing it capacity to expand and contract according to emerging priorities. The organisation of a career based on an annual contract however “...creates high levels of uncertainty for the individuals seconded as they cannot plan easily for the future (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003, p.68) while the “ticking clock” of secondment is a source of anxiety as they await news of its renewal (Kosnik and Beck, 2008). Sugrue (2011, p.797) notes this as particularly acute in Ireland where sanction must be secured annually from the DE and individual school boards, either of which can terminate the secondment at any time “...leading to a general pressure to ‘toe the party line’ due to being vulnerable without any permanent position in the service”.

A transition in life is said to be complete “...when the tasks of questioning and exploring have lost their urgency and when there is acceptance of the new state and readiness to get on with life” (Bruce, 1991, p.13). However, for teacher educators in secondment positions, *Stabilisation* transpires as a time of uncertainty and earnest speculation commonly concerned with feelings of disconnectedness from their schools (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Kosnik and Beck, 2008). In their pre-service study, Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway (2010, p.50) found that “... the gap between school and university positions was increasingly becoming wider, making it more difficult to decide whether to return to schools or not”. Conscious of their newly acquired skills and predicting their new identities to conflict with former colleagues, seconded teachers, “...worried about appearing better informed than [school colleagues] and overextending [themselves]” (ibid.). Tuohy and Lodge’s report alluded to similar fears in returning to “*The narrow mindedness, the insularity, the lack of creativity...the cynicism*” (2003, p.45).

Accordingly, seconded teachers feared that “...*the positive aspects of secondment...might be jeopardised in a return to school*” (ibid., p.46).

A particularly stark observation in the Irish context references “...*perceptions that to return to one’s own position in school as a classroom teacher, is an indication of ‘failure’*” (Sugrue, 2011, p.798) while Tuohy and Lodge reported seconded teachers to be “...*fatalistic about their return in that they saw no future in the secondment*” (2003, p.47), describing a return to school as “...*going into hibernation, or going into decline physically, emotionally, mentally, professionally*” (ibid., p.46). Sutherland and Sloan’s (1990) research yielded widespread views that working with students again having worked with adults would be a significant adjustment and that the statement of “going **back** to school’ had overtones of regression” (p.38). Interestingly this also proved to be the case for those who had embarked on secondment with the intention of returning to school, thus indicating that the extent of identity change was unexpected. Indeed, studies unanimously converge on the impact of professional learning while on secondment, its influence on professional identity and where secondees saw their careers heading (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Badali and Housego, 2000). Perry *et al.* noted among the teachers they interviewed “...*a sense of ambivalence...that they had grown beyond their previous selves*” while claiming that “...*this growth made it difficult for them to return to their original positions*” (1999, p.389). In fact Tuohy and Lodge (2003) observed that exposure to the broader world of education coupled with newly acquired skills set in management and administration, meant that some no longer saw themselves as teachers. Participants of Sutherland and Sloan’s study were of the belief that “...*their return could be, in effect a demotion unless they were given a new and challenging role in the school*” (1990, p.38). In a similar vein, an openness to return to school was noted by Taylor *et al.* (2011, p.92) where seconded teachers could “...*leave their primary role of classroom teacher... [and]...exercise a leadership role and utilise what they had learned*”. Teachers in McMichael, Draper and Gatherer’s study sought alternative career options where they believed their newly acquired experience would be more appreciated and so “...*as if to predict [their schools] indifference to their new skills, over half of the secondees moved with their customary enthusiasm, to new posts* (1992, p.39). Indicating a desire for more time in the role, teachers

interviewed by Keogh (2000) reported a lack of closure where an abrupt termination prevented their bringing work to completion with Taylor *et al.* framing the arrangement as “...an initiative with an uncertain future...” where it “...opened up a pathway...but closed it again” (2011, p.92). Indeed almost all the studies consulted reference seconded frustration with the absence of career pathways to further harness the new skills and identities that they had acquired. In seeing no place for these in school, they sought permanent education positions elsewhere as concluded here by Tuohy and Lodge;

Whether it was that the secondment had opened up previously new talents previously untapped or whether it had changed their experience of themselves as professionals, returning to school (or contemplating a return to the classroom) was not the preferred option.

(2003, p.49)

The studies examining seconded teacher educators' future career decisions, reveal some stark statistics. Of the fifty seconded teacher educators participating in McMichael, Draper and Gatherer's (1992) study, seven sought further secondments, either in the same post or in new posts with the same employer. Another eight secured senior jobs in their previous schools and 28 applied for jobs in alternative locations as head teachers or college lecturers. Keogh (2000) reported that although 33 of the 46 teachers seconded to an Irish post-primary support service returned to school, seven left their school during the first year back with a further 24% leaving their schools within the next two years. Both Gatherer and Edwards (1988) and Sutherland and Sloan (1990) found that over half of their samples sought positions outside of school while Tuohy and Lodge (2003) when revisiting their sample two years after their study, found that the majority chose to remain on secondment or moved onto other jobs.

The research indicates that for many seconded to the role of teacher educator, *Stabilisation* is swiftly followed by a return to the *Preparation* phase of the next career cycle as “*Secondments serve as “catalysts” for a range of possibilities*” (Costley *et al.*, 2007, p.86). Involvement in the broader work of the system, increased autonomy and a growing confidence in second-order competencies, adult pedagogies and a host of other managerial skills, provides them with a taste of a world beyond the school gates, mobilising a curiosity about other

career options. Furthermore with reference to what is discussed above, “...*contractual difficulties confronting individual secondees militate against professional continuity and continuing commitment* (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988, p.19). However in being “...*significantly advantageous [in avoiding] commitment to permanent posts...*” (ibid., p.13), secondment can be a ‘safe option’ for policy makers as “...*a time limit to contractual obligations...*” means “...*they do not have to deal with emerging career expectations or problems of the seconded teacher*” (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003, p.67). All that said, issues of long-term secondments have also been raised where “...*the teachers could become distanced from the school and be reluctant to re-enter the classroom environment*” (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988, p.59). Teachers in this Scottish study “...*considered a three-year secondment to constitute a separate career and as a consequence, anticipated readjustment problems on return to a classroom*” (ibid., p.30). The study concluded that while one year is too short to gain maximum benefit from the secondment, more than three years is disruptive to one’s career and it is of interest that only three of the teacher secondment studies consulted for this literature review referenced a secondment of more than three years. The argument that three years is too long conflicts however with the wider research’s claim that at least three years is required to complete the transition to teacher educator.

Other studies indicate that the level of disruption depends on whether or not the teacher’s role on secondment comprised subject specific work with some connecting this with returning to the classroom specifically. Subject specific work alone is considered to be constraining following a period of broader skills acquisition (Avis, 1999). Correspondingly, Tuohy and Lodge (2003) found that seconded teachers more positively disposed to returning to school tended to be those whose seconded role focused on a subject or curricular area as having been exposed to cutting edge changes, they saw themselves as bringing a value-added dimension back to school. Contrastingly, those working in broader schoolwide programmes that transcended subject specific work, “...*questioned their ability to return to the classroom*” (p.44). This finding is further supported by Keogh (2000) who found that 60% of those involved in subject specific CPD work returned to the classroom compared to only 30% of those involved in CPD for school wide programmes.

According to McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, if the job to which the individual is exiting is not regarded with enthusiasm (i.e. a return to school) while the secondment is viewed very positively, then the change is perceived as an **attachment loss** “...accompanied by a sense of stimulation forgone, a task not yet completed and newly acquired strengths wasted” (1992, p.5). In the Irish context specifically, Tuohy and Lodge reported seconded teacher educator frustrations with the “*Capricious way in which the DES dealt with notice for commencement and terminations of secondment*” (2003, p.64), as a driver for taking control of their future careers with this also observed among Canadian counterparts (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). In line with Nicholson’s description of the *Preparation* phase of career transition, seconded teachers in coming to view themselves and their future careers in a new light, are drawn to other career prospects rather than accepting a return to school. Other perspectives however posit a more calculated motivation. In relation to purposeful career enhancement, Tuohy and Lodge (2003, p.24) reference the secondment experience as “...an investment in future careers” while Sugrue (2011, p.798) alludes to a certain opportunism, describing teachers taking this route as ‘*educational entrepreneurs*’ who “...have enhanced their CVs significantly”.

#### **4.9 The return to school**

Although the body of knowledge exploring the transition from teacher to teacher educator has grown in recent years, there is considerably less written about the reverse process of returning to teaching from teacher education. As signalled at the beginning of this chapter, the majority of available studies capturing this are those exploring secondment as the concept implies an eventual return to school. Such studies document the identity challenges faced by seconded teacher educators in reverting to their first-order roles (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; McDonough, 2017) with McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, concluding that “*It was not, after all, simply a return to where they had been before*” (1992, p.37).

In returning to the classroom, **reattachment losses** were apparent for individual teachers in attempting to apply their newly acquired pedagogical skills. McDonough (2017, p.247) found herself wrestling with putting these into practice within “...teaching schedules that confine thought and pedagogy to a

*pre-determined list of tasks to be ticked off...*". Elsewhere, the hurriedness of classroom life and the demands of testing (Trumbell, 1999; Berry, 2008) gave little opportunity to draw on the innovative approaches they had learned as teacher educators (Scherff and Kaplan, 2006; Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith, 2010) with Badali and Housego (2000, p.337) concluding that "*Reverting to previous practice was common among seconded teachers returning to their schools*". This threat to their ideals as they revisit the 'real world' of teaching, finds expression in Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002, p.105) concept of 'praxis shock' where "*...teachers' confrontations with the realities and responsibilities of being a classroom teacher...put their beliefs and ideas about teaching to the test*".

**Reattachment losses** also featured where less flexible and autonomous schedules resulted in their feeling "*...trapped, constrained by structure, bound by rules...*" McDonough (2017, p.252) and where the reappearance of the proverbial school bell was a reminder of how "*... hard it is to live again by someone else's clock*" (Scherff and Kaplan, 2006, p.159). McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992, p.38) noted that "*...feeling oppressed by "trivia" or "regimentation" after the stimulation of the secondment*" was most acute where teachers returned to a job from which they tried to escape.

The literature shows that the greatest **reattachment losses** experienced by these teachers on the return to school lay in the undervaluation and underuse by others of their newly developed skills (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). Teachers returning from pre-service secondments reported "*...a lack of interest in what they had accomplished and learned during their time in the university setting*" (Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith, 2010, p.624). Badali and Housego (2000, p.338) observed that despite seconded teachers' intention to share expertise, "*...there was no evidence that they did share new resources with colleagues*" with "*...no obvious [staff] efforts to use their new knowledge and skills*" (ibid., p.342). McMichael, Draper and Gatherer in discovering that strengths were not called upon as seconded teachers returned to their previous positions, noted "*...a significant waste of the increased capacities of this energetic group of professionals*" (1992, p.31). In

the Irish context, early indications of the return to school show that “*None of the teachers spoke of schools trying to capitalise on the work they were seconded to, or of having to justify their request in terms of their benefit to the school*” (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003, p.54). Furthermore, school principals saw the benefit as accruing to the seconded individual rather than to the school. Some referenced the boon in having had someone ‘on the inside track’ but “*At best the principals hoped the school would benefit from a ‘trickle down’ effect on the teachers return*” (ibid., p.65).

Studies which evidence a redundancy of the returning teachers’ new skills have some parallels with those exploring the diffusive impact of cascade training in the CPD setting where a nominated member of staff attends training with the intention of bringing back the learning to the school. A considerable body of research shows the limitations of the cascade model (inter alia Day, 1999; Solomon and Tresman, 1999; Kennedy, 2005), reporting that the successful transfer of such learning is highly dependent on other factors such as supportive leadership (Sugrue, 2005; Schleicher, 2016; King and Stevenson, 2017; Sims *et al.*, 2021) and a culture of experimentation and regular professional exchange (Loxley *et al.*, 2007; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2014; Brookfield, 2017). According to Hargreaves, these nominated teachers often “*...return to schools of unenthusiastic and uncomprehending colleagues who have not shared the learning with them*” (2000, p.162). Similarly it is possible that school staff in being removed from the seconded teacher’s experience, are equally indifferent or reluctant recipients of what that returning teacher has to share.

Studies also indicate that the underuse of the returning teachers’ expertise are closely linked to other **reattachment losses** presenting as frictions between their teacher and teacher educator identities where staff now perceived them as outside experts occupying a different professional space (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Spiteri 2010; Scherff and Kaplan, 2006; McDonough, 2017). Likewise, teachers formerly seconded across eight different universities (Costley *et al.*, 2007, p.98) although having “*...no false illusions that anything they had done on secondment might be valued by their schools*”, still greatly lamented how quickly in the eyes of the school staff they had lost their status as fellow classroom practitioners. Some cases staff members viewed secondment

as a vacation away from school after which teachers come back to 'the real world' (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007) with some cynically attributing the teacher's return to having failed in the seconded role (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). Commonly reported across studies was staff hostility to the returning teacher thought to be underpinned by resentment and jealousy of their experience and perceived prestigious roles as teacher educators (Kosnik and Beck, 2008, McDonough, 2017). Concerns of school principals anticipating conflict in this regard is evident where some hoped "...*that on their return the teachers would not flaunt their new knowledge too much in front of colleagues*" (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990, p.37). The literature shows that such undercurrents were not lost on returning teachers who in feeling "...*foreign and marginalised, chose to stay silent about what they knew*" (Costley *et al.*, 2007, p.98) with Scherff and Kaplan (2006) for similar reasons deciding not to create the impression of knowing more than others. Couched as an unwritten rule, there existed a "...*clear folk wisdom...among seconded teachers that on return it was essential to play a 'low key' role...and wait until being requested before offering to share what you had learned on secondment*" (Sutherland and Sloan 1990, p.38).

Collectively the studies cited here show returning teachers as subject to the power of socialisation and the less desirable aspects of schools' micro politics typified by Flores and Day (2006, p.229) as "...*the 'normative' and bureaucratic side of teaching, the existence of 'vested interests' and unwritten and implicit rules*". A host of studies (inter alia Wilson and Berne, 1999; Fullan, 2002; Elmore, 2004; Cuban, 2013; Opher, 2016; Brookfield, 2017) identify the supremacy of school-level beliefs and normative controls as sanctioning change with a body of evidence showing that where new learning fails to challenge existing practice, the grammar of schooling<sup>16</sup> persists (Tyack and Tobin, 1994; Sugrue, 2002; Cuban and Usdan, 2002). Such dominion of stasis and

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<sup>16</sup> Tyack and Tobin (1994) describe what they call a "grammar of schooling" as being like any language which frames how we can speak. Schooling has a fundamental grammar that frames how we can educate. Each grammar like a language has its origins. But once established, each grammar also becomes highly stable and therefore slow to change.



politeness (Wilson and Berne, 1999) to the detriment of healthy change, is well illustrated by Scherff and Kaplan's experience of returning to school. In *"Longing to be [members] of a community of learners...found [themselves] increasingly in a community of nodding heads"* (2006, p.160). Indeed, there are comparisons here with the experiences of beginning teachers who become socialised into the school culture by adopting its norms and values. Using the concept of 'social strategy' (Lacey, 1977), most novice teachers in spite of their own beliefs and values, adopt an attitude of 'strategic compliance' as they become aware of the way in which the school operates. Even for the most established teachers, challenging the status quo risks "cultural suicide" (Brookfield, 2017), described as *"...engaging colleagues in questioning assumptions and uncovering hegemony while simultaneously alienating those peers"* (p.231).

These studies clearly show the influence that the workplace and colleagues' perceptions have in (re)shaping the returning teacher's understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their development, and in (re)constructing their professional identities. In particular the findings indicate **reattachment losses** where newly formed identities as teacher educators are destabilised by a return to school contexts and cultures. In this respect the issue of identity hybridity manifests in tensions between being a teacher again on one hand and retaining the identity of a teacher educator on the other (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; McDonough, 2017). In recalling her own such experience, McClay (2011, p.418) describes a sense of belonging in neither space where first and second-order practice collided in ways that challenged her assumptions as both a teacher and a teacher educator. Consequently she contends that the experiences of returning teachers *"...are fraught with ambivalence and tension as our presumption of bi-culturalism often meets with disparagement in both camps"* Depicting the return to school as "going home", she argues that in moving across cultures, teachers who *"...migrate from school teaching to teacher education are pulled by demands from sometimes competing cultures of education"* (ibid., p.417) concluding that *"...teacher educators can never really 'go home again' "* (ibid., p.418).

Despite what appear to be overwhelmingly negative reports about the return to school, other studies found there to be **reattachment gains** in revisiting classroom practice with renewed focus on foot of all that was learned on secondment and also in observing the work of teacher educators from a teacher's perspective. Although McDonough (2017) experienced some tensions in realigning her knowledge and identity as a teacher, the return to teaching and the complexities of the job enabled her to further appreciate the practices and understandings required of teacher educators in supporting their teacher colleagues. Her study also challenges the deficit mentality of "going back" to school by viewing it "*...as a coming and a going, a reoccurrence, a conduit for moving something again to the starting point...to question my understandings about teaching and learning*". Spiteri (2010, p.132) in returning to teach "*...sought to challenge [her] knowledge-of-practice and [her] knowledge-in-practice*" and as a result gained a renewed understanding of teaching and an objective insight into how teachers are supported by teacher educators. In another self-study, Russell (1997, p.44) also takes an optimistic view of the lessons to be learned from a return to school where it offered the possibility of "*...thinking long and hard about how we teach and the messages conveyed by how we teach*" and in regaining that perspective, the ability to identify how this impacts the practice of a teacher educator. Primary school teachers in Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway's (2010) study, although having enjoyed the secondment experience, said that their teaching benefitted from now having greater awareness of how it could be improved, with post-primary teachers in Keogh's (2000) study reporting to be more creative in their methodologies since they returned and highly motivated to try new ones out.

McClay (2011, p.421) argues that "*When we translate the educational cultures in which we live, we create expanded conceptions of home*". So while studies indicate that many teacher educators find going 'home' to be a disappointing experience, the research also evidences rich professional learning in re-experiencing the challenges and joys of teaching and in relating these to the practice of teacher educators. An overall examination of the studies suggests that the return to school involves a revisiting of Nicolson's *Encounter* phase. There are **reattachment losses** in confronting the realities of first-order practice, adapting to the micro-politics of school and the underutilisation of skills

developed while on secondment. **Reattachment gains** are also evident where teachers experienced the return as a fresh start in the classroom as wiser and more reflective practitioners. Whether the return to school is perceived in terms of gains or losses is dependent on how this second *Encounter* phase transpires as it hinges firstly on the returning teacher's experience of 'coming home' and secondly on the school's level of acceptance of, and support for them, including an openness to harnessing their fresh expertise.

#### **4.10 Towards the inquiry phase**

This review of the literature has further highlighted the knowledge gaps in the field of teacher education discussed at the outset of this study. In the first instance, it signals the need to discover more about the unique identities and work of teacher educators in continuing teacher education and more specifically those in seconded positions. Accordingly, this research investigates the professional experiences of teachers who once held seconded positions as CTEs in Ireland's largest teacher education support service and in doing so aims to learn more about the implications this has had for their professional development and future career choices. In line with the theoretical framework for this study, their transitions into, through and out of the service are explored through the lens of their experiences at each juncture which in turn are rooted in career transitional phases and perceived **attachment /detachment gains** and **losses**.

The knowledge and learning they acquire is examined in the contexts of the 'trilogy' of transitional shifts identified in this chapter but also in relation to other opportunities during the secondment which further developed that knowledge and skills base. The challenges highlighted in previous studies regarding the transitory nature of secondment and tenure uncertainty, are explored in the Irish policy context of a five-year ceiling on annual contractual renewal to which the study participants were subject. From that it is hoped to learn how this specifically impacted on their professional identities, how they perceived themselves as teacher educators and the influence it had on future career plans. Particularly ripe for fresh investigation is their transition to post-secondment destinations and how that compared to their transition into teacher education. For those participants who returned to school, their experiences of

how they were received and perceived by former colleagues, the extent to which their expertise was recognised or harnessed and what impact, if any, school cultural norms had on their agency and practice, will situate what the literature says within the current context of Irish teacher educators who have returned to teaching. This is pivotal to this study's research question as Ireland's policy circular on teacher secondment claims that there are benefits for the teachers by virtue of the professional learning and experience acquired while with the support services, in turn benefitting the school to which they return.

However, the review of the literature also beckons other lines of inquiry not originally identified when this study was first proposed, bringing additional richness and depth to the data gathering phase which follows. It prompts an exploration of the dual identity of teacher/teacher educator held by teacher educators generally and the resultant occupancy of a 'third space' but in particular the extension of this concept for seconded teachers who are still strictly employed as teachers in their base schools. It also exposes a gap in what is known about **how** learning is acquired and **how** knowledge is constructed in the secondment setting including the factors that help or hinder teacher educator professional growth. In relation to eventual 'stabilisation' as teacher educators, the review invites a probe into at what point this happens and what triggers the 'aha moments', or indeed whether for some, if this transition happens at all given the anticipation of secondment termination which potentially influences one's commitment to making the full transition. For others, it asks if the transition is so complete that they cannot return to where they came from as a result of what they have become 'on the other side' which sees them fitting better elsewhere. In such cases, the literature tells us that the uncertainty of tenure directs their minds on the future as much as the present. This begs the question as to when this realisation of 'no return' manifests and how it influences their views of the future, thus serving the research question's aim to discover the impact that secondment has on later careers. Although the literature tells us that most seconded teachers do not return to school and move to alternative work settings, it does not tell us about how this transition transpires, the realignment (if any) of professional identities in making that transition, how they are perceived in these destinations and whether or not the

knowledge and experience they acquired on secondment is harnessed. This second transition presents an opportunity to explore relevant stages of another Nicholson career cycle with further application of Kelly's model. Finally, the review of the literature has set the stage for the study's theoretical framework which traces the secondment journey of its main actors from entry to the PDST through to exit and beyond, before committing their stories to a script not yet written.

## Chapter Five

### Methodology

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study was concerned with exploring the experiences of teachers who were seconded from their schools to work as CTEs with the PDST and who have since either returned to their schools or moved on to other educational work settings. As shown in Chapter Four, save a limited number of studies, the majority of which are located in the pre-service sector, there is a dearth of research in the field focusing on those who have taken such a career route and the impact it has on future career decisions and work thereafter. The study aimed to address this in the Irish CPD context where teachers are seconded to national support services under conditions governed by a very specific policy rationale.

This chapter sets out the epistemological orientation of the study and its methodological approach. The chosen data collection method is outlined as are reasons for rejecting other potential methods. The implications of Covid-19 on this particular phase of the study are detailed. The study's purposive sample and criteria for stratification used are fully described. There is a comprehensive account of the data analysis process, its accompanying coding system and the identification of themes. Considerable attention is afforded to ethical considerations particularly where power and insider matters present. Issues of trustworthiness and authenticity are addressed across the key areas of sample selection, data gathering, research bias, data analysis and data interpretation. It is timely here to draw due attention to the research design adopted for this study; namely Structured Thematic Inquiry (STI). This has already been introduced and described in Chapter Three where Table 3.2 and Section 3.6 both illustrate how the main elements of this study mirror those of STI.

#### 5.2 Epistemology

The aim of this study and what it sought to learn is compatible with a **post positivist** intention to "...*understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants*"(Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2018, p.17). Within that paradigmatic view, proponents of **interpretivism** claim that

*“...all research necessarily starts from a person’s view of the world, which itself is shaped by the experience one brings to the research process (Grix, 2002, p.179).* The research question was explored solely from the perspective of teachers with direct experience of what it wanted to discover. My decision to adopt an interpretivist stance was reinforced by the review of the literature. I found that existing studies examining the experience of teacher educators in seconded positions, without exception, assumed this epistemology through case studies, self-studies and interview methods. Their treatment of the multifaceted issues associated with transitioning in and out of teacher education, secondment tenure, professional identity and agency, clearly underscored orientations towards an ontological belief that social reality is complex, non-linear and subjective, thus privileging the philosophical assumptions underpinning the interpretative tradition.

A fundamental imperative also driving the design of this research was the post-positivist’s intention to examine problems rather than trying to control or resolve them (Ryan, 2006), where the researcher is concerned with a learner role rather than a testing one (Agar, 1986). In this context, while acknowledging that the rationale of Irish secondment policy informed the research question, I was not concerned with testing the claims of the policy which in themselves are rooted in pre-formulated theories regarding the benefits of short-term lending of teachers to support services for their professional enhancement and that of their schools. Rather I wanted to know more about the lived experiences and knowledge acquisition of teachers who transitioned into, through and out of a seconded teacher educator position which according to the literature, impacts in a myriad of ways on professional identity and career aspirations. More specifically, I hoped that insights into the learning and knowledge they acquired during that time and at key junctures of transitioning, would unearth assumptions, capacities and competencies that they brought to the role, developed while in the role and harnessed thereafter in post-secondment work. Indeed key to the study’s significance is its attempt to understand professional learning, knowledge generation and knowledge sharing not alone within the PDST, but in the school and wider education environments where these teachers subsequently work.

### 5.2.1 A compatible methodology

The theoretical framework of this study locates it within the career journey of a teacher on secondment as a teacher educator which according to the literature is characterised by complex career transitions and a number of tensions arising from career gains and losses at each point of transition. In keeping with the epistemological stance adopted, the task confronting me for this study needed to privilege an open ended and exploratory position reflecting the fact that some problems need to be discovered, not solved (Hammersley, 2000). In true interpretivist fashion, the discovery process had to happen “... *among people, learning with them, rather than conducting research on them*” (Wolcott, 1990, p.19) while focusing “...*on the particularities of the local and on the ‘thick description’ of human interactions in that context*” (Geertz, 1973, p.6). Therefore with its emphasis on individual interpretation and meaning within particular contexts, a **qualitative** approach was employed for this study. I considered a sequential mixed method approach whereby a larger sample would be surveyed first towards informing key themes for deeper investigation through interviews with a subsample. However the review of the literature had prompted sufficient and highly relevant areas and indeed gaps, for inquiry. Therefore I could not justify time invested either on my behalf or by would-be survey respondents given the unlikelihood of gaining a proportionate return regarding further insights. Further it is advised that when researching an area that is both new and complex, an initial exploration in depth with a small sample can be beneficial before embarking on large scale investigations (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2015). Finally and as referenced above, I was guided by previous such studies which had adopted a purely qualitative approach. The review of these studies also shaped other qualitative elements of the study such as the sample selection, chosen method and ethical considerations.

In accordance with the STI orientation of the research design which challenges the claim that qualitative research must be solely inductive (Berkeley, 2014), both the theoretical framework and common themes arising in the literature guided deductive lines of inquiry during data gathering while similarly steering some deductive coding at the analysis stage. At the core of the research design however and qualitatively fleshing out the framework from within, were inductive processes of inquiry and analysis which unearthed new and unprompted



themes as well allowing for what Berkeley (2014) calls the 'contemporizing' of existing ones. The presentation of findings according to the meanings and intentions of the participants further illustrated the fundamentally qualitative tenor of the study. Additionally, Chapter One highlighted an emancipatory dimension to this research where it committed to providing a voice for a much under represented group in the world of teacher education. Accordingly, qualitative inquiry as a critically reflective process enabled participants "...to think consciously about what they are only half aware of, to give names by which to remember experiences that otherwise vanish without trace' (Canovan,1974, p.7). In this way the study aimed to do justice to the work and experiences of teachers seconded to continuing teacher education while making who they are and what they do more visible in the field.

In discussing the "hidden agenda of modernity", Toulmin (1990) presents a compelling argument for privileging qualitative research in the social sciences and a related need to return to certain traditions which I believed to be core to this study and its specificity;

- **a return to the particular**—that is, "... *specific, concrete problems which do not arise generally but occur in specific types of situations*" (ibid., p.190). This study explores the particular professional experiences of teachers working as CTEs which took them on a particular career journey into, through and out of secondment.
- **a return to the local**—that is, using systems of knowledge, practices, and experiences in the unique contexts in which they are embedded. (ibid.). This study is located in the specific context of the PDST as an Irish CPD support service.
- **a return to the timely**—that is, problems are studied in their chronological or historical context while describing them in that context (ibid.). This study takes place at a particular time in Irish teacher education characterised by significant policy churn and secondment tenure conditions which govern the movement of teachers to and from schools and the CPD support services. The study also explores a specific period of time in the careers of the study participants where their past experiences and what they learned as seconded teacher educators

with the PDST, are brought to bear on their subsequent career choices and their professional roles in post-secondment settings.

### **5.2.2 The qualitative interviews**

According to Flick, in defending qualitative choices for research “*If all empirical studies were exclusively designed according to the model of clear cause-effect relations, all complex objects would have to be excluded*” (2009, p.15). For this study the use of **interviews** as the data gathering tool was considered most suitable given that the participants were likely to have embarked on what the literature documents as a career changing experience characterised on one hand by professionally transformative opportunities, and on the other by career unpredictability and deep identity implications. Indeed because the essence of interpretivism is to understand the human experience, I wanted a method that allowed me to connect with the study participants in a way that would uncover inner perspectives of working as CTEs with the PDST towards arriving at meanings they themselves have made of that experience and how it informed their career direction and future work. In support of interview as providing access to such perspectives, Patton (2015, p.341) reminds us that “*We cannot observe how people have organized their world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in that world. We have to ask people questions about those things*”. In discussing the notoriously challenging shift from teacher to teacher educator and the unique professional journey that typifies a secondment arrangement, participants were likely to reveal deep insights into their work and professional development as CTEs, transitional tensions, shifting identities and career motivations. An exploration of these themes through individual interviews aimed to do justice to such complexities and sensitivities as determining factors for choosing this instrument rather than the other way around. It was for this reason and related issues of confidentiality that the use of focus groups was deemed inappropriate. Participants now held positions in different agencies throughout the system and may not have felt comfortable disclosing their experiences or discussing certain systemic issues as part of a shared conversation. Finally I took due note that previous studies exploring such themes in a teacher education secondment setting (Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2007; Kosnik and Beck, 2008) had all done so using qualitative interviews. Finally, and again with reference to affording a voice to

this under researched group, such a method in yielding “...*microscopic’ details of the social and cultural aspects of individuals’ lives*” Geertz (1973, p.10), would shed due light on the work and identities of CTEs and specifically those seconded to this role.

### 5.2.3 A semi-structured approach

De Marrais (2004, p.55) defines a research interview as “...*a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study*”. That said, I was cognisant that “...*it is a conversation with a purpose*” (Dexter,1970, p.136) in order to “...*afford the researcher a thorough knowledge of the empirical problem that he or she studies*”(Charmaz,1995, p.33). The interview questions and rationale for their selection (detailed in Appendix F), were guided by the study’s theoretical framework and so were divided into three broad categories of **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit**. The common threads of career **transitions** (breadth) and the **tensions** inherent to dichotomous gains and losses (depth), were implicitly stitched into the tapestry of the interviews, thereby facilitating fidelity to the framework while also ensuring consistency as participants worked from the same broad interview structure. However a solely structured approach that rigidly adhered to predetermined questions would not serve the emergent nature of the interpretative tradition, or allow participants sufficient latitude to expand on relevant points towards fairly representing their perspectives.

Kleining (1982, p.233) argues that the object of interpretative research needs to be considered as preliminary, because the object “...*will present itself in its true colours only at the end.*” In relation to this study, gaining real insights into concepts such as the professional identity misalignment, associated feelings of inadequacy and praxis tension, mechanisms used to survive these upheavals, ongoing management of the dual identity of the teacher educator, all located within the precarious and uncertain contractual conditions of a secondment, deeply hinged on a principle of openness and space to negotiate meaning with participants. Therefore although the interview guide contained specific questions intended for everyone, others emerged organically. In ‘unhooking’ me from the interview guide, this allowed me as a researcher to pursue fresh lines

of thought or to probe further whenever I sensed that participants were “...onto something significant or that there [was] more to be learned” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p.122). This gave scope to elicit more details, invite specific examples and judiciously use helpful silences to mobilise critical reflection (Glesne, 2016). I found this to be particularly the case where I needed to know more about what was not explored in the literature such as working in alternative post-secondment settings for example.

**Semi-structured interviews** accommodated this fusion of planned consistency and freedom to “...meander around the topics - without adhering slavishly to verbatim questions” (Adams, 2015, p.493) as well embodying the principles of STI which uses this method as a quasi-deductive approach to explore chosen themes in sufficient depth to unearth new ones. Although some questions were informed by pre-determined themes, there was space for spontaneity and a social construction of a narrative suited to the necessary postponement of conjectural formulations as advised above by Kleining. This facilitated the application of Nicholson’s and Kelly’s career models while also inviting interpretive discussions on the transitions and tensions of working as a CTE in a secondment capacity, in a particular organisational setting, at a particular point in a career. The interviews were one hour in length. Advance communication with participants including consent matters are outlined in Section 5.6.1.

Bearing in mind that “*Interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when it will get better data or more data or data at less cost than other tactics!*” (Dexter, 1970, p.11), as the interviews progressed it became apparent that “...openness sometimes leads to a rather comprehensive approach in data collection (“Please tell me the story of your life and everything that may be important for my research”)” (Flick, 2009, p.43). The semi-structured method in allowing an element of deductive steerage, helped maintain a somewhat economic approach thus prioritising the collection of data that was really necessary to answer my research question, which in turn underscored the value of investing time and thought in generating good questions in the first instance. It also rendered typically messy qualitative data easier to control during the analysis stage and to identify my data saturation point as later discussed in Section 5.5.3.

### 5.3 An unexpected event

The advent of the global pandemic Covid -19 resulted in the interviews taking place virtually via a synchronous video connection using the university approved platform Microsoft Teams. Faced with this when on the cusp of the data gathering phase, I initially resisted the online option hoping that the situation might change. Although the literature indicates that qualitative research has been conducted online for many years with growing cases for its merits (Mann and Stewart, 2000; Madge, 2010; Deakin and Wakefield, 2014), I believed the face-to-face setting to be an uncontested component in the field of qualitative research with online interviews “... *a second choice or alternative when this ‘gold standard’ of interviewing is not possible*” (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014, p.604). In particular I had concerns in relation to ethics and the trustworthiness of responses in line with limitations documented about compatibility with interpersonal interaction (Evans, Elford and Wiggins, 2008), user competence and platform usability (Egan, Chenoweth and McAuliffe, 2006), unreliability of internet connection (Jowett, Peel and Shaw, 2011) and background privacy distractions difficult to control in a remote setting (Volda *et al.*, 2004). Ultimately, time dictated that I embrace the online option. However just as would have been the case with face-to-face to interviews, I anticipated potential threats to trustworthiness and ethical soundness and sought to overcome them as detailed later in this chapter.

### 5.4 The research sample

According to Creswell (2009, p.178) “...*the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants...that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question*”. **Purposive sampling** has been described as the targeting of people who have particular knowledge owing to their professional role (Ball,1990) or who have direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Tongco, 2007) with Merriam therefore contending that the researcher “...*must select a sample from which the most can be learned*” (1998, p.6). I also noted that according to the literature, purposive sampling is especially exemplified through the ‘key informant technique’ (Campbell,1955; Seidler,1974; Bernard, 2002) where “...*there are certain people who know much more than the average person when it comes to certain cultural domains* (Tremblay,1957 cited in Tongco, 2007, p.153). As

evidenced by the dearth of studies to date, the 'cultural domain' of a teacher seconded as a CTE is very unique within the wider domain of teacher education, but even more so within the teaching profession and wider educational arena. In honouring the study's theoretical framework and with reference to Toulmin's (1990) 'the particular', I needed the insights of 'particular' teachers who were seconded to work as CTEs with the PDST, and who in travelling into (**Entry**), through (**Experience**) and out of (**Exit**) teacher education, typically negotiated Nicholson's four stages of career transition (*Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment, Stabilisation*). Purposefully selecting such a sample would serve to optimally address the questions posed in this study.

Echoing Toulmin's (1990) notion of 'the timely', participants were drawn from those who at the time of the interviews, had left the PDST a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years previously. I considered three years since departure short enough to facilitate relatively accurate participant recall of the professional experience and its perceived **attachment /detachment gains** and **losses** while with the PDST, while a minimum of one year since departure, would facilitate similar and sufficient exploration of notable impact on their work post-secondment. I also believed this time interval since departure to be significant for reasons relating to the Irish policy context outlined in Chapter Two and to the learning from the literature as follows;

- At the time of the interviews, teachers who departed the service between the previous one to three years had worked with the PDST during the period 2015 and 2020 which simultaneously marked a significant expansion of the PDST's remit in response to policy reform and teacher professional development needs. The literature highlights that secondment into teacher education builds considerable professional skills and knowledge. Accordingly the increase in the scope of the PDST's work at this time likely impacted greatly on the learning and growth of these teachers giving them increased capital and options in the wider education sector.
- These teachers worked with the PDST during the application of policy's five-year ceiling on secondment tenure. Considering the literature's evidence that limits on secondment contracts prompt teachers to leave earlier than expected, and frequently onto alternative educational

settings rather than returning to school, this had possible implications for the when and the why of participants' departure from the service as well as their chosen career destination.

At the time of data collection and as per PDST HR records, 147 teachers had exited the service since 2015. 98 of these left the PDST between one and three years of the interviews taking place as required for the sample. HR records broadly detail their onward destinations following their secondment with the PDST. The table below details the destination categories of this group and the number per category.

*Table 5.1: Post-secondment destinations of staff who left the PDST between one and three years of the interviews taking place*

Post secondment destination	Original position as class teacher in base school	Principal /Deputy Principal in base school or in a new school	Education agencies (NCCA*, SEC*, Inspectorate, The Teaching Council, etc.)	University	Retired	Other (career break, travel, personal leave, etc.)
No. of teachers (Total = 98)	13	22	19	16	11	17

\*National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

\*State Exams Commission

Merriam (1998, p.12) advises that when sampling “...*the researcher must determine the selection criteria essential in choosing the right people to be studied*”. As later noted in Section 5.7.1, a level of tenacity in sampling was required to maximise the trustworthiness of the findings. In deciding what I wanted to learn and in setting out to find former PDST teacher educators as the aforementioned ‘key informants’, I needed to define very specific criteria considering that no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Bernard *et al.*, 1986). In this regard I employed **stratified purposive sampling** “...*wherein a purposive subsample is chosen within a purposive sample*” (Tongco, 2007, p.152). Given that there is no defined cap on how many informants should make up a purposive sample as long as the information

needed is obtained (Bernard, 2002), and that at least five informants are needed for a purposeful sample to be reliable (Seidler, 1974), I selected a sub sample of eight for the qualitative interviews according to specific criteria which not only reflected my "...*deliberate choice of informant due to the qualities they possess*" (Tongco, 2007, p.147), but also the themes which emerged in my review of the literature.

- To maximise consistency across the sample, only those who held PDST advisor positions (i.e. not management roles) were included, as the nature of management work in the PDST is very different to that of advisor and would compromise the necessity for role uniformity in the sample.
- The selection could only comprise those who were currently working in the education system (i.e. not retired or on career break) while also representing the four post-secondment work destinations in Table 5.1. In this regard the sample needed to
  - include teachers who returned to their base school in view of policy's reference to the benefits accruing to a school when a teacher returns and also with respect to what the literature documents about the reverse transition from teacher educator to class teacher.
  - proportionally represent the sizable number who did not to return to their original school positions as evidenced in the literature and in PDST records. Consequently the sample comprised former PDST staff from across these three other destination categories. This was relevant to investigating whether the professional learning and experiences acquired as teacher educators with the PDST influenced alternative career directions and if it impacted their work in other education settings, the latter being a notable gap in the literature.
  - include primary and post-primary teachers across all destination categories to reflect the cross-sectoral nature of the PDST. This was also relevant in view of the literature's claim that the work focus of a teacher while on secondment to teacher education (subject based or broader programme based), impacts on their perceptions of and willingness to, return to school.



Table 5.2 below shows the study’s stratified purposive sample according to the aforementioned criteria. An additional criterium for geographical location<sup>17</sup> was also employed to ensure a representative sample of PDST advisors. As the table indicates this yielded two participants for each of the four categories.

*Table 5.2: Sample of study participants and their post-secondment destinations*

Post secondment career destination	Original position in base school	Newly appointed Deputy Principal	Education agencies	University
No. and sector of participants	1 Primary 1 Post-Primary	1 Primary 1 Post-Primary	1 Primary 1 Post-Primary	1 Primary 1 Post-Primary

Participants’ pseudonyms and other relevant details (those which ensure non-identification of participants) are included later in the **Preamble to the Findings**.

### 5.5 Data Analysis

As already outlined in Chapter Three, the model of **Structured Thematic Instruction** (STI) (Berkeley, 2014) was adopted for this study’s research design. STI is aligned with a view within the domain of qualitative research that theoretical frameworks in steering deductive approaches to coding and the identification of themes, can co-exist with an inductive extrapolation of patterns and themes from the data (Hyde, 2000). Within that context, I conducted a process of **Thematic Analysis** described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) as “...a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” which “...minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail”. Renamed more recently as “**Reflexive Thematic Analysis**” (Braun and Clarke, 2019), this method is uniquely agile in allowing both preconceived realist thinking and constructivist open mindedness to be employed simultaneously during data analysis thus signalling its compatibility with both Berkeley’s (2014) and Hyde’s (2000) theories. Figure 5.1 overleaf illustrates how this study concentrically conceptualises these three related philosophies which were brought to bear on how data analysis was conducted.

<sup>17</sup> Specification of geographical criteria potentially identifies some participants.

The model locates reflexive thematic analysis (inner most ring) as nested within the principles of STI (middle ring) which in turn reflects Hyde’s broader claim (outer most ring) that both inductive and deductive approaches can apply in qualitative research.

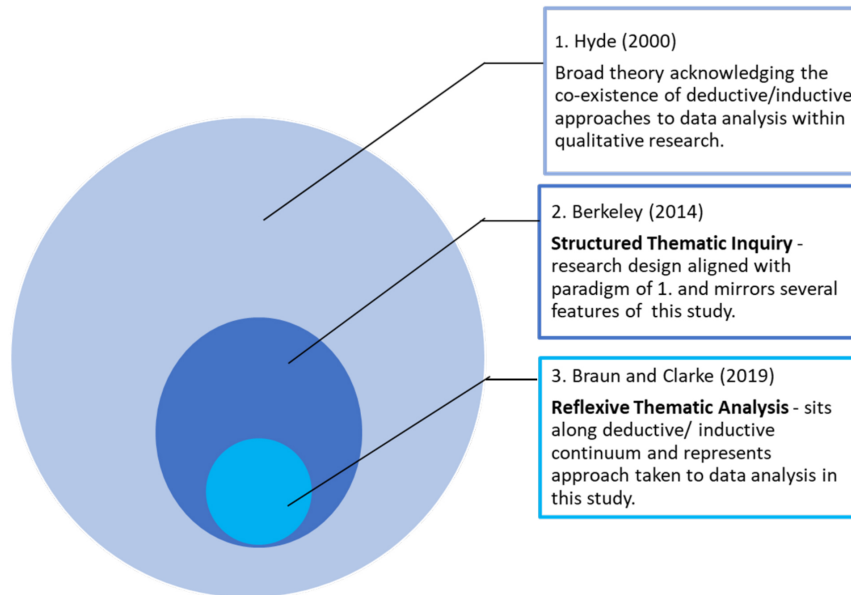


Figure 5.1: Study’s Conceptual Framework for Data Analysis.

### 5.5.1 Coding and the identification of themes

The software programme within Microsoft Teams was used to transcribe the online interviews. My first encounter with each transcript involved watching /listening back to each interview and amending text where inaccuracies in voice recognition presented. I then read through each clean transcript and conducted some preliminary coding where points resonated with some key ideas appearing in the literature e.g. “*When I first started I had serious imposter syndrome*” was coded immediately for ‘imposter syndrome’. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.88) tell us that “*Coding will, to some extent, depend on whether the themes are more ‘data-driven’ or ‘theory-driven’*”. Given the deductive influence of the study’s theoretical framework, the four components of Kelly’s model and the four phases of Nicholson’s transition cycle were all identified as deductive themes from the outset. The deductive coding process began by approaching the data according to these career models and related ideas from the literature. For example, data alluding to role flexibility and self-management were coded for ‘Increased Autonomy’ under the predetermined theme **Attachment Gain** (to the secondment work setting) whereas data coded for ‘Missing students’ were

recorded under the predetermined theme **Detachment Loss** (from the former school setting). Concepts discussed in the literature, were coded accordingly i.e. *"I always told audiences I was a teacher like them"* was coded for 'Reliance on first-order identity' and *"a foot in both camps"* referenced in relation to belonging to neither the PDST or parent school, was coded as 'Third space identity'. Several other codes such as 'Loyalty tug between policy and teacher needs' had strong resonance with the latter and so **Third Space Identity** eventually developed into a subtheme in its own right encompassing other codes such as 'Perceptions of school staff' which emerged as an identity tension for participants across the three stages of **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**. Other statements invited the deductive application of Nicholson's career phases. *"I felt I had mastered the role"* was coded for 'Stabilisation'. More latent comments involved working with Nicholson's model more interpretively, e.g. *"I was now being given more challenging schools"* was also coded for 'Stabilisation' given its underlying implication of perceived proficiency acquired in the role of teacher educator. Similarly Nicholson's 'Encounter' was the code assigned to *"waiting to be found out"* which was also coded for 'Imposter syndrome' owing to its association with self-perceived fraudulence. I noted with interest that in general, the application of Nicholson's career phases during the coding process found greater expression within the thicker nuanced descriptions of participant realities at each point of secondment compared to Kelly's framework which tended to align with overtly articulated experiences e.g. *"The travel and isolation were downsides of the job"*, which was immediately coded as 'Attachment Loss'.

The coding process was repeated for each transcript paying attention this time to ideas that did not explicitly or immediately attach themselves to predetermined ideas. This is in line with Braun and Clarke's contention that in reflexive thematic analysis, such ideas are *"...not in the data waiting to be identified and retrieved by the researcher"* (2019, p.594). Rather and in customary interpretive fashion, they stem from *"...stories about the data produced at the intersection of the researchers' theoretical assumptions...and the data themselves"* (ibid.). Examples of codes identified during this inductive phase were 'Skills offered not asked for' and 'Covert use of expertise' which both arose as fresh perspectives to the way skills were harnessed post-

secondment. Other codes such as 'Team division' and 'Annual anxiety' were assigned to unexpected findings relating to internal PDST team dynamics when secondment approval was looming. The inductive theme generated from such ideas was **Organisational Culture and Dynamics**.

I undertook the entire analysis process for the primary teacher transcripts first and repeated for the post-primary teacher ones to ascertain whether there were some sector specific findings. Here I employed a constant comparative approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) where interview data within a sector were compared first "...to uncover common thematic elements across research participants [and] the events they report...", (Reissman, 2008, p.74). This approach highlighted some uniqueness within each sector in particular with regard to subject versus generalist knowledge which was then generated as a subtheme under the main theme of **Knowledge**.

Overall comparisons across the eight transcripts were made continuously throughout the deductive and inductive coding processes towards incrementally building up a set of shared and prominent themes across the transcripts. In parts, this gave rise to some notable quantities, which according to Hammersley (1992) and Punch (2013) can be relevant even in qualitative studies. I found this to be true for example when all eight participants reported that they would have stayed in PDST had it been a permanent position, or where six out of eight participants cited avoidance of returning to school as the main driver in seeking a permanent position elsewhere. Even so, given that "*Research outcomes, at best, represent only a version of the truth, but cannot be said to describe the lived experience of another*" (Hewitt, 2007, p.1153), where such frequencies were noted, the accurate reflection of participant response still demanded the inclusion of quotes directly from the transcripts. It is also important to say here that not all codes and themes were created in relation to how frequently certain data presented, but rather according to the their "...'*keyness*' to the overall research" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). A case in point here is the code 'Replacing experienced people' which although only representative of two participants, found deep expression in how new PDST members perceived themselves in the context of continuing staff turnover and so the data's relevance transcended their prevalence.

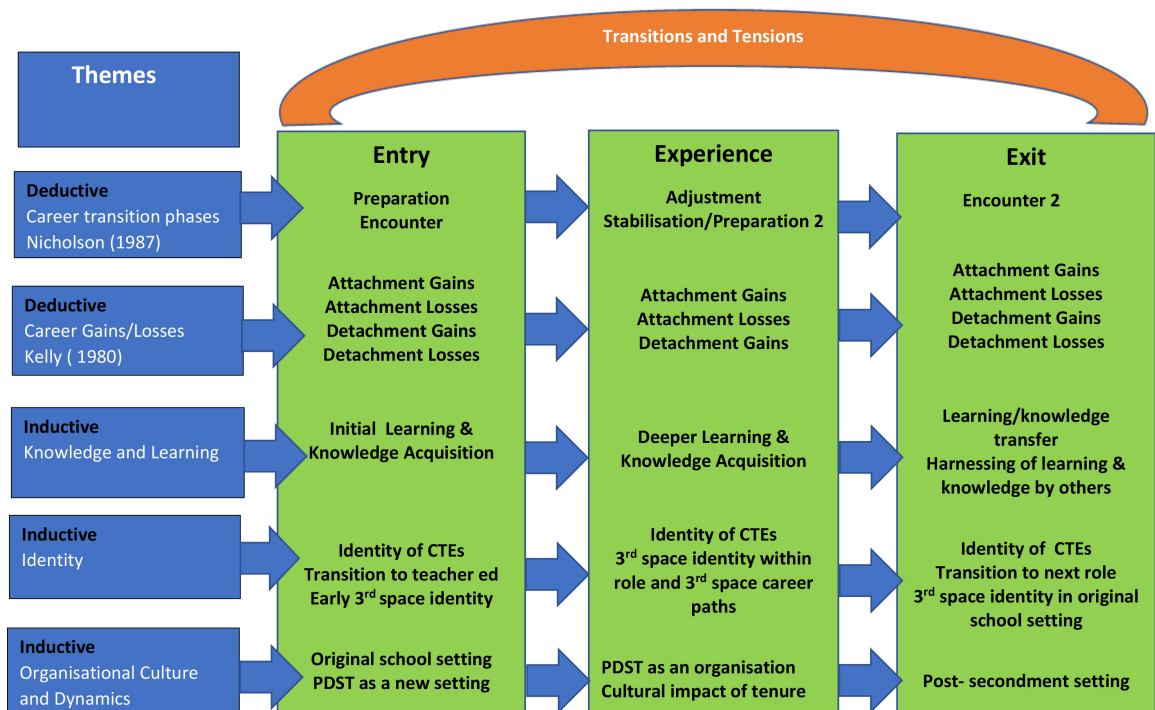
### 5.5.2 The Code Book

I created a code book divided into three sections according to the three pillars of the theoretical framework: **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit**. A simple table was created within each section which would house a catalogue of all the codes with accompanying quotes from the transcripts. As I had already identified the deductive themes, I included a column headed 'Theme'. For illustrative purposes, see Appendix G for some pages extracted from the **Entry** section of the code book. Working through the composite list of codes and their attached quotes, I copied and pasted them into the sections as appropriate (**Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit**). Although a seemingly laborious process, it was enabled by the arrangement of interview questions according to these three categories and the key scaffolds of Kelly's and Nicholson's models. Consequently, I began by entering codes and quotes relating to Kelly's model which applied across all three stages while those pertaining to Nicholson's four phases were inserted into the appropriate stages as dictated by the data. For this study it transpired that the **Entry** section housed the *Preparation* and *Encounter* phases, the **Experience** section housed *Adjustment*, *Stabilisation*, and *Preparation 2* phases, and the **Exit** section played host to a second *Encounter* phase. The location of a second '*Preparation*' phase in the Experience section reflected the delicate paradox of preparing to leave the secondment role having just reached the point of proficiency (*Stabilisation*). It is also congruent with Nicholson's theory that *Stabilisation* in one cycle is inextricably linked to *Preparation* for the next cycle.

I then opened a fourth section in the code book named **Other Themes** where all other codes and narratives were tabulated. Here I recorded those themes inductively generated according to the data themselves such as the aforementioned **Organisational Culture and Dynamics**. While populating this particular section, it became clear that the codes within some themes could be broken down into subthemes each remaining true to the "...'*essence*' of *what each theme is about*" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.92). For instance, the theme **Knowledge** was split into the sub themes, **How Learning Happened** and **Knowledge Transfer**. Similarly the theme **Organisational Culture and Dynamics** was subdivided as it found different meanings in pre and post-secondment settings. Conversely, I was mindful of how the themes related to

each other in the context of the broader study. Themes identified according to Nicholson's phases and Kelly's model often related to each other, i.e. codes within the subtheme **Encounter** had relevance for those relating to subthemes **Attachment Gains** and **Attachment losses** to a new role depending on how the individual experienced the transition. It also became apparent that the themes identified in the code book's fourth (inductive) section all had specific meaning within each of the three secondment stages.

Finally because good themes although distinctive, are part of a unified whole, (Braun and Clarke, 2006), it was important when arriving at my final themes that each found meaningful expression in the overarching concept of **Transitions and Tensions** which spans the entire theoretical frame of this study. Therefore each theme's fidelity to this all-encompassing embodiment of secondment as a CTE, was the ultimate barometer I used to decide whether or not it merited a place in the presentation of findings. Figure 5.2 provides an illustrative overview of what is detailed in this section and reappears in later chapters where it is elaborated upon in the context of the study's findings.



*Figure 5.2 \*: Representation of findings (themes and a selection of subthemes) across the theoretical framework*

*Will appear as Figure A in the Preamble to the Findings and as Figure 9.1 in Chapter Nine (Conclusions and Recommendations)*

### 5.5.3 Reflection on data analysis

Braun and Clarke recognise that “...*although the question of epistemology is usually determined when a research project is being conceptualized, [it] may also raise its head again during analysis*” (2006, p.85) with their more recent work similarly stressing that reflexive thematic analysis procedures should “...*reflect the values of a qualitative paradigm, centering researcher subjectivity...and the importance of deep reflection on, and engagement with, data*” (2019, p.593). The active role that the researcher inevitably plays in selecting codes and themes of interest, and in reporting them to the readers (Taylor and Ussher, 2001), was evident in my seeking out of patterns during the deductive phase. Here data analysis was informed by what I had read in the literature but also coloured by the positionality that I brought to the process. However as already set out in the study’s conceptual frame for analysis (Figure 5.1), that is not to say that this was antithetical to my chosen epistemology of interpretivism. In fact because reflexive thematic analysis “...*seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided*” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.85), it allowed interpretivism to continue guiding how I made sense of the data and to represent them from the perspective of the participants. This flexibility also allowed some codes to straddle deductive and inductive orientations. For instance, ‘Work with like-minded people’ appeared as a code in the deductive subtheme **Attachment Gain** but it was also coded inductively in the subtheme **Knowledge Acquisition** with regard to factors enabling the CTE’s learning.

Holloway and Todres (2003) caution that such an approach to analysis in being essentially independent of epistemology, needs to be employed consciously and reflexively, while demanding that researchers make their assumptions explicit with Braun and Clarke (2019, p.594) similarly stressing that “*Reflexive thematic analysis needs to be implemented with theoretical knowingness and transparency*”. I have therefore in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 demonstrated my commitment to a ‘named and claimed’ approach by making the ‘how’ of my analysis transparent (Attride-Stirling, 2001) and acknowledging what were deliberate decisions such the fore-fronting of deductive coding in order to bring initial structure to disparate qualitative data. As it later transpired, this made it far easier to discover my data saturation point when I was satisfied that my topic

was sufficiently explored and where gathering additional data would unearth little more or perhaps nothing at all. Further in the context of STI, I found that using the review of the literature to provide pre-determined points of reference for themes (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2009) also facilitated comparisons and links to be more easily made with previous studies when writing up the findings.

Ryan (2006, p.25) acknowledges that “...*in promoting post-positivist approaches we recognise that there are many competing discourses, which give rise to contradictions...a tension and creative energy that is not always easy to live with*”. Consequently the reflexive thematic approach outlined above was not always straightforward where all data gathered fitted neatly into separate fortified themes. In fact some data rejected the assignment of a dedicated theme (i.e. where peripheral issues were raised) while other data conflicted (i.e. participants at times contradicted themselves). I also struggled with embracing contradictions across responses, often having to resist efforts to arrive at clean and unambiguous conclusions. I needed reminding of the non-scientific nature of the post positivist stance where some discoveries while helpful and plausible, do not represent any one truth (Crotty, 2021). Later in Section 5.7.5, I elaborate on where this challenge became even more convoluted when ensuring that my interpretation of participant responses represented their reality of their stories. In this case the dividing line between my bias and subjectivity depended on whether I could demonstrate a deep understanding of the participants’ world rather than superimposing my meaning onto the data.

## **5.6 Ethics**

The dynamics of ethical dilemmas first revealed themselves when developing my research proposal and while grappling with my research question. Indeed it is difficult to disagree with Northway (2002, p.3) and her contention that “...*all aspects of the research process, from deciding upon the topic through to identifying a sample, conducting the research and disseminating the findings, have ethical implications*”. I found myself confronted with ethical issues at almost every step of this study with some presenting repeatedly, such as the tension between my professional role as the Director of the PDST and that of the researcher conducting it. However Flick (2009, p.43) points out that



*“Thinking about ethical tensions...should not prevent you from doing your research, but should help you do it in a more reflective way...”*. Devoting due time to a robust risk assessment during the proposal phase greatly helped me to reflect on potential issues as I systematically considered all aspects of the process from the participants’ perspective. In any case *“...inquiries into other people’s lives are always an exercise in ethics”* (Agee, 2009, p.440) and as a qualitative endeavour, this study involved probing deeply into the transitions and tensions of participants’ past and present career experiences with a view to unearthing memories of, and insights into, professional/personal gains and losses. By putting myself in their shoes regarding the line of questioning and their perceptions of researcher/respondent relationship as explored below in Section 5.6.2, I challenged myself in asking how comfortable I would feel if I were a participant in this study. In the context of the global pandemic and notwithstanding online interviews being a new ‘methodological frontier’ for collecting data in an innovative and versatile manner (Madge, 2010), there were specific ethical issues to be addressed in relation to interviewing in the online environment (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014) which are detailed throughout this section. Finally before its commencement this research received approval from the Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

### **5.6.1 Informed Consent**

According to Silverman (2021), research ethics are grounded in the acquisition of informed consent defined by Cohen, Mannion and Morrison as *“...the procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions”* (2007, p.52). The eight former PDST advisors were approached either by their current e-mail addresses to which I had access<sup>18</sup> or initially by text message<sup>19</sup> where I requested their new e-mail addresses for further contact. A standard letter of invite was issued to all to engage in an online interview which clearly described the purpose, significance and potential benefits of the study. An accompanying information sheet (Appendix H) explained that the interview

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<sup>18</sup> On exiting the PDST, some teachers choose to retain their PDST e-mail should they later decide to embark on associate work.

<sup>19</sup> I had phone numbers for participants who retained their phone number since leaving the PDST and sourced others from colleagues who were still in contact with them.

would be an hour in length as well as detailing its general structure. Its provision of indicative questions facilitated prior thinking time for participants and allowed for any potential concerns to be raised in advance. Owing to my being advantaged epistemologically, not least in shaping the agenda and having access to the relevant literature (Easterby-Smith Thorpe and Lowe, 1991), I also included a short extract from the end of my draft literature review which summarised for participants what I wished to discover. As part of this communication, they were assured of the voluntary nature of their engagement and their freedom to withdraw before, during or after their participation. Flick cautions that issues of confidentiality or anonymity “...*may become problematic if research is done with several members of a specific setting*” (2009, p.42). It could be argued that all participants in this study were part of a ‘community of former PDST staff’, many of whom have retained personal and professional connections with each other. The information sheet assured participant anonymity where pseudonyms would disassociate names from responses. Securing consent also required participants to know that interviews would be recorded and that these along with electronic transcripts would be filed in secure electric folders to which only my supervisor and I had access. They were also informed that the data would only be retained until such time as the project was fully completed and that thereafter all raw data would be permanently deleted or destroyed. Finally the letter included a consent form (Appendix H) which all needed to sign using electronic signatures to indicate their full understanding of the study and their agreement to participate.

When scheduling the interviews, every effort was made to minimise intrusion on the participants in terms of time, place and privacy of the interview setting, all of which can impact on the data (Bloor *et.al*, 2001). Woods advises that “...*interviewees should be given the choice of time/place...to give them a sense of control and confidence*” (1986, p.70). While the original face-to-face plan intended that each participant would choose a venue best suited to them, Covid-19 isolation measures negated the need for travel or the arrangement of a venue. Here I discovered some unintended advantages of conducting the interviews online. Firstly in directing my research away from a purely geographical-centric focus, it allowed me greater scope in my sample. Secondly in eliminating the need to travel, it saved time for all concerned while also

allowing greater flexibility in scheduling. I found that this in turn attended to the affective needs of conducting social research in a pandemic when normal routines are disrupted and when many people are under personal stress. Having agreed dates and times, I issued calendar invites from the Microsoft Teams platform. All but one participant engaged in the interviews from their home. Although this typically “...allows the researcher and the researched “a neutral yet personal location” (Hanna, 2012, p.241), I had no control over participants’ physical environment which could have background distractions or indeed implications for confidentiality. Therefore the information sheet included advice to remove or conceal anything within visible and audio range of the camera that could compromise confidentiality or personal privacy. Finally as the interviewer I also needed to ensure that the same conditions for privacy and confidentiality were in place within my physical environment.

### **5.6.2 Insider implications and power dynamics**

Sikes and Potts (2008, p.4) describe ‘insiders’ as those “...*who undertake research projects who, already have an attachment to, or involvement with, the institutions or social groups in, or on, which their investigations are based*”. I was acutely mindful in this regard of my role as National Director of the PDST and any potential threat this might pose to transparent and trusting relationships throughout the project. Although all participants no longer worked for the PDST or reported to me, there remained ‘insider’ research implications by virtue of my position as their former leader. As PDST Director since 2014, participants all worked within structures that I had led and managed towards guiding the work and professional learning of PDST staff. Indeed the interviews invited comment on these given the research question’s focus on professional learning and experience while in the PDST. This avenue of inquiry could have been perceived as an attempt on my part to elicit positive feedback regarding their satisfaction with the job or training provided for them. Tuckman and Harper (2012) discuss the desire for participants to be seen in a good light, and so may say what the interviewer wants to hear. Degrees of acquaintance between researcher and participant can affect the authenticity of participant responses particularly in an interview setting (Rosenthal and Rosnow,1991), furthering the possibility that participants might provide affirmative responses due to knowing me personally. I also noted with interest Walford’s (2001, p.96) cautioning that

the “...*information provided by an interviewee might depend on the topic having ‘greater potential impact’ on the interviewee*”. Here I considered the possibility of their feeling beholden to me if they at some future point required a career reference or should I appear on an interview panel for a role they apply for in the system. If provision of professional references was to be raised as a concern, I planned to offer co-signing a reference written by a PDST colleague who managed them directly. In the event of my appearing on future interview boards where they may present as candidates, I decided that I would offer to withdraw from the panel while their particular interview is conducted.

In discussing researchers as insiders/outsiders, Brannick and Coghlan highlight that they “...*encounter role conflict and find themselves caught between loyalty tugs, behavioural claims and identification dilemmas* (2007, p.70). Whilst it could be argued that I am a fellow teacher on secondment and remain employed as such in my own school, my dominant profile reflects a position of power as leader of a DE funded support service. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) claim that preconceptions of power can impact on building trusting relationships with participants. My work involves addressing large audiences in the education community on a regular basis as well as reporting to higher echelons of the DE. As an agent of the DE and known as having access to many grapevine networks, I could be perceived suspiciously by study participants as “...*spying or breaking peer norms*” (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p.71). Seidman (2019, p.105) reminds us that in itself “...*the interviewing relationship is fraught with issues of power -who controls the direction of the interview, who controls the results, who benefits*”. Consequently gleaning honest thoughts and views from participants could be jeopardised by inclinations to provide self-protective responses (Scheurich,1995) due to concerns as to how the information will be used or disseminated in certain corners of the system. Furthermore, Flick (2009, p.44) warns that “...*many ethical dilemmas arise from a need to weigh the research interest (better knowledge, new solutions for existing problems) against the interest of participants (confidentiality, levels of risk)*”. Here I considered that participants were aware of the secondment policy’s impact on PDST staff retention in recent years and challenges I faced regarding strategic management and staffing of the organisation. Again ‘insider’ status could have located me in their eyes as having a political motivation or a vested interest in

reaching certain findings in order to solve a problem for myself and so risked participant suspicion of preconceived notions I may have about secondment policy.

I was also conscious of my unique attachment to the PDST and a certain organisational protectiveness which could manifest where participants, in the course of the interview, offered inaccurate information or a critical view about the practices and culture of the service. I needed to avoid any temptation to view such data unfavourably, react defensively, interrupt or influence the discussion by correcting participants, expressing my opinion or using leading questions, all which could perpetuate a perception of me as questionable 'insider'. Put simply, I needed to assume neutrality regardless of how antithetical the respondent's position was to my own beliefs or values. Interestingly Patton (2015, p.457) distinguishes here between neutrality and rapport; "*Rapport is a stance vis-a-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says*". Appreciating that a semi-structured interview allows for relatively free dialogue, that content is nevertheless determined largely by the direction of the inquiry and so "... *the kinds of questions a researcher is asking become paramount when considering the short- and long-term effects on others* (Agee, 2009, p.239). The ethics risk assessment I undertook prompted me to consider how every question might sound from an interviewee perspective and how comfortable I would be in answering it honestly. For instance I was conscious of possible sensitivities where some participants did not depart the PDST of their own accord or where the timing of departure/choice of onward destination was impacted by external factors out of their control. As a preventative measure, the information sheet issued made all topics of discussion clear in advance of the interviews providing an opportunity for participants to raise a priori concerns.

More broadly and in the spirit of the semi-structured interview, I informed participants that the questions were a form of stimulus to engage them in fluid conversation. In assuring them that there was no single correct answer for any question, I sought to demonstrate a democratic and participatory approach which openly promoted the emergent nature of interpretivist knowledge construction as opposed to pre-calculated or self-serving anticipated agendas.

Consequently, I employed a number of strategies throughout the interviews to privilege participants' realities, including seeking clarification through paraphrasing or probing more deeply, taking the stance of 'naive inquirer' which according to (Morrow, 2005, p.254) "*...is particularly important when the interviewer is an 'insider' with respect to the culture being investigated or when she or he is very familiar with the phenomenon of inquiry*". I also hoped that the practice of member checking and peer debriefing, described later in Section 5.7.5 further demonstrated my intentions to preserve the integrity of participant responses.

Finally in acknowledging the challenges associated with 'insider' status and the possible distorting effect of power, I actively strove to confront "*...the impact of organisational politics on the process of inquiry*" (Brannick and Coughlan, 2007, p.72). I presented myself in the invitations to interview as Ciara O' Donnell, doctoral student as opposed to National Director of the PDST with correspondence travelling through my student email account. Other steps taken towards minimising insider or power threats included the provision of a clear statement of the study's purpose and an assurance of my non-partial role from the outset, clarifying same whenever necessary, and affording due attention to any insider or power related issues if they arose. I stressed to invited participants the value of honest responses provided by a group of educators who, using a purposive sampling technique, were selected owing to their satisfying particular characteristics and so were best placed to contribute meaningful data for my study. Consequently I was sure to make them aware of the value of their contribution to what is currently a limited knowledge base on the work of CTEs and in particular those seconded to do this work. This helped participants considerably I believe to engage comfortably with the process and to be forthcoming with the experiences they had to share.

### **5.7 Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

While quantitative research assumes that realities can be controlled and measured through scientific inquiry and discusses those realities in terms of data validity and reliability, proponents of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Morrow, 2005; Patton, 2015) have developed an alternative vocabulary in line with multiple interpretations being understood within a

particular time and context (Merriam,1998). Given the non-testing and highly contextualised nature of this study, I considered terms such as trustworthiness (in lieu of reliability) and authenticity (in lieu of validity), as better fitting concepts within which to critically reflect on the data gathered in my study and its analysis. Toma's (2005, p.410) assertion that "...*approaches based on trustworthiness and authenticity do not diminish validity or reliability, instead... they recast it in more relativist terms*", resonated strongly with the interpretivist stance I adopted for this study and the contingent (as opposed to fixed) realities that it sought to explore. Nevertheless advocates of these alternative terms (Flick, 2009; Patton, 2015) stress the need for qualitative researchers to be just as vigilant as positivist researchers are about ensuring the validity and reliability in their studies. Accordingly I examined the following for trustworthiness and authenticity;

- the sample
- the data gathering method
- the potential influence of my role and identity
- the potential influence of my inner biases
- methods of data interpretation and analysis.

### **5.7.1 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: the sample**

Given that qualitative studies often target smaller samples, it is common for qualitative researchers to struggle with issues of transferability of findings with many seeming apologetic for a study's limited scope and perceived lack of applicability to other settings. In discussing perceived limitations with the validity of single-figure samples, Lester (1999, p.4) refers to "...*the common misunderstanding that the results should be statistically reliable*" with Flick reminding us that "*It is less the number of cases that are studied, but rather the quality of sampling decisions on which the generalization depends*" (2009, p.31). The purposive sampling method already discussed in Section 5.4 applies where "...*researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic(s) being sought*" (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2018, p.219). It is openly non-probable in that "...*it does not pretend to represent the wider population; it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased*" (ibid.).

In further support of the argument that “...*numbers alone have little to do with the quality or adequacy of qualitative data* (Morrow, 2005, p.255), Patton also contends that “...*validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size*” (2015, p.313). Through interviews, rich descriptions were elicited from participants with sufficient detail and raw data to allow the reader to judge the transferability of a study about a group of former teacher educators in a particular context at a particular point in time, reflecting Merriam’s (1998, p.208) contention that “...*in qualitative research, a single case or small sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many*”.

While appreciating all of this, Tongco (2007, p.154) reminds us that purposive sampling demands “...*the researcher to exercise judgment on the informant’s reliability and competency*” with Godambe (1982) underscoring the necessary knowledge base of participants to avoid meaningless and untrustworthy data. The priority of this investigation was the securing of richly-textured data about a significantly neglected area of research and scholarship both nationally and internationally. In introducing the concept of ‘information power’ as a pragmatic guiding principle, Malterud, Siersma and Guassora (2015) claim that the more information power the sample provides, the smaller the sample size needs to be, and vice versa. Indeed the gathering of real and authentic accounts of teacher education experiences while on secondment and its influence on later career, involved my asking “which cases?” “what do they represent?” and “why were they selected?” rather than “how many?” Consequently as discussed in Section 5.4, the selection was targeted and guided by highly specific criteria with underpinning rationales. Therefore I was as confident as I could be of the suitability of the study’s subjects and accordingly I made explicit to them their unique value to this under researched area of teacher education where only certain individuals with certain direct experience could meaningfully contribute. In summary, I realised that the strength of the study’s sample actually lay in its intentional bias and choices.



### 5.7.2 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: data gathering

In relation to selecting interviews for qualitative research, Flick (2009, p.266) maintains that “...it is often the face-to-face contact and the personal relationship, based on verbal and non-verbal communications, that are its strengths”. Notwithstanding claims that using a webcam allows for synchronous interaction comparable to the onsite equivalent of nonverbal and social cues (Stewart and Williams, 2005; Sullivan, 2012), I wondered about the limitations in observing body language, inflections and tone (Cater, 2011). Neither could I make assumptions about user confidence with online platforms or reliability of internet connection. Both have implications for comfort and fluidity of dialogue particularly where technical issues can “...create an abrupt feeling in the interview that is hard to move forward from” (Seitz, 2015, p.4). Despite initial concerns about connectivity and digital competencies, all participants were clearly proficient in using online platforms daily in their work with only one participant conducting the interview from his car having driven to an area for better reception. Even where some interviews were momentarily interrupted by the loss of connection, the conversation resumed comfortably somewhat helped I believe by my knowing the participants previously. In fact like Cabaroglu, Basaran and Roberts (2010), I found that pauses and repetitions were no different online to how they manifest face-to-face. To offset the screen as a potential barrier to detecting non-verbal cues, I employed an element of pre-emptive compensation by listening more carefully to a participant's voice and looking carefully at their facial expressions (Mann and Stewart, 2000) while observing Seitz's advice for researchers in this scenario “...to use their own facial expressions deliberately to convey understanding and emotion too” (2015, p.4). In this regard I was also conscious that in a face-to-face environment, participants would clearly know exactly when I was recording the interview so it was important to explicitly inform them when recording online had begun, paused or stopped. In summary, despite the potential pitfalls I had anticipated about conducting interviews in this way in relation to authenticity, I discovered that when these are risk assessed and addressed, online platforms can allow qualitative researchers to reap the benefits of traditional face-to-face interviews (Hanna, 2012).

From an authenticity perspective I was aware of the limitations of retrospective interviewing in qualitative research where remembering is a constructive process and therefore is prone to the omission or alteration of details (Keightley, Pickering and Allett, 2012). As memories of events are also influenced by the environment in which they are recalled, the content of the interviewer's questions and the way in which questions are asked (ibid.), I took the steps outlined above in Section 5.6.2 (i.e. avoiding leading questions and adopting a neutral disposition to responses). It was also intended that the provision of indicative questions to participants in advance of the interviews would allow for prior thinking and therefore more accurate recollection. Retrospection as an issue could have been addressed by interviewing present members of the PDST who are immersed in the role. However and quite apart from the study requiring participants to have left the PDST, this would have created more serious issues for power /insider implications in being interviewed by their current leader, issues which I believe would have posed a greater threat to authenticity than an absence of pin point recall. A parameter of three years time elapse since departing the PDST was deliberately factored into the sample criteria in order to minimise distorted recollection. Finally during the analysis process the identification of common experiences by several participants who were all interviewed separately, further reduced my concern about retrospective accounts.

### **5.7.3 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: my role and identity**

If a study's trustworthiness and authenticity also lies in how at ease the participants are with the researcher (Bernard *et al.*,1986) and if "*...the gaining of quality information in an interview depends upon establishing good relationships*" (Measor,1985, p.57), I remained conscious of how preconceptions of my position both within the PDST and in the wider system could affect participant levels of comfort in openly engaging with me during interviews. Section 5.6.2 has already detailed ways in which I endeavoured to minimise the distorting impact of possible perceptions regarding my role as National Director of the PDST; having a personal and emotional attachment to the organisation, pursuing a particular self-serving agenda, exploiting or communicating interview information at policy level, or influencing participants' career prospects. In considering all of these potential threats to trustworthiness

and the option of having an outsider conduct the interviews, I realised that my prior acquaintance with participants was not only necessary in terms of purposive sampling, but advantageous for trustworthiness and authenticity. Firstly much of the literature on qualitative interviewing highlights the importance of establishing rapport (Shaw, 2010), getting to know participants and establishing trust before the interview process (Mann and Stewart, 2000). According to Roulston (2010), using participants known to the researcher provides a relatively readymade intimacy which can enhance the generation of data in interview settings in ways not possible for 'outsider' researchers. As it transpired in the context of the pandemic, this was particularly fortuitous given that "*Online communication is said by some to have a narrow or lean bandwidth, in contrast to the rich bandwidth of face-to-face interaction*" (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014, p.611) citing Sala (1998) which can compromise the quality of rapport between the researcher and participants (O'Connor, Madge and Shaw, 2008; Rowley, 2012). The fact that relationships and rapport were already in place here negated the need to adopt a "guarded optimism" (Madge and O' Connor, 2004, p.9) regarding the trustworthiness of the arguably less personable web-based environment.

Secondly and fundamentally for the purposes of this research, my sampling technique knowingly selected participants according to a unique career journey they undertook with the PDST, one that may not have similar resonance with an outside interviewer or facilitate a truly empathetic approach. Davey (2013, p.36) notes that empathy between colleagues during the interview conversations can "...allow for genuine elaboration [and] personal expression of feelings" and so I saw great value in facilitating a conversation where the interviewer and interviewees shared similar professional backgrounds. I too am a seconded teacher and have experienced the transition from the classroom into teacher education along with its related identity and role boundary disturbances. I have first-hand experience of the substantive/situational self-misalignment and the associated lure of my first-order dominance when initially rehearsing the role of teacher educator. I can also relate to the paradoxical existence of secondment characterised by unparalleled learning opportunities and growth on one hand, and the unease and instability that annual contracts renewal creates on the other. In this regard Robson (1993) argues the advantages of being an 'insider'

having knowledge and experience of the field, its historical developments and current situation as one will have therefore engaged with the intricacies of its culture in a way which could take an external researcher years to assimilate. Finally, I contend that the aforementioned process of risk assessment where I reflected deeply on the impact that some lines of inquiry might have on participants and the plausibility of their responses, was all the richer for my understanding of their former positions in the PDST.

#### **5.7.4 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: my inner bias**

According to Bullough and Pinnegar “*Who a researcher is, is central to what a researcher does*” (2001, p.13). I have already acknowledged my role in the system and within the PDST as well as my proximity to the phenomenon under investigation and my acquaintance with the sample. My professional life experiences as a seconded teacher are similar to that of the research participants, and like theirs, have had both personal and professional relevance for me and my identity. More profoundly, following a long career in the CPD support services and holding the position as Director of the PDST for the last eight years, I have encountered opportunities and challenges that have informed my view of reality and so have arrived at theories about how certain things are and have come to be. Bassey (1999, p.43) observes that “...*for the interpretive researcher, reality is a construct of the human mind*” where the ideology of the researcher is a key factor in how they approach a problem, with Denzin and Lincoln (2017) asserting that this ideology is dependent on the researcher’s personal history and biography. Indeed if “*It is not the method that approaches scholarship with pre-existing baggage, but rather the researcher*” (Grix 2002, p.180), then I needed to be sharply attuned to my own prejudices, assumptions and self-constructed theories.

Given the propensity for qualitative researchers to bring their life experiences and biases to bear on how they approach their work (Ryan, 2006) where “...*their impressions, irritations, feelings, and so on, become data in their own right*” (Flick 2009, p.15), I needed throughout the life of this project, to observe high levels of inward critical self-scrutiny (Mason, 2018) or **reflexivity** described by Archer (2007) as considering oneself subjectively in relation to the world. In my daily work I am frequently required to speculate and predict developments

and outcomes for example. This study's post-positivist orientation rejects anticipatory discourses in favour of what Flick calls the interpretivist's need for "*suspended attention*" (2009, p.63). According to Freud, a priori consideration of expectations no matter how informed they may appear to be, puts one at risk of "...*never finding anything but what he already knows*" (1958, p.112). Applied to this study and its inbuilt tolerance for what might unfold, I was obliged to check habitual pre-emptive thought processes that could potentially endanger the essence of emergent discovery which was core to the study's epistemological stance. As previously stressed, this research was not an exercise concerning hypothesis, validation or proof. It explored terrain not yet investigated and so trustworthiness of findings demanded them to be grounded in the data gathered (Lincoln and Guba,1985). Therefore in retaining the integrity of the interpretivist tradition, I made every effort throughout the interviews to ensure that the focus of inquiry, the interview questions, the manner and tone in which I posed questions and reacted to responses, collectively demonstrated my neutrality as a researcher and my fidelity to the meanings that interviewees brought to the evolving narrative rather than any speculative impositions on my part. All that said, Woods (1986) argues that regardless of how much we try to nullify our views, opinions and biases and remain open to the understanding of others, we cannot accomplish 'total purification'. And so in acknowledging how the trustworthiness of the study could be impacted by participant perceptions of me as 'biased insider', I appreciated the added value that shared histories brought to the exchange while taking some refuge in that fact that "*Insiders and outsiders in the domain of knowledge, unite. You have nothing to lose but your claims. You have a world of understanding to win*" (Merton,1972, p.44).

#### **5.7.5 Trustworthiness and Authenticity: data interpretation and analysis**

In qualitative study, the researcher is recognised as the primary instrument not only in the data collection, but during its interpretation and analysis (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Further, Patton (2015) asserts that a study's trustworthiness and authenticity is defined according to how well the research findings match reality. Given that qualitative research typically examines multiple constructions of reality, then the trustworthiness and authenticity of this study was dependent on my interpretation of the participants' constructions of reality and how I chose to present these in my findings. Indeed

for me, the interpretation of interview text and its translation into my narrative, more than any other phase of the study, starkly highlighted the “... *reflective capacity of qualitative research to hold a mirror up to the world, and even to our own behaviour*” ( Hammersley, 2000, p.396).

Schütz states that facts only become relevant through their selection and interpretation and so are “... *detached from their context by an artificial abstraction*” (1962, p.5) deeming them to be ‘constructs of the second degree’, that is, “... *constructs of the constructs made by the actors*” (ibid., p.59). Following the interviews it became apparent to me that the text represented only what the recording had ‘caught’ and what was documented in the transcription. Thereafter it was mine to draw from and commit to paper according to my interpretation as a ‘second degree’ knowledge constructor. Flick (2009, p.76) reminds us that “... *participants actively produce realities through the meanings they ascribe to events*” and that “... *qualitative research relies on understanding those realities through the interpretation of texts*” (ibid., p.75). I wondered to what extent I could authentically suppose a reality existing beyond the socially shared viewpoints of participants and validate how I was representing these in my findings. Furthermore, with regard to the emancipatory element of this study where it aimed to ‘give voice’, Fine (2002, p.218) argues that even a ‘*giving voice*’ approach “... *involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments*”. Here I discovered another unexpected gain of conducting my interviews online in that during transcription I could ‘relive’ the interaction and real time reactions of the participants in a way that would not have been possible if the interviews were audio recorded. In some cases however, additional steps were needed to ensure that what happened in the participants’ translation of reality into text, and what happened in my retranslation of that text by inference back into reality, in as much as possible, reproduced the original intentions of the participants while ever conscious of the persistent background noise created by my own identity and beliefs. On two occasions I needed to clarify accuracy of responses or where the data appeared incoherent, I adopted Sanders’ (1960) recommendation to revisit the field site for clarification of stances and member checked accordingly.

Steps taken to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity while analysing the data are evident in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 where I explicitly detail how I knowingly enacted reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) and also in Section 5.5.3 which I believe demonstrates “...*the researcher’s reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflective and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process*” (ibid., 594). I also decided to employ a participatory and collaborative model to triangulate the data analysis process and open it up to alternative interpretations (Merriam, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend peer debriefings as a strategy to establish a study’s trustworthiness where the researcher consults with professional peers who challenge and support the researcher throughout the study. Throughout the data analysis stage, I consulted with a community within the domain of CPD teacher education comprised of “...*knowledgeable colleagues to engage in critical and sustained discussion*” (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p.69), to test my interpretation of emergent themes. Their ‘devil’s advocate’ interpretations along with their genuine interest in the research and its findings, further strengthened my system of checks and balances in support of a study which sought to represent an under researched context in which they too worked.

At a fundamental level Morrow (2005, p.256), argues that “*Data analysis, interpretation, and writing are a continuous and interactive process...and should be seen as an integrated whole. In the data analysis phase immersion in the data is essential*”. I contend that the trustworthiness of this study was strengthened by my engagement with the data throughout the data gathering phase when I made a concerted effort to include common indicators across interviews to enable authentic cross referencing at the later stages. As individual interviews were completed, I took stock of the culminating knowledge and patterns emerging. An ongoing connecting, comparing and contrasting of inferences that emerged from the iterative feedback loops I built into the research design, facilitated complementary aspects of the study’s picture to be continuously generated, checked and rechecked, towards building a coherent justification for the findings. Simultaneously this was compared to existing knowledge in the field, either validating or challenging it, thereby contributing to the body of literature on teacher education as the study intended.

Finally, the theoretical framework for the study contributed to its trustworthiness by providing a common thread regarding the three stages of secondment, career transition phases and **attachment/detachment gains/losses**. This provided a robust structure which supported consistency across broad areas of questioning and which also served to house emerging themes and evolving interpretations, thus also adding to the study's authenticity.



## Preamble to the Study Findings

The findings of this study and their accompanying discussion are presented in three separate chapters in line with the three pillars of the theoretical framework: **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**, equating to what this study identifies as the three stages of secondment. The deductive and inductive themes generated during analysis are summarised below and represented visually in Figure A overleaf.

### Deductive Themes

As outlined in Chapter Three, the deductive aspect of the study was driven by the theoretical framework, its three pillars (**Entry, Experience** and **Exit**) and two models in the field of career change as they pertain to the secondment journey.

- Nicholson's (1987) model of career transition and its four phases of *Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment* and *Stabilisation*
- Kelly's (1980) GLAD model of job change where career **attachment /detachment gains** and **losses** represent the tensions at each point of transition.

Both models guided the line of questioning across all three stages of secondment during the interviews. At data analysis these stages provided three key headings (**Entry, Experience** and **Exit**) which were sub-headed according to Nicholson's four career transition phases and Kelly's four categories of **attachment/detachment gains** and **losses**. Whereby Kelly's categories of **attachment/detachment gains** and **losses** appear across all three stages in the findings, the discrete transition phases as defined by Nicholson, apply to particular stages (i.e. *Preparation* and *Encounter* phases specifically feature at the **Entry** point of secondment with the PDST).

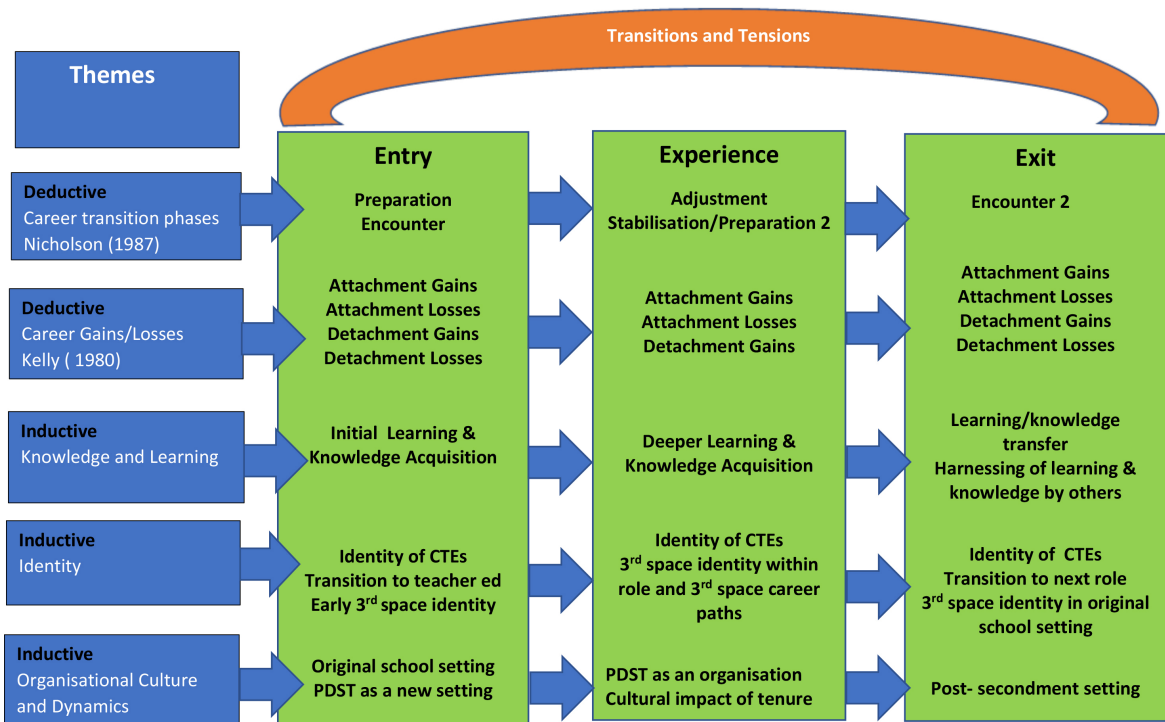
### Inductive Themes

Underpinned by the epistemological orientation of this study, the intended purpose of interview as the data gathering tool was to facilitate a principle of openness and a negotiation of meaning between myself and each of the participants in line with the emergent nature of the interpretative tradition. This yielded the following

inductive themes each manifesting in various guises at the **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** stages.

- Knowledge and learning
- Identity
- Organisational culture and dynamics

The diagram below illustrates how these themes (deductive and inductive plus some of their subthemes) are mapped across these three stages.



*Figure A\* : Representation of findings (themes and a selection of subthemes) across the theoretical framework*

*\*Has appeared as Figure 5.2 in chapter five (Methodology) and also appears as Figure 9.1 in chapter nine (Conclusions and Recommendations)*

The next three chapters (Six, Seven and Eight) adopt a common structure and begin by fore fronting the elements of Nicholson’s and Kelly’s models that pertain to that stage of secondment as dictated by the data generated. The findings and accompanying theorised narratives (Discussion) are presented according to the deductive sub themes of Nicholson’s transition cycle and the sub themes of Kelly’s model in the context of Nicholson’s phases. Findings for the three inductive themes are woven throughout these thus representing the co-existence of inductive and deductive approaches as per the tenets of STI (Berkeley, 2014).

It is noteworthy that Chapter Eight somewhat stands apart from Chapters Six and Seven in presenting mainly inductive themes given the paucity of previous studies exploring the post-secondment period. As was the case in Chapter Four's review of the literature, references to the literature on career dynamics are incorporated into the discussion where relevant. Direct quotes from the interviews are presented in italics. Table A shows participant pseudonyms and some corresponding details in line with the sampling criteria outlined in Section 5.4 of Chapter Five.

*Table A : Participant pseudonyms and details*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Participant Details</b>
Karen	Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for three years. Left the PDST to work in a university.
Katie*	Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for eight years. Left the PDST to return to original class teacher role in her own school.
Peter	Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for three years. Left the PDST to take up a Deputy Principal position.
Laura	Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for three years. Left the PDST to work with another education agency.
Tim	Post-Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for three years. Left the PDST to work in a university.
Helen	Post-Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for two years. Left the PDST to return to original class teacher role in her own school.
Tina*	Post-Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for six years. Left the PDST to take up a Deputy Principal position.
Jackie	Post-Primary Teacher: Seconded to the PDST for three years. Left the PDST to work with another education agency .

*\*Katie and Tina were granted derogations annually having reached year five and had each been offered a further year before choosing to depart the PDST due to ongoing annual uncertainty.*

## Chapter Six

### Findings and Discussion Part 1

#### Entry to Secondment

##### 6.1: Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings and related discussion for the **Entry** stage of secondment defined by this study as the period when participants first make their decision to join the PDST and embark on their first few months in the job. In relation to Nicholson's transition cycle, the findings of the study align the first two phases, *Preparation* and *Encounter* with this stage of secondment. Participant responses across the eight interviews show that all four categories of Kelly's GLAD model applied during the **Entry** stage, with **attachment gains** to the new job in the PDST appearing more prevalent than the other three categories of gains/losses.

##### 6.2 The *Preparation* phase

*Preparation* as the first phase of Nicholson's career transition cycle spans the period where individuals informed by some key motives, recognise a need for a career change and investigate fresh possibilities. In reporting the motivational "push" and "pull" factors influencing their decision to apply for a position with the PDST, participants demonstrated patterns of thinking and behaviours synonymous with this phase. In terms of Kelly's model, and given that at this point participants would not yet have experienced the new role, these push and pull factors can be respectively equated with what were anticipated **detachment gains** (in leaving school) and anticipated **attachment gains** (in joining the PDST). Revisiting Markus and Nurius' (1986) framing of identity as the imagining of "possible future selves", the data strongly illustrate that participants had optimistic visions of these.

When discussing decisions to pursue a role with the PDST, all participants spoke about the need for a job change with stasis in their professional learning and development presenting as a key push factor (**detachment gain**). Tina explained "*I had learned as much as I could and felt that things plateaued for me. I wanted to spread my wings*". In being "...eager for new experiences" (Laura), having "...outgrown school as the same motivation just wasn't there (Jackie), "...it was time to take on a new challenge and break out of routine" (Helen).

All participants had post-graduate qualifications and had secured middle management positions in as far as internal school structures allowed. With school offering “...very few opportunities outside the classroom for teachers” (Jackie), career wise they had “...gone as far as possible there as a teacher, a tutor, a year head and a programme coordinator” (Tina). **Detachment gains** were anticipated where their achievements “...would no longer be wasted and could be used more fully with the PDST” (Katie). Contrasting **attachment gains** to the PDST were described as experiencing broader horizons by “...getting an insight into national policy and how things work out there” (Peter), and “...having some kind of influence on education in a more national sense” (Laura).

Half of the participants referenced **detachment gains** associated with school leadership or culture. They spoke about feeling unheard and generally not belonging. Laura explained “I just felt that I wasn't being listened to ...that my views were a nuisance or not important. I was disillusioned by the leadership in the school”. There were references to “...a clique system in school...” where “... the principal just couldn't manage the toxicity” (Katie) and feeling “...out of sync with the herd mentality of ‘let's do the easy option’, rather than the best thing for the students” (Jackie). Tina hints at a similar mismatch between her identity and the values of her school colleagues;

*I just felt different...the kind of teacher who said “what can we do next...what are different schools doing or is there research on this...is there a better way of doing something?”. I always read the policy circular letters for myself, whereas some of my colleagues would be like, ‘Ah sure look, this tells you what to do’. But I wanted to pick it apart.*

Two participants' recollections of how staff reacted to their PDST appointments illustrate a perceived 'all or nothing' identity for teacher educators and a disdain for those who choose to pursue a career outside of school;

*Once I got the job I was categorised as a past colleague really quickly. I had literally only told them in the staffroom and they were practically saying goodbye to me. And I thought, “Hang on, I haven't gone yet” (Tina).*

*I told nobody from school that I was going for the PDST interview because I was afraid that they'd be angry with me. And when I got the job they were like, “Oh, you're one of those now”...they were annoyed at me for moving on (Katie).*

Such cultures evoked a fear of stagnation and highlighted potential **attachment gains** to be enjoyed in a world beyond school. They spoke about “...*running away from school because I didn't want it to suck the energy out to me*” (Katie) and “...*a chance of refreshment as I was getting into a rut*” (Peter). Jackie elaborated;

*I was going to become disengaged if I didn't have something more to rejuvenate me and replenish my well. I was beginning to become a functionary. I needed another angle, another opportunity, another perspective.*

Six of the eight participants believed that other **attachment gains** to the PDST would involve delving deeper into subject or pedagogical content. The data reveal a leaning away from what is traditionally associated with school sector, namely subject specialism at post-primary level and a more generalist approach at primary level. Primary participants craved immersion in a particular subject indicating a desire for specialism given that “... *in dealing with 11 or 12 subjects...you don't really gain an in depth-knowledge into any of them*” (Karen) while Peter in having a passion for literacy, “...*applied for a literacy advisor role to dig down into its component parts*”. Post-primary participants “...*wanted to develop pedagogically not just from a subject perspective*” (Tim) but to “... *become a better educator beyond my two subjects* (Helen).

It appears that career persuasion towards teacher education was fuelled while observing PDST members at work. Tim recalled “...*two PDST people giving training and I was blown away by the energy and skill*” where Helen said she “...*learned more about the job from attending PDST CPD and was fascinated with all that the facilitator knew*”. Katie also as an attendee “...*thought ‘God, that's the kind of thing I'd love to be doing...making a real difference and getting deep into methodologies’*”. The attraction of a role in the PDST is particularly noteworthy where PDST staff in going about their work, may inadvertently have ‘sold the role’ to participants through “...*the sheer enthusiasm of the facilitators you met and their hunger and thirst for learning*” (Jackie) and “...*the vibe from them that they really loved their job*” (Katie). This signalled an **attachment gain** to the PDST as an organisation where they “...*felt it must be a place where you are valued and heard*” (Laura) and “... *seemed to be such a productive place to work*” (Jackie).

The fact that secondment was a temporary arrangement posited an **attachment gain**. Viewed at the time as “...*not a huge commitment, because you can go back to school at any stage*” (Karen), Jackie similarly thought “*Well, this isn't forever. I'll come back better and rejuvenated with more to give the school*”. Of significant interest in this regard was an assumption on behalf of all eight interviewed that they would return to school at some point therein accepting secondment as intentionally temporary. Laura “...*knew that you could be out for up to five years, but expected to be going back to school*”. Peter “... *was happy to go back to class and put ideas into practice*” where Jackie “... *left school thinking, I'll be back...this won't be the last time I'm going to walk down this corridor*”.

### **6.3 Discussion**

In occupying the *Preparation* phase of career transition, factors prompting participants to pursue a role with the PDST mirror studies detailing reasons why teachers leave school for a career in teacher education (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Wood and Borg, 2010). These studies and the findings here concur on the notions of fresh challenge, escaping the daily classroom routine and a taste of the wider education arena beyond school, as drivers of career change. There is a congruence of concerns about professional learning and voice in the absence of progressive school leadership and cultures. The review of the literature has already cited the social and institutional norms of schools as barriers to democratic values, extended thinking, collaboration and professional growth (inter alia Fullan, 2002; Opher 2016, Brookfield, 2017) with Hargreaves (1994) concluding that school contexts can accordingly either constrain or enable teachers to develop positive professional identities. In this regard it is also clear from the data that those interviewed perceived themselves as ‘other’ among their peers as reported by previous studies (Wood and Borg, 2010; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011; Holme, Robb and Berry, 2016). These findings show that identity mismatches with school life were further highlighted in observing the demeanours of PDST facilitators who arguably presented to them as contrasting role models. By a similar token of distinction and reminiscent of some perceptions in the teaching profession that pursuing a role in teacher education demonstrates disinterest in the practice of teaching (Costley *et al.*, 2007), the reaction of participants’ colleagues to their PDST appointments suggest suspicion of those

having agentic career orientations and reveal binary views of teacher/ teacher educator identities, where one is no longer a teacher if one works in teacher education.

While former studies reference immersion in subject specific work as an attraction of the teacher educator role (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993), these findings elaborate on such motivations in the context of the PDST's identity as a cross-sectoral service. The seduction of subject specific work for primary teachers as opposed to the appeal of pedagogical depth for their post-primary counterparts, arguably expose polar priorities in primary and post-primary school practices with resultant desires to achieve a specialist/ pedagogical balance in their knowledge base and skills set.

Finally, the findings suggest some common identity indicators in relation to teachers opting for this job change within the broader discourse of career dynamics. Firstly, for these teachers the exhaustion of enhanced opportunities at school level finds less meaning in promotional trajectories than aspirations for greater autonomy, recognition and extended learning, thus adding credence to Schein's (1990) theory of career anchorage. In relation to teacher specific career anchors (Gouldner (1957, 1958), the findings profile these participants as Outsider Cosmopolitans, not strongly invested in vertical movement as such but being frustrated with the aforementioned limitations of school, are eager to make their mark beyond the classroom (Costley *et al.*, 2007; Wood and Borg, 2010). As was noted when reviewing the literature, it is likely that participants resided at Huberman's Experimentation /Reassessment stage having reached stabilisation in teaching. Finally, it is noteworthy that all participants at the point of secondment to the PDST, occupied Day *et al.*'s (2007) mid-career Professional Life Phase 8 -15 characterised by job plateauing and detachment.

Appreciating the desire for change at this stage of their careers, participants' intentions to return to school showed that reverting to teaching was not considered unpalatable at this point in time. Rather, secondment was "...a career loop or opportunity...after which they would return to their previous job" (Taylor *et al.*, 2011, p.91). Indeed as Irish secondment policy envisions, participants saw this arrangement as allowing them a taste of something new while retaining their



teaching role which could be further nourished on their return to school. Viewing the temporary nature of secondment as an **attachment gain** in this way also resonates with the literature's depiction of secondment as a 'safe career option' (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge; 2003).

#### **6.4 The *Encounter* phase**

Chapter Four's review of the literature in line with Nicholson's second career transition phase *Encounter*, illustrates the transition from teacher to teacher educator as commencing with a 'honeymoon' period followed by one of identity disturbance as the reality of the role dawns. In recalling the early weeks and months with the PDST, participants also described their 'encounter' with the new role as a combination of welcome boons and not so welcome shocks which respectively align with **attachment gains** and **attachment losses** to the PDST at this point of **Entry**.

Immediate **attachment gains** referred to the professional and personal supports provided. All participants commented on the PDST's comprehensive induction programme while referencing the depth of professional learning rooted in contemporary literature, policy and curricular developments. Components mentioned were "...*adult learning, self-evaluation, the digital strategy and...lots of time given to facilitation training*" (Tim). Tina recalled induction as "...*a series of inputs on effective CPD where we were given articles to read in advance of group discussion*". Katie remarked that she "...*couldn't have asked for a better preparation*" with Peter adding that "...*although induction had loads of elements, none of them were one offs, we kept going back to each of them*". Opportunities to engage with key thinkers in the field were relished. Helen remembered that "*I was only in my second month and I attended a session led by Andy Hargreaves. Ciarán Sugrue and Aileen Kennedy were in weeks beforehand*".

It was also appreciated that "...*there was a real focus on our own personal development, empowerment and effectiveness*" (Tim) ...*and a library of self-development books we could borrow by people like Covey and Senge*" (Jackie). In particular, mentoring provision was valued where "...*we all got assigned a mentor and got four full days with them for the first term*" (Helen). Karen "...*felt it was incredibly helpful being able to bounce things off my mentor when I was stressed*".

Participants also remarked on the effectiveness of the incremental approach taken to building their confidence and independence as teacher educators. Karen reported that “... *the biggest help was shadowing, like seeing others present and facilitate...then co presenting which was great before going out on your own*” a point echoed by Katie who similarly felt “...*properly set up for going solo*”. The warm welcome by PDST team members across the organisation was referenced by all . They remembered being “...*welcomed in by all the staff...meeting somebody from literacy, numeracy, and another person who just started sharing information with me*” (Tim). Helen “...*found within no time people were sharing numbers and emails and picking up the phone even though they didn't really know you*”, while likewise Peter “...*didn't anticipate contact from people from PDST Technology or School Leadership teams or those on post-primary teams*”.

This high level of inter team and cross-sectoral collaboration indicated that this was inherent to the PDST as a multifaceted organisation giving a sense of belonging to something bigger. Consequently, **attachment gains** were evident in relation to knowledge acquisition across school sectors which speaks to aspirations articulated during the *Preparation* phase. Laura remarked that she “...*was on the primary numeracy team and yet had a whole day's exploration of STEM subjects at post-primary noting possibilities for links with primary*” while Helen “*As a post-primary teacher...gained a great respect for the pedagogical depth of primary teachers and the skills needed to teach young children*”.

Frequent opportunities to reflect on learning individually and collectively were considered an **attachment gain** with limitations for such activity at school associated with policy reform. Katie talked about “...*time to interrogate the curriculum and really make meaning of it*”, Helen mentioned that her school “...*would have been very focused on policy development over pedagogy like a lot of schools are*”. This was supported by Peter who savoured “...*the time to just step back and process what you've been doing and why*” while pointing out that “*Teachers just do not have that luxury, one system change follows the next*”. Participants welcomed the change from the school routine and structure, noting that “...*school by comparison was almost religious, you're a slave to the bell and you know, everything is time tabled to a T*” (Karen) with “...*the same old routine of meeting the same people for coffee and sitting in one chair in the staff room, and*

*always determined by the bell*" (Katie). Indeed, almost all mentioned the school bell as the "...most challenging and disempowering thing about school" (Peter) and how "...the bell dictates your whole day" (Helen), thus strongly correlating with what seconded teacher educators in previous research described as working in an environment "...not dictated by bells" (Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010, p.44).

Despite the broad range of duties specified in the PDST advisor job description, the *Encounter* phase presented surprises in terms of role diversity beyond front-line CPD work with teachers. Jackie "...couldn't believe the diversity...doing many other things like the upkeep of the website". Referring to "...all the stuff that happened before going out on the road", Katie "...didn't expect be knee deep in research and design work". Similarly given that PDST's shadowing and co-facilitation opportunities for inductees are arranged to reflect diverse CPD settings of the role, other unanticipated aspects of the job challenged some assumptions participants had about CPD. For Katie there were "...so many more facets beyond the seminars like facilitating in-school management meetings and coaching teachers". As her "...main experience of CPD was evening workshops", Jackie "...had not been aware of individual school support which became one of the most rewarding pieces of the job". This was referenced also by Tina who "...used to think only of CPD as workshop delivery rather than working with schools repeatedly and in different ways".

All those interviewed considered the combination of collegiality and high productivity in an environment of dynamic exchange as an **attachment gain**. In remarking that "...everybody in the broader organisation was quite like-minded" (Tina), they "...found kindred spirits in teachers who had the same values" (Peter) with Laura noting "...the strong sense of team, open to new ideas, research and insights. This reflects thoughts during the *Preparation* phase when motivation to leave school stemmed from having different mindsets and attitudes to staff and so leaving this behind was considered a **detachment gain**. Tim referenced "...the refreshing culture of sharing and genuine reciprocal relationships" while Helen "...was taken aback by how willing people were to share ideas compared to school where they would keep things to themselves". Additional **attachment gains** in this respect related to feeling valued for the knowledge and experience they brought

into the PDST along with a freedom to openly express viewpoints. Again, there were references to corresponding **detachment gains** in relation to school cultures and leadership left behind as illustrated in these examples;

*Even though I was a brand-new member of the PDST team, my thoughts and my ideas were still very much valued...like there I was with very experienced teachers and professionals, but yet I had a voice and a purpose in being there. I didn't feel that in school (Laura).*

*What struck me was the way that people could challenge and disagree with each other. And yet they could have banter. Like in my school staff, if you disagreed with somebody, they kind of got annoyed (Katie).*

The autonomy advisors had to manage their diary and work independently was considered to be to a motivating and empowering **attachment gain** where "...you structured your own working week...here's your caseload and you are trusted to manage it" (Karen). Tim expanded on this;

*I found that there was an immediate sense of trust. We've brought you into this organisation and we trust that you're going to do a good job. And I was very empowered by it. I remember one day sitting, at home thinking "Jeez, these people actually trusted me sitting in my house doing work for them instead of watching tv". I thought I'd actually have to log in every half an hour. But then I thought to myself, "That's a really good trick and unless I'm a complete nutter, I'm going to work harder for them".*

Participants appeared to link gains related to trust, autonomy and freedom of voice with the PDST's expectations of hard work, sharing, and high standards in order to enjoy these gains. Tim recalled an incident as follows;

*Like one person said to me, "You must show up and work really hard. There's an expectation that you are part of the greater good of the organisation, you're expected to share as well as gathering the ideas of others".*

Peter reported "...there was a certain amount of pressure to be honest, where I ended up spending more time researching by myself to keep up" with Laura also acknowledging that "... there's an onus on you to independently upskill yourself as well. You could tell that people had to lift their weight or else you stood out".

Comments like Helen's here evidence an intrinsic desire to do things right and to earn one's place in the organisation;

*The culture of knowledge and high expectations definitely spurred me on to make sure that I knew everything that I was delivering inside out. So, I made sure I kept up to date with everything so that I could be on par with colleagues.*

The gains associated with autonomy and independence for some though were offset by **attachment losses** owing to it being “*a lonely role*” (Jackie) where you are “*...secluded in your work and lose routine and the structure*” (Tina). Some missed “*...the comfort of going into the same workplace every day and knowing your colleagues and students*” (Helen).

Half of the sample explicitly referenced no longer working with students as a **detachment loss** from school. These comments were all made by post-primary participants and could be indicative of their jobs as subject specialists working with students as they move up the school. For instance Tina was “*...really conscious of my sixth years who I'd had since they were first years...*” while Helen reported that “*The thing I missed most were the kids, and getting to know them as they grow up into adults*”. Indications of loyalty to students presented where Jackie “*...felt a guilt at leaving them and wondered if I was walking out on them*” and Tim reported “*...100% I missed the students and thought of them during exams when I felt I should have been there*”. On a broader level and resonant of the disruption caused by sporadic appointments to Irish CPD support services (Sugrue, 2011), two participants discussed this in relation to receiving notification mid school year. Tina recalls it being “*... a weird time of year and it wasn't going to be clean for my students who were settled now*” while Jackie felt “*...a mix of emotions where I was absolutely thrilled but then it was, Oh gosh, I'm in the middle of all of this stuff with these kids*”.

The findings outlined here so far indicate that **attachment** and **detachment gains** outweighed the losses during the *Encounter* phase of **Entry** into the PDST. However as per Nicholson's definition, participants also recollected this phase as having distinct periods of doubt and anxiety about their readiness and capabilities to fulfil the role of teacher educator, resulting in a combination of **attachment losses** (to PDST) and **detachment losses** (from school). Synonymous with what was discussed in Chapter Four regarding early transitioning to teacher educator, all those interviewed at some point experienced the proverbial Imposter Syndrome, with half of them explicitly naming the condition itself. Comments suggest that at first this was due to what they perceived to be a formidable organisation in terms of size, general dynamic and knowledge base. Helen “*...was taken aback by how much knowledge people had... thinking 'I don't have a clue in comparison'*”.

Laura spoke of being “...in awe of the level of expertise within the organisation and had serious imposter syndrome”. A sense that this tension was amplified at PDST’s national team assemblies spotlights the imposter as the “... ‘admission mistake’ in the midst of a gathering of august professionals” (Marracco, 2006, p.69 citing Cranton, 2006);

*You're nervous and sick to your stomach. We all started the morning of a national meeting so it was particularly daunting with all these people. It's that kind of intimidation, you know, imposter syndrome (Tina).*

*The first day was absolutely terrible, everybody just seemed so confident. It was national meeting and buzzing. And I walked in going, “ Oh what have I done? I am the imposter in this room” (Katie).*

Feelings of fraudulence and unworthiness were articulated as having potentially fooled their way into the PDST wherein “*I might have sold myself well at the interview, but I was very worried now about being up to the mark*” (Tim) and “*I was waiting for somebody to tap me on the shoulder and tell me I'd been found out*” (Jackie). Despite their craving exposure to the bigger world of education, for some, this heightened their insecurity given the “...so many moving parts like the NCCA, the SEC, the sections in the department, the politics and the different ways they operate” (Tina) while Katie recalled “...sharing the room with the chief inspector and thinking ‘I hope I haven’t bitten off more than I can chew’”.

These early doubts about their abilities to fulfil the new role correlated with grieving for their previous roles as teachers where they had reached a level of proficiency and confidence, now being traded for what they perceived as novice status. For instance in relation to past experience, Karen “...remembered thinking, ‘God, back in school I was the one people came to for advice and ideas’” and Katie felt “...like a junior infant coming into school in September”. Others framed this as a disturbance in power dynamics as “*There was comfort in being at a level above the students when you are teaching and also you've earned your stripes*” (Jackie) and “...you're moving from a position where as a teacher with the deeper knowledge, you have more control of the audience” (Tina).

Notwithstanding that six of the eight participants’ decision to join the PDST was partly driven by observing PDST facilitators in action, a deeper realisation of what

the role actually entailed, unsettled their professional identities. The move from pedagogue to andragogue presented as a particular challenge;

*Yeah that was a shock. Coming from teaching, where you have the responsibility for 30 kids in the classroom...this was not the same. I'd advise others applying to PDST to try to get some experience of presenting to adults first because it was a huge transition for me (Karen).*

This became starkly apparent when first out working with established teachers where "...you don't hold the balance of power like you do in the classroom. You're going in as a fellow teacher teaching your peers who know a lot already" (Jackie) and "...you face conflict in dealing with principals being quite irate about national policy" (Karen) where Laura "...found it tough reading unforgiving comments in evaluations about my facilitation". These references to power undercurrents and threats to their professional identities in feeling exposed to what they deemed to be informed, expectant and challenging audiences, are well summarised here by Tim;

*You have to be 100% top of your game with a cohort of people that are resistant to support, and you risk being judged...you can't hoodwink adults. They want to leave that room, having had an experience that will actually affect their teaching. That was a tall order, and that freaked me even more.*

The sense of exposure was aggravated by a pressure to be 'knowledgeable other', again arguably more acute given the CPD context. In "...not knowing what teachers are going to raise" (Jackie), they "...worried about being asked something I didn't know given that I was meant to be the one advising here" (Karen). Peter said he "...was uncomfortable with the grey and fuzzy...where things couldn't be sorted for teachers by the end of the session" believing that he "...would be judged as ineffective when teachers had devoted their time to this". In this regard participants spoke of "...a strong need to be the information giver and to say, 'well when I was in the classroom, this worked for me or here's loads of examples' " (Laura). The data show that this propensity to fall back on their classroom identities found some expression in how they as teachers viewed CPD as "...where you got all the answers because you were looking to get something sorted" (Karen). It is also redolent of narrow understandings of CPD when first joining the PDST;

*I guess as teachers, you know, you see CPD as information, telling you things. I thought I could turn up for two hours and have it all ready to present, then by the end, I'll have all that shared, you know, my understanding was that the teachers will leave feeling better - job done (Peter).*

Further reliance on their class teacher identities was revealed when participants recalled drawing upon a survival toolkit of first-order credibility. Indeed, participants used metaphors of protection to describe their coping mechanisms and efforts to actively impress upon audiences that they were neither novice nor 'other'. A deliberate declaring of their first-order identity and therefore worthy of this role, clearly acted as a compensatory shield against the insecurities they harboured about their second-order abilities and how they might come across in front of their peers. Katie admitted "...being very defensive when I started out, unsure of myself, nearly pretending that I knew what I was about...feeling that I had to prove myself". Likewise, others spoke of a need to "...at least show a certain level of expertise and confidence...to be more armed in the beginning" (Peter) and "...try to lose that rabbit in the headlights look and at least appear comfortable (Laura). In response they "... always made sure teachers knew the amount of teaching experience I had." (Peter) as "... ears pricked up then, there was an improved kind of respect" (Karen). Jackie recounted "People told me that I'd be great at this job because I was a good teacher so I pulled on that a lot early on. 'I am a teacher like you'...I think I must have said that at every session, just to establish myself".

## 6.5 Discussion

Participant experiences of the *Encounter* phase of transition into the PDST resemble much of what appears in the literature on the teacher to teacher educator transition including what has been captured about this in the secondment context.

**Attachment gains** commonly reported across previous studies regarding intellectual stimulation, space for reflection and identity compatibilities (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000), interface with extended educational partners (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Allen, Butler-Mader and Smith, 2010) and flexible hours (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011), all presented as welcome changes from their former lives as class teachers and appeared to validate their decision to leave school for a role with the PDST. However, the findings indicate further **attachment gains** not listed in the literature which study participants identified as particularly empowering. Appreciation was expressed for this kind of professional trust which they perceived as related to an organisational expectation of hard work and agentic dispositions in return. A palpable acceptance for healthy dissonance within PDST team dynamics was considered refreshing and a contrast to experiences in school. Although



increased professional collaboration was highlighted as an **attachment gain** in many secondment studies (inter alia McEachern and Polley, 1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003), these findings also frame it as nurturing subject and primary/post-primary boundaries within the unique cross-sectoral PDST, while simultaneously reflecting communities of learning in teacher education structures as both transient and stable (Dolan, 2019).

High levels of satisfaction with PDST induction processes show a marked distinction with documented deficiencies of teacher educator preparation programmes regarding poor mentoring (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010), inadequate training in the fundamentals of adult learning (Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007), and a focus on first-order skills transfer as opposed to developing second-order ones (Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005). Participants in this study spoke about formal professional learning provision in the 'trilogy' of skills discussed in Chapter Four coupled with a practical suite of mentoring, shadowing and co-facilitation opportunities. Further, the bespoke nature of the induction programme and its application to a range of CPD models and audiences, was appreciated as providing a broad toolkit of skills and highlighted the primacy afforded by the PDST to transformative and contextual approaches to teacher learning. Affective features of the induction programme such as welcoming, communicative efforts and acknowledgment of what newcomers were bringing to the PDST were valued, the latter reflecting Reupert and Wilkinson's (2011) view that the expertise of incoming seconded teachers should be recognised. Respecting the professional needs of newcomers despite their temporary status, is evident in descriptions of induction as being measured and sustained beyond the first few weeks. This contrasts sharply with what McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, (1992) contend should be a swift and intense induction for seconded teachers in order to avoid a disproportionate time investment in their preparation as teacher educators. Overall the findings here evidence participants having being provided with the 'map, bicycle and good weather' considered necessary by Nicholson (1987) at the *Encounter* phase of career transition. As signalled in Chapter Two, Appendix B provides an outline of the PDST's induction and mentoring programme.

Although many of these **attachment and detachment gains** matched those predicted by participants during the *Preparation* phase, the findings typify a key feature of Nicholson's *Encounter* phase where despondency, regret and a number of coping mechanisms present as the reality of a new role comes into focus, made all the sharper here perhaps where change was "...*anticipated with exaggerated optimism and starry-eyed idealism*" (1987, p.182). Whereby isolation and missing students also reported in previous research (Badali and Housego, 2000; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010) were considered **attachment losses**, the greatest loss for these participants entailed the role and identity disturbances referenced in several teacher education studies (inter alia Dinkelman, Margolis and Sikkenga, 2006; Bullock and Christou, 2009; Loughran, 2011). It is clear from the interviews that these manifested as a number of unexpected tensions within the trilogy of identity shifts discussed at some length in the review of the literature. Firstly, there is evidence of continuing to call upon their first-order capabilities (Murray and Male, 2005; Exley, 2010; Livingston and Shiach, 2013; Dolan, 2019) and successful histories as classroom teachers (Boyd and Harris, 2010; Carrillo and Baguley, 2011). Secondly, the data reveal transmissive and biographical practices also common in novice teacher educators (Berry, 2008; Williams, Ritter and Bullock, 2012). Comments indicate that the temptation to tell and provide solutions arises in a need to appear as expert (Bullock, 2007; Williams 2014) and provide some 'tricks of the trade' (Loughran, 2014) towards avoiding the silence that may expose gaps in their knowledge or experience. Thirdly, and also reflecting a host of previous studies (inter alia Buchberger *et al.*, 2000; Martinez, 2008; Wood and Borg, 2010), participants grappled with the idea of now being a teacher of adults having assumed it would be relatively straightforward and similar to teaching children (Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). This study however highlights the issue in the specific context of the CTE indicating reality checks as acutely apparent during on site work. Reactions to changes in the balance of power also reported by Tuohy and Lodge (2003) and sensitivity to audience feedback shows an incognisance of some discrete adult learning components such as the bringing of prior experience to the learning environment and a tendency to be threatened by the introduction of new ideas (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2012). As stated in Chapter Four, the latter is notorious in the CPD sector during

periods of education reform when teachers' habitual practice is challenged (Fullan, 2007; Elmore, 2004; Cuban, 2013).

The findings show how early navigation of the second-order domain brings with it a burden of perceived incompetence as participants recall moving from once valued specialist at school to what they now perceive to be rank amateur in teacher education (Murray and Male, 2005; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011; Dolan, 2019). The findings also support previous claims that novice teacher educators in seeking some sense of competence and comfort in their new work, employ a number of coping strategies, not least proclaiming their first-order identity when working with teachers (Badali and Housego, 2000; Livingston and Shiach, 2013; Williams, 2014). To this end, the data find particular expression in the literature which posits a legitimacy for new teacher educators to lean on their former identity and a reproduction of its practices in the face of impostorism and the need to project a proficient exterior to their audience (Murray and Male, 2005; McKeon and Harrison, 2010). Participant behaviours suggest that at this point they were "...*'clinging to the life raft' of the school*" (Murray and Male, 2005, p.11) and its association with success lest they drown in a sea of impending failure, and so they reverted to the safer waters of first-order practice as their '*anchor of professional identity*' (Murray, 2008, p.119). The data confirm the power of the enduring and impervious substantive self (Southworth, 1995) during this transition where attachment to former school-based practicum and the security it offers at a vulnerable time, transcends efforts to craft a new professional identity as an educator of teachers.

The findings for the *Encounter* phase shed some light on the insularity of school cultures. Despite some prior awareness of a wider world beyond school, participants when commencing this job demonstrated a wonder in accessing deeper wells of content and pedagogical knowledge and a certain awe of the broader educational landscape, arguably casting a spotlight on the relatively sheltered lives they led at school. The data unearth an unconscious myopia in schools of CPD's purpose and the role of the CTE. There are strong hints of Lortie's (1975) *apprenticeship of observation*<sup>20</sup> in that as teachers in school,

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<sup>20</sup> Dan Lortie's seminal text 'Schoolteacher' refers to the "apprenticeship of observation" as the way most people when they are students, develop a view of what teaching looks like from 'the other side of the desk'.

participants had publicly viewed what CTEs do very differently until they were in the role themselves. Locating teacher learning within the traditional model of transmission as participants had when first joining the PDST, ignores the CTE's role as being crucially facilitative and transformative. This mirrors research carried out by the Teaching Council (2018) where Irish teachers surveyed nationally associated CPD solely with in-service training. It is possibly reflective of Ireland's education reform efforts which have to date privileged mass content dissemination through 'catch all' CPD events. Finally, the unexpected mismatches between participants' substantive first-order selves and situational second-order selves, not only speaks to what is replete in the literature about the assumed seamlessness of the teacher to teacher educator transition (inter alia Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005; Exley, 2010) but is symptomatic of misconceptions among the teaching population regarding the identity of CTE and what they do. In this regard participants learned early on about the great diversity of the CTE's role and its inherent complexity regarding the front-line mediation of policy and curricular expectations to seasoned (and often resistant) professionals.

## Chapter Seven

### Findings and Discussion Part 2

### The Experience of Secondment

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter details the study findings for the **Experience** stage of secondment which for the purpose of this study comprises the period of the secondment itself (post-**Entry** to pre-**Exit**). The findings locate the remaining two phases of Nicholson's cycle *Adjustment* and *Stabilisation* within this second stage of secondment. In line with Nicholson's philosophy that the end of one transition cycle sets the stage for the next, the findings of this research see a return to Nicholson's first phase *Preparation* during the latter part of this stage. In revisiting this phase, participants typically began turning their thoughts and mindsets towards next career steps. Bruce's (1991) premise that career transitions in fact take place before, during and after the career change, holds true again here where *Preparation* marks participants' transition out of the PDST. From the perspective of Kelly's model, a considerable number of **attachment gains** were apparent as secondment progressed and these remained in place for the entire **Experience** stage. **Attachment losses** featured in the context of some aspects of the job but most prominently as the secondment termination loomed. No enduring **detachment losses** from school were reported. Whereby **detachment gains** from school were not explicitly referenced, for some it could be inferred that these equate to the equivalent **attachment gains** to the PDST.

#### 7.2 The *Adjustment* phase

Participants' accounts of becoming more established in the role of CTE reflect Nicholson's *Adjustment* phase which is considered to be a slow burn compared to the baptism of fire associated with the *Encounter* phase. Here there is evidence of the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation where attempts are made to adapt to the role in line with an acceptance and appreciation of what it requires. During the interviews, all participants identified the significant level of knowledge and learning acquired as the greatest **attachment gain** while on secondment with the PDST. As earlier findings show, this commenced during the *Encounter* phase with their programme of induction. Interviews showed that the *Adjustment* phase was synonymous with an extended and intense period of knowledge and skill

building as they continued to make the shift from teacher to teacher educator. Firstly, a growing awareness of what they needed to change led participants to begin adjusting their approaches and employing techniques for working more effectively with adult audiences including the more difficult ones. They spoke of “...*learning not to patronise them and tell them what they should do...treating them as professionals who have a lot to offer to the conversation*” (Laura) and “...*moving things on especially where people were complaining about policy*” (Tim). Katie considered “...*when somebody is there giving me daggers, sitting with their arms folded...maybe I needed to engage them more and draw on their experience*”. Secondly, participants spoke of a decreased reliance on first-order competencies moving from directing teacher learning to the creation of more constructivist settings where they employed a range of newly acquired facilitative skills. Jackie discovered that “...*even though teachers like us to go in and fix their problems, you don't need to give the answer*” but rather as Helen explained, “*You have the conversation, and facilitate staff to come around to their own way of solving things*”. In ‘providing’ less, Tina explained how she became more innovative in enabling teachers’ learning;

*I found it really helpful to send a form in advance to teachers to ascertain what they wanted as well as giving them time to really think about it. So, it wasn't just like the ready-made slides and off you go, but you'd design the session around what they told you.*

The data reveal new tensions presenting for participants later in the *Adjustment* phase, bringing the specific work of CTEs into sharper focus. Participants spoke about feeling torn between their duty as front-line mediators of national policy and having empathy for the teachers charged with implementing it. Helen “...*felt sorry for teachers trying to find time to do all that's expected with so many other things on their plate*”. Katie elaborated on this dichotomy in terms of wrestling with her own true feelings about policy;

*Like there was many a time a teacher or a principal cried because they just felt so overwhelmed and I felt so conflicted because in a way I was one of those applying the pressure and I didn't necessarily agree with it.*

Similarly, Tina “...*struggled with loyalty to policy because regardless of how you might feel you can't publicly disagree with it*” where Jackie framed the dilemma as “...*holding that very awkward in-between space...straddling two horses, mediating a message to teachers and yet you are one of them too*”. Katie provided an

interesting insight into how this played out internally in schools in illustrating how the CTE can be positioned as protective buffer for school leaders who themselves are uncomfortable with leading change;

*I found that I was sometimes torn between the principal and the staff...often the principals would want you to get certain messages through but yet the teachers are like, 'what are you doing here'? I felt like I was thrown to the lions while the principal stayed tucked away from the mob.*

### 7.3 Discussion

Efforts to eliminate the disruptions of the previous *Encounter* phase through the modification of cognitions and behaviours epitomise the *Adjustment* phase of transition (Nicholson, 1987). Indeed, the data presented in this section illustrate participants' attempts to negotiate the notorious teacher/teacher educator tensions explored in the findings for **Entry**. Notably there is considerable evidence of agentic modification of identity schema in accommodating this shift, reflecting the adaptive efforts typical of the *Adjustment* phase. Likewise, other studies have demonstrated that in absorbing more information about the role and developing an enhanced understanding of it, teachers seconded to teacher education endeavour to go that extra mile and challenge themselves to fit the second-order setting (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). However, specific references to reform, experienced audiences and school contexts, firmly locates these findings within the work of the CTE and accordingly provide fresh insights into adapting to the role. In engaging with audiences of seasoned professionals, participants realised the importance of activating prior knowledge and dynamic discussion while tempering their own communicative pitch appropriately in view of the experience in the room. Crucially in supporting teachers who are well established in school communities, they gained a greater appreciation of school context and the implications it has for implementing system reform at local level. In coming to see this for themselves, they sought to reconcile the teacher/ teacher educator identity tensions presenting during the *Encounter* phase towards embracing their situational selves as CTEs. The data also show that identity issues continue to present in other ways. The review of the literature explored how teacher educators in managing a dual role of teacher /teacher educator, are faced with negotiating a third space identity towards bridging two sites of practice (Cuenca, 2010; Davey, 2013; Williams, 2013). These findings echo

those of Williams' 2014 study where divided loyalties between policy rhetoric and personal experience of classroom realities manifested for pre-service teacher educators. These accounts though, illustrate the cultural/social capital of the CTE as the visible face of policy imperatives, where the third space lies between publicly advocating the official line to their established peers, and privately questioning it through internal conversation where they conceive things differently. This highlights the unique task faced by CTEs as they attempt to craft that third space between two seemingly paradoxical roles. At this point in their secondment, participants' awareness of policy /practice tensions and their apparent acceptance of them as inevitable, frames the third space as a function of the *Adjustment* phase where they recognised the need to live with conflicting perspectives of both identities (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011). Finally, evidence of school leaders employing external services to impress policy upon their staff while essentially abdicating their own responsibility for leading change, suggests a particularly precarious third space for the CTE . It is also indicative of the insider/outsider dichotomy that some principals face when they are "...no longer classroom teachers, but may construct themselves as 'one of us' among teaching colleagues" (Sugrue, 2005, p.10).

#### **7.4 Adjustment towards Stabilisation: continuing attachment gains**

The data so far show that participant knowledge and skill acquisition continued beyond the *Encounter* phase with some key learning happening during the *Adjustment* phase. As they advanced onto *Stabilisation*, further data indicate that this remained a significant **attachment gain** throughout the entire secondment. All eight participants spoke about the PDST's internal programme of ongoing professional learning comprising structured learning and development opportunities, time for team and individual review, reflection and research. Katie reported that "...calendars were punctuated with professional development, policy and curricular inputs current and relevant to what schools wanted" and Laura valued "...the termly research forums where we got to interrogate articles and what they meant for us out on the ground with schools ...bridging theory and practice". Time and space for individual development was referenced where they "...were given regular opportunities to reflect and refine practice as CPD providers" (Peter) while "Individual review and being observed by your team leader meant you got honest feedback and support for your own learning goals" (Tim). In the context of knowledge and skills acquisition, this study sought to address a gap in the literature



with regard to **how** learning happens for teachers seconded as CTEs and the settings which facilitate it. The data illustrate how learning transpired across a catalogue of national, regional, and local learning environments;

*Those national meetings when we had speakers from the Teaching Council, colleges of education, other support services or the inspectors where issues came up that affected us all and we discussed them (Karen).*

*I particularly liked the regional meetings because you got to work with advisors who were from lots of different PDST teams but worked with the same region of schools. There was lots of sharing of expertise (Katie).*

Further accounts indicate a nurturing of subject/sectoral boundaries where teams within the organisation were fluid as well as fixed. Consequently, these had the value-added **attachment gains** of collaboration, role diversity and extended learning. Peter claimed that he “...learned most from working collaboratively in designing CPD...the creative conversations and watching a piece of work comes together” where Laura “...saw the collective team as a learning resource where people helped you to troubleshoot and problem solve”. Jackie summarised her experience in this regard;

*When Irish medium schools needed support in numeracy and the numeracy team didn't have an advisor with Irish, I was able to cross pollinate because I have maths too. I would frequently draw on the experience of others in school leadership, dig tech and wellbeing teams. In the PDST you were standing on the shoulders of your colleagues in many ways.*

Specific **attachment gains** presented for primary and post-primary participants, fulfilling aspirations they had during the *Preparation* phase. Primary secondees spoke of developing greater subject content knowledge with all four referencing the modelling of lessons for teachers in this context. Laura explains

*I learned a huge amount from being immersed in primary maths...as it was difficult to understand for example, how you could teach certain concepts without the textbook and now I totally get it having modelled lessons for teachers.*

Post-primary participants on the other hand referred to pedagogical content knowledge as a key area of development. Helen gained “...a real understanding of the rationale behind different forms of assessment and differentiated pedagogies” while Jackie benefitted from the experience of “...extending the team-teaching project from the post-primary team into the primary sector and learning so much

*about child-centred play-based methodologies” concluding that “I wouldn’t teach my subjects the same way as before...it would be exponentially different”.*

Involvement in initiatives and projects also developed a number of leadership capacities as well as the skills of self-management and self-reliance. Laura “...had the opportunity to drive a numeracy project in the south with an education centre and local teachers...learning how to manage people, tasks and timelines”. Tim “...developed an entire section of the website to be used by every teacher in Ireland as well as actually leading others in doing it”. Karen reflected in this regard as follows;

*Being one of the longest serving at one point I was drawn upon a lot to lead the training and development of others in things like oral language and reading strategies. It totally empowered me and I recognised that I was actually quite good at leading and managing.*

Particular **attachment gains** were attributed to “...working directly with thousands of teachers in schools across the country and getting an understanding of different school contexts” (Helen), “...learning from one school and being in a position to share that practice elsewhere” (Peter) and “...building trusting relationships with teachers during school visits” (Jackie). This manifested in a deeper knowledge and appreciation of transformative approaches to CPD where they “...began to see the limitations of workshop delivery and the value of repeated engagement over time where you saw evidence of real change” (Tina). Here participants spoke about PDST’s contextualised model where “CPD is not a one size fits all” (Helen) believing that “...tailoring support to meet the needs of a school was the most rewarding because that’s where you see the rubber hitting the road” (Jackie). Related comments reflected a degree of job dissatisfaction when engaged with CPD models that conflicted with these principles. Invariably these models were attached to top down policy reform typically colluding with efficiency efforts. There is congruence here with the third space identity tension which previously arose in straddling the rhetoric of policy imperative and the reality of life in schools. Helen “...questioned how effective those large-scale roll outs are...the once off CPD spurts had little impact”. Tina “... felt very conflicted as a professional in a room of 45 ‘bums on seats’ compared to facilitating smaller learning communities when you could do more to empower them”.

Individual advisors also engaged in independent learning as a matter of course. There is evidence here again of the agentic adaptation of the *Adjustment* phase but also of PDST's cultural expectations detected by participants during the *Encounter* phase. Tim "...went to Google scholar a lot...because we'd get a list of articles and I'd immediately go home, download them and distil them" with Peter claiming that "To stay ahead, you had to support your own learning and engage in a lot of private reading". Independent learning was also connected to "...learning on the job, like from lived experience which meant you had to bite the bullet" (Karen) and "...trying things out, failing even and knowing it's going to be OK" (Laura). In these situations, they valued "...getting team leader feedback which was affirmative, but also critically constructive" (Karen) with "...feedback from teacher evaluations helping you reflect on your approach" (Laura). Peter recalled;

*The scariest part is when you're actually going into a school by yourself. No matter what training you get it still feels like jumping in at the deep end but we were always told to take the leap and we were supported if something went wrong. We were told to use mistakes as learning opportunities.*

In this respect a number of **attachment gains** were associated with personal development where "You learned to be resilient and reliant upon yourself" (Tina), "You had to allow your assumptions to be challenged...manage your reaction to things" (Jackie), and "...be willing to share vulnerabilities...not take things personally" (Peter). Katie "...got a lot of practice in managing my own behaviour, like knowing when it was best not to speak and when I had said enough" and similarly Tina reported that "... the biggest personal development for me was working with others and moderating how you operate... gaining an appreciation that people work and process information in different ways".

After knowledge and skills acquisition, **the attachment gain** most referenced was the opportunities for exposure to and involvement in the bigger system. Here participants spoke about "...gathering a network and contacts in education ...having a chance to influence the shape of education on a larger scale" (Peter) and "...seeing how the different parts work, you know, the NCCA, the SEC, the Department...it was a huge eye-opener" (Tina) while Katie recounted being "...in Dublin one day, Monaghan the next...going to Crumlin and Temple Street hospital schools, special schools, two teacher schools and working with the biggest school

*in the country*". In this regard Laura compared the experience with her work pre-secondment;

*PDST literally changed my life. I had seen so little...I was only familiar with my own rural school and had no awareness of the bigger picture. I remember in the first month we had a morning meeting with the education centres and I remember feeling so privileged thinking to myself, I should be in class teaching Irish...here I was sitting around the table in West Cork talking to education centre directors about local CPD.*

Previous studies ranked work isolation and excessive travel as **attachment losses** (Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) with corresponding **detachment losses** linked to missing the school community and a regular daily routine (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993). Peter mentioned that "...*the amount of travel and being away from home was a downside of the job*". Others felt this was balanced where "...*you had control over your diary and you managed your work accordingly*" (Tim).

Over half of those interviewed referenced the burden of being on the front line as an **attachment loss** to the job. Katie spoke of "... *walking into a Viper's nest where groups are quite hostile and aggressive while you're trying to enthuse, there's a huge personal investment which can be very draining for you if that isn't reciprocated*". According to Jackie this positions CTEs as "*punch bags for the system*" where

*It's not you per se. It's teachers' frustration with change or terms and conditions, but you're the one they meet... teachers don't see the gap between the PDST and they department. You're in a room with 30 people and somebody challenges you and there's 30 sets of eyes on you. This was a test for how the rest of the day would go because you risked losing the whole room if you didn't get it right. Managing that is all consuming and you leave a lot of yourself there afterwards.*

## 7.5 Discussion

Participant reports of continuing **attachment gains** for the duration of the secondment resonate with the literature, particularly in relation to professional development opportunities (inter alia Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali, and Housego, 2000) and notably those not available at school such as deep exploration of new pedagogical practices (Costley *et al.*, 2007; Taylor *et al.*, 2011). The evidence here also aligns with previous studies citing advantages associated with exposure to multiple agencies and facets of education (Sutherland

and Sloan, 1990; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992), involvement in cutting edge projects (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Reupert and Wilkinson, 2011), development of leadership capacities (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010) and dynamic discourse with likeminded people (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). Participant accounts in this research however locate these gains specifically within secondment to the CPD sector and also within PDST organisational structures where deliberate and organic arrangements facilitate the ongoing development of the CTE. The data indicate that attention to the team's internal CPD underpinned by pedagogical depth and academic rigour, helped to ensure the teacher educators' currency as agents of change. It also illustrates that this learning happened collaboratively across sectoral, discipline and geographical boundaries. Appendix C and Appendix D respectively detail the continuing professional learning opportunities and research supports provided for the PDST team during the period when study participants worked in the organisation.

The study adds to the field in detailing **how** learning takes place for seconded teacher educators where knowledge building and sharing is facilitated by autonomous schedules, access to several networks, and a diversity of national, regional and local work settings. It is notable that previous studies (Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) show that the lack of structured support for the ongoing professional learning of seconded teacher was symptomatic of team fragmentation and the interchangeable nature of group formation. These findings indicate otherwise where a strategic learning programme and coordinated purposeful mobility across groups, greatly enhanced the professional learning for those interviewed. Participant beliefs that independent learning was necessary to 'keep up' correlates with previous research indicating that individual efforts to remain current was considered essential by those on secondment to CPD support services (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003).

Fresh data also emerge here in relation to the development of the CTE beyond their assigned area of priority and/or as mere mediators of national policy. Firstly, and also apparent in findings for the *Encounter* phase, the cross-sectoral makeup of the PDST allows for heterogenous learning settings and involvement in cross-sectoral CPD initiatives where reciprocal knowledge sharing and understanding is

facilitated between primary and post-primary teacher educators. Further, there is considerable enhancement of their first-order competencies where specific gains are evident for primary (subject depth) and post-primary (pedagogical depth) cohorts. Secondly, their development as second-order practitioners finds meaning in more transformative models of CPD and the broader realm of teachers' growth as professionals. The unique space that the PDST occupies in providing on-site school support situates this expanded view of teacher professional learning within the work environments of practising teachers which according to the findings above, also provides one of the richest learning grounds for CTEs. **Attachment gains** therefore present where holistic approaches to teacher development enriches how learning happens for teacher educators in the PDST as well as imbuing them with a deep understanding of what constitutes effective CPD. Thirdly, and again with reference to hybrid spaces, the findings isolate ongoing access to the nation's schools and teachers as key to garnering current and relevant insights. In having similar access to interagency arenas where decisions are made, they can field these insights towards influencing policy rather than simply assuming the role of disseminating it. Straddling this boundary position them as vital conduits between schools and the wider education community, rendering them valuable assets to system cohesion. **Attachment gains** are evident through opportunities for self-development and working with others which participants connect to their effectiveness as teacher educators. Although 'on the job' learning is accepted as an inevitable part of the role, the data show that this was supported by professional feedback and the use of mistakes as learning points, thus contrasting with the lack of scaffolding and follow up reported in Tuohy and Lodge's study (2003). Finally, these findings for the *Adjustment* phase provide further insights into the unique tensions faced by CTEs while mediating reform changes to experienced teaching staffs, a common denominator being transmissive CPD settings. There is resonance again here with previous data reporting participants' inner struggle firstly with policy imperatives themselves, and secondly with the wholesale national CPD models that accompany them. With regard to the latter, the comments sharply contrast with the **attachment gains** enjoyed while participants operated in what they believed to be more rewarding and transformative CPD settings.

## 7.6 The *Stabilisation* phase

According to Nicholson (1987), the final phase of the career transition cycle *Stabilisation* is synonymous with feeling settled in a role where efforts to adapt occupy far less of the transitioner's time and focus. Previous studies exploring seconded teachers' transition into teacher education broadly associate *Stabilisation* with increased confidence in facilitating adult learning (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003) and a sound understanding of what the job demands (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992). This study however sought to uncover more explicit evidence of practices and behaviours that demonstrated what *Stabilisation* looked like for those seconded to the PDST. This was elicited from them during the interviews when asked to identify how and when they themselves believed they had reached that juncture of their transition to teacher educator. One of the first signs of perceived *Stabilisation* was a newly acquired confidence (Van der Klink *et al.*, 2017) which comments below illustrate as being linked to increased resilience and self-belief, both reported as **attachment gains** derived from managing the challenges of the role. The data align with how the literature on career transition describes *Stabilisation* as a mindset free of earlier anxieties and insecurities which previously detracted from deeper immersion in, and enjoyment of, the job (Nicholson, 1987; Bruce, 1991). Participants described this point as "...*not being nearly physically getting sick going into the schools anymore...believing I was doing something of value that I could stand over* (Peter), "...*being able to predict most scenarios that could be thrown at you so energy wasn't going into fretting over that*" (Laura), "...*feeling more self-assured, that I'd earned my place in PDST and was there on my own merit*" (Katie) and "...*no longer pre-empting questions that might come up because I knew I'd be able to address them or if necessary direct them elsewhere*" (Jackie). Further indicative of *Stabilisation* was participants' further mastery of the key components of adult learning and facilitation. The literature describes having an ease in addressing large groups of adults and an ability to handle conflict in those settings, as typical of those who have adapted to the teacher educator role (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). Katie explains;

*I learned to manage those difficult conversations and to manage my reaction...how to gently point out to the hijackers that they're not being dismissed, but we do have work to do and there's more than them in the room.*

A deeper grasp of constructivist approaches to teacher learning manifested where participants broke free from the 'trap of telling' and the need to provide solutions (Berry, 2008). Jackie "...now avoided saying 'As a teacher this worked well for me'". Helen "...soon saw the need to be humble and go, you know what? I don't know everything" and so "...as I got better in the role I turned to the expertise in the room". Peter's account below exemplifies a confidence that comes with this readiness to cast off the role of perceived expert;

*I used to go in there feeling like I had to be an expert, and ironically enough, as you develop into the role, you need to be less of an expert. I eventually saw it was OK to show vulnerability. I wasn't rocking up trying to be everything to all people or trying to impress with all the things that I knew. I was happy to be a learner with these people.*

Overall the comments signal an alignment of their previously diverging situational and substantive selves (Southworth, 1995), bestowing them with a maturity to embrace humility in their work for the benefit of empowering others. Possibly linked with this enriched skill set, participants spoke of **attachment gains** associated with being charged with leadership and mentoring tasks. Having greater responsibility and being assigned schools and teachers in particular difficulty was viewed as a sign of their capabilities being recognised while also symbolic of how far they had transitioned. Tina saw she "...was increasingly asked to induct, train and mentor new people which was really affirming and reflected how far have I'd come...like I was once in their shoes". Katie "...noticed I was getting more challenging schools...like those in the DES school improvement programme and they were only given to really experienced advisors so I thought that was a good reflection on me".

In addition to what participants articulated themselves as indicators of *Stabilisation*, a further analysis of some implicit data for this phase signals some defining moments of identity equilibrium where teacher/teacher educator tensions were in fact exploited (consciously or unconsciously) by participants as an essential part of the job. The self-assuredness of *Stabilisation* presented where as second-order practitioners they now made authoritative arguments for the enduring currency of their first-order identities beyond simply using those identities to prove themselves to audiences as they had during the *Encounter* phase. This is well illustrated in



Tina's recollection;

*There were many times when you needed to revisit your teacher identity, you'd be in a meeting and you'd say, "well, if I had my teacher's hat on". I remember reading through the specifications for the Junior Cycle and thinking if I was a teacher, that part is a little bit kind of patronising.*

Similarly, Tim recounted "When we were looking at policy circulars, we drew on our practice as teachers and asked ourselves how reasonable they were for teachers".

Related comments frame this in the context of cautioning against idealism and the need for CTEs to remain rooted in reality;

*In PDST you engage with all of these educational philosophies and ideologies, and because you're not in the classroom, you need to stay real because you can find yourself unfairly pulling apart what teachers are doing (Laura).*

*Teachers listen when you talk honestly through the lens of experience not purely from an aspirational document that you've been given from on high. You can give the right messages but you have to retain your relevance and connection to your classroom practice. It doesn't have to be an either or (Jackie).*

Public proclaiming of their past teaching experience as they had at earlier phases of transition was still considered important for the job on the ground. However, some remarks in privileging the nuances of school context, indicate a more meaningful draw on first-order credentials compared to the *Encounter* phase when they were employed more superficially as a defence or biographical tool. For instance, having worked in an area of socio-educational disadvantage, Tina "...understood the challenges in engaging these students so I could genuinely reassure teachers" while Katie's prior experience in teaching split classes meant that "...when going into a rural two teacher school I could say 'Yes I taught in a split class and understand how messy it can be'".

## **7.7 Discussion**

This data show the concept of third space identity continuing to migrate into the mature stages of secondment. Findings outlined for the *Adjustment* phase illustrated early third space identity construction as participants through the processes of assimilation and accommodation, sought to navigate the boundaries between their first and second-order selves. That same phase revealed loyalty tugs between policy and practice, prompting a need to examine beliefs grounded in

personal experience while discerning their compatibility with the role of the CTE. Here at *Stabilisation* they had learned to occupy a third space identity more comfortably by continuing to draw on what concerned them as teachers while applying it constructively and empathetically to their role as CTEs. In learning to “...develop their teaching about teaching...[they began]...to make the problematic observable...[and]...publicly face their dilemmas and tensions of practice” (Loughran, 2007, p.9). While the literature clearly distinguishes the professional identities of teacher educators from those of classroom teachers, it also shows that they are not reciprocally exclusive (Murray and Male, 2005; Davey, 2013) and in fact signals folly in a wholesale move to second-order identity to the neglect of the parent first-order one (Jordan, Hawley and Washel, 2016). The accounts in this study however situate this in the space of the CTE. As secondment progressed, participants learned that retaining a teacher identity was necessary in order to remain grounded in classroom realities when it came to system expectations. Previous studies show that seconded teacher educators in having access to other networks and the wider education landscape, are well positioned to provide fresh perspectives on the teaching profession as well as identifying what needs to be addressed in the system (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). To this end the findings shed light on today’s CTEs as key players on the broader education stage given their proximity to system reform and early iterations of policy’s thinking. Whereby at *Adjustment*, participants grappled with being caught in the middle of policy and practice, *Stabilisation* in the role saw them unpack and view policy critically without compromising their allegiance to it while also having the opportunity to influence it for the betterment of the system.

More generally there remains considerable support here for the contention that teacher educators never fully shed their teacher selves (Badali and Housego, 2000; Kosnik and Beck, 2008). While it is claimed that overplaying one’s previous identity can be a barrier during early stages of career transition (Ibarra, 1999; Allen, Park Rogers and Borowski, 2016), there is evidence in this data that as teacher educators refine their craft, they can skilfully enact their first-order selves without it getting in the way of their second-order identity. Echoing the ‘harnessing of complexity’ discussed in the review of the literature (Axelrod and Cohen, 2000; Rust, 2018), these findings associate *Stabilisation* with a masterful use of third

spaces where the teacher educators here learned to work with and indeed capitalise on binary tensions and so in turn, could confidently legitimise their coexistence as hybrid professionals.

### **7.8 *Stabilisation*: to connect or disconnect?**

Appreciating what is presenting so far for *Stabilisation*, further exploration of this phase highlighted the precarious nature of secondment as an obstacle to third space identity construction with seemingly contradictory perspectives emerging in the data as a result. Additional data build on the findings above in describing participants' concerted efforts to continue declaring their first-order identities to teacher audiences. In this instance though and indicative of a further manoeuvring of the teacher/ teacher educator boundary, participants indicate a certain compulsion to impress on audiences that although they were now working as teacher educators, they had not lost sight of their teacher selves. The following comments stand apart from earlier ones related to proving their credibility during the *Encounter* phase. Profiling their first order identity this time finds more expression in the temporary nature of secondment and an awareness on behalf of participants at that point that their time as teacher educators was limited.

Accordingly, "...it was essential to let teachers know that I was a teacher and that I would be going back to school doing the same job as them" (Helen) where Katie was sure to stress "I'm a teacher and I know what that means but I am doing this job for the moment". Indeed there is a certain protectionism in Peter's remarking that "If you don't put yourself out there as a teacher while on secondment, then you potentially burn a bridge and we were all only a letter away from having to return to school".

Although it could be argued that participants were simply continuing to emphasise their first-order credibility, the driver here appears more attached to staying rooted in the reality of their temporariness and at least optically maintaining that first-order connection given that they would eventually have to revert to what their colleagues were doing in classrooms. In a similar vein Helen "...wanted to keep the link with the school and felt a sense of loyalty...in helping all these other schools, I should be helping my own" and Karen "...felt a duty to give something back, and went in to support my school three or four times while with the PDST". Yet by complete contrast, participants referred to *Stabilisation* as synonymous with disconnecting

from their schools and more specifically the role of class teacher. Laura's comment positions this realisation at the third year point of secondment which is most relevant to later inquiries into **when** participants felt they had made the transition to teacher educator;

*I stopped keeping links with the school. I didn't feel like this when I was leaving school, but as time moved on, I cut ties. And at that point, you think, three years ago I was in school. You're no longer able to say you know, up until last year, you've really moved away and less connected to the classroom.*

In terms of belonging and identity, others "...no longer felt like a school staff member and never felt like a teacher when meeting them" (Tina), "...felt very much like PDST was my family now and while there were five or six people who were friends in school, attending staff nights out fell by the wayside, (Katie). Tim "...didn't really miss school at all and started thinking 'jeez, I actually could stay in PDST forever' ". Whereby these comments indicate that participants had moved on, Jackie's account below shows that the school had moved on too thus echoing the literature (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Robinson, Munn and MacDonald, 1992) which shows that connectedness to the school fades owing to the changes that take place at school during the seconded teacher's absence;

*The first thing I noticed was the code on the door had changed. And there was a new secretary and I had to convince her, I wasn't a lunatic to try get in. And when I got to my classroom, it was flipped the other way around. When I brought sweets into the staffroom, there were new faces who had no idea who I was.*

This disconnection was also evident in underlying loyalty tensions arising during occasional interactions with former school colleagues;

*When I met school colleagues I was often asked if I missed the classroom and was I ever coming back? I always felt a pressure to say that I did miss teaching. But I didn't miss it one bit. Yet I always just said "Oh Yes of course I miss teaching and I'll be back some day" (Laura).*

*When I used to meet my colleagues from school, there seemed to be a low-lying anxiety or fear among them that I was going to come back with all these big ideas and create a mountain of work for them. I used to say "Don't be daft I'm still one of ye" (Jackie).*

## **7.9 Discussion**

The conflicting data here could be explained by the fact that participants had privately disconnected from their schools while publicly retaining their teacher profile, the latter reflecting Ritter's (2007) efforts to stress to former colleagues that

he had not “sold out” on them. This signals an additional hybrid identity issue for teachers seconded as teacher educators in being still employed as a teacher in their school and is reminiscent of Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway’s (2010, p.51) depiction of teachers seconded to the pre-service sector as “*neither fish nor fowl*”. The participants of this study indicated that although they had mentally severed the ties with school, they remained conscious that school was where they were anchored and where they were bound to return. Studies point to the uncertainty of secondment contracts as militating against the establishment of secure teacher educator identities (McEachern and Polley, 1993; Badali and Housego, 2000). Indeed in revisiting findings discussed in Section 7.3 which saw participants question how reasonable policy’s expectations were for the profession, some of this empathy may be rooted in what Kosnik and Beck (2008) report as seconded teachers’ anticipation of grappling with such expectations themselves when they return to school. Consequently, the data in exposing a number of paradoxical dispositions and articulations, possibly signal protective measures to broker a third space by “*keeping a foot in both camps*” (ibid., p.195). Despite earlier data showing participants successfully negotiate third space boundaries in practice and policy circles, it appears that when it comes to job security and belonging somewhere, navigating a third space is subject to the external control of secondment policy.

The findings presented so far for *Stabilisation* and their accompanying discussion, detail continuing **attachment gains** to the PDST as secondment progresses. They add further to the field in unearthing what *Stabilisation* looked like for the transitioners and how they knew they had reached it. The responses in this study associate *Stabilisation* with a grasp of pivotal teacher educator competencies, being entrusted with leadership tasks and having an overall confidence in their abilities. Implicit data show all of this manifesting in the accommodation of their situational identities as second-order adult educators where in resisting former binary practices, they carve out a third space identity which privileges neither one nor the other (Zeichner, 2010). The findings also relate this particular point with having disconnected with school and the classroom despite publicly indicating otherwise in some cases.

### 7.10 Year three: a turning point

One of the few closed questions posed in the interviews asked participants if they could isolate the year or point of secondment when signs of *Stabilisation* became evident. All responded to say that this was apparent towards the end of year two and into year three. This supports the research claiming that it takes three years to transition from teacher to teacher educator while also describing most of year two as an enduring period of steep learning (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Murray and Male, 2005). Helen reported that

*By the end of year one you're comfortable with workshops and school visits. But then into year two you discover there's much more, so it was the end of year two and even into year three before I felt I had a proper grasp of most things.*

Tina also felt "...definitely by the end of the second year and by the start of the third, you've moved into a totally different space" where Laura "... had found a groove at the end of the second year going into the third" which she described as "quite a defining year". Others echoed this while hinting at tenure issues;

*Five years is short...the first two years you're getting into it. In years three and four you are ready to give your best. So, I felt I've only come in the door and yet, the end is coming (Laura).*

*It was probably mid-way into the third year when I became independent and almost fearless...I was on fire...but I was more than half way through my secondment and the clock was ticking (Jackie).*

Resonating with previous studies concluding that three years in the role was not long enough (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Allen, Butler Mader and Smith, 2010) and even more specifically with the following remark made in Kosnik and Beck's study; "*Three years ... you are finally getting good, and then you're gone!*" (2008, p.195), this data bring into focus policy's stipulating a maximum secondment of five years for PDST's staff. If this three-year point is synonymous with *Stabilisation* as evidenced by this study's findings while also compatible with the literature on transitioning from teacher to teacher educator (Murray and Male, 2005), then this suggests serious implications for teachers who are seconded to teacher education on yearly contracts. Firstly, if contracts are terminated before this point they are unlikely to fully reach *Stabilisation* given that this typically takes three years. Secondly, for those who reach the three-year juncture and who according to these findings and previous research, are primed to operate at optimum level, their contracts are still subject to annual approval. Thirdly, the ceiling of five years for

annual renewal means that those still in place in year three have limited time left as teacher educators to fully exploit their newly developed identities and skills. Herein lies the greatest of all tensions encountered by participants of this study during their secondment to the PDST. The findings thus far support the corpus of literature in spotlighting the challenging transition from teacher to teacher educator owing to a host of identity issues and the necessary mastering of complex skills and behaviours. They also show this to be especially complex for CTEs given their work with seasoned teachers and their task as front-line purveyors of system change. Here the findings go on to highlight that those who are retained to year three having just navigated this difficult transition to the second-order setting, are now faced in less than that time with a return to the first-order setting from whence they came.

### **7.11 The second *Preparation* phase**

The findings in the last section mark the point at which participants believed they had stabilised in the role of teacher educator owing to a number of indicative milestones and mindsets. Further data revealed however that they had in fact undergone a significant transformation which conflicted with a return to school. Participant accounts associate this transformation with the acquisition of new skills and a new professional identity, thereby prompting a rethink about how compatible these would be with life in school and who they once were as teachers. Jackie captures the sum of these responses here;

*All you learn and become makes you realise how stuck schools are in their ways. I didn't anticipate all I was going to learn and how much I'd change. I decided I would no longer fit at school. I'd left behind how colleagues and families saw me. I developed, changed and honed skills and diversified in so many ways. I was no longer the same person anymore... you can't put yourself back into the place that you came from because it no longer exists.*

Data at **Entry** clearly indicated that participants had all intended to return to school while viewing the non-committal nature of secondment as advantageous in retaining their job security there. The following comments still reflect this but go on to show that the transformative effect of secondment was unexpected;

*I had every intention of going back to teaching but you outgrow your shadow of a teacher. I didn't plan it but it's like the longer you spend on secondment and the broader your range of skills gets, you realise that, you can do more than teach in a classroom (Tina).*

*When I left school it was like, I'm going to come back here and be better. But it became very clear quickly that this was not going to happen. PDST gave me tools to manage people and insight into running a school...distributive leadership, policy development, challenging conversations, stuff I would never have dreamt I would be able for. So, I started applying for principalships (Peter).*

On further elaboration, participants made it very clear that the skills and identities they had acquired, orientated them away from returning to school which most spoke of as a backward move. Tim felt "...knowing so much more now, it would have been a retro step to go back to school" where Tina "...realised given all I had learned with PDST, I couldn't step back into the same stream...going back to school would be backward step and I'm being perfectly blunt". Laura talked about "...getting more comfortable as a teacher educator, but you are also getting more ambitious and having new confidence to try out for other jobs instead of going back to school". Katie was passionate in expressing the transformation while hinting at a certain disparagement in returning to the classroom in particular;

*The better I got at the job, the more knowledge I built up. When I got into the thick of things in the PDST...working with principals and middle management, I discovered that didn't want to just sit back and be just a teacher. I want to be somebody who's leading change.*

Taking Katie's last statement above, it is notable that others believed that the sense of regression would be somewhat reduced if they returned to school in a leadership capacity as opposed to a class teacher, indicating this as a better fit for their new identity and skills. Tim remarked that "If I really had to go back then I'd take a leadership role. All I had learned impacted on my decision not to go back to class teaching". Similarly Jackie indicated a tolerance of returning to school "...but only if going back meant taking on a leadership role. I felt I could live with that". In pursuing this route in his own school, Peter rationalised that "In the short term, it felt like a step back, but it would be a forward movement in the long run you know...like it was progress". Further comments show the realisation of this identity transformation and the parallel unpalatability of returning to school, as inextricably linked to the ticking clock of secondment and the five-year limit. Katie recalls "I got to mid-year three and I was like going 'after a year and a half, I'm gone'". Tina figured "I might not be here for the full five years and they [DE] could end it at any time...but I had enough under my belt now to start looking out for something else".



Tim while observing that *"After year three, everyone I joined PDST with started looking around"* reasoned *"Jeez, I'm not going to leave it until the last year"*. Karen captured a similar urgency here;

*You knew this was only five years which is a shame because everyone starts looking around two years before that because if you wait until say four years in, there is a sense of panic so I was kind of keeping an eye out around year three because roles outside of school in education don't come up very often.*

Such anxiety about the future was amplified however by the stipulation of annual sanctioning of secondments. Helen *"...was always very aware that the job was not only temporary but yearly. So, it was always there at the back of your mind, hanging over you"*. Likewise Katie remembered *"It was every year, come Christmas...you wondered what was happening next year? There was always an insecurity...the department could decide to send you back"*. As a result, participants spoke about *"... getting edgy every year and looking beyond at all times (Peter)* and *"... constantly thinking about your exit because any year could be your last one"* (Laura). This was further aggravated by the terms of policy giving the PDST and the school the right to terminate a secondment. Participants spoke of a distinct lack of control over their own destiny with *"...so many masters deciding your fate"* (Helen) and *"...phoning up your principal which was very awkward... sending letters, like begging to get another year"* (Tim). Others referenced *"All the hoops you had to get through"* (Katie), where *"... first PDST had to decide they were happy to retain you, then DES make their decision and also the school...the control that other people had was a thorn and weighed heavily"* (Jackie). Participants also voiced their frustration about an employment arrangement which in lacking a career path meant *"Your progression within the organisation is compromised even though you had more to give"* (Laura). Karen talked about *"...the nagging feeling that I could have advanced in PDST which would have been the preferred option because I still felt I had more to offer"* where Katie *"...would have stayed definitely and wanted to move on to management but was never going to get that chance because there wasn't enough time left and derogation was never definite"*. Tim and Helen were regretful in their conclusions;

*They [policymakers] don't understand the transformation that happens. So many good, knowledgeable people were lost because of the five-year rule and uncertainty around secondment so people jumped ship before they were pushed (Tim).*

*There's no doubt in my mind that my leaving was premature. I found it particularly difficult because it wasn't my decision to go back to school. I had no autonomy over my own career. Doing something I enjoyed and loved ended so abruptly (Helen).*

This cocktail of uncertainty, angst and urgency prompted a need to take back control and dictate their own future as Tina explained “ *I'm the kind of person who likes to be organised and know what's happening. So I just took the decision, started going for interviews and thought, Okay, this is my fourth year anyway*”.

Likewise, Jackie reasoned;

*There came a tipping point because there's so much uncertainty every year and this is going to end in two years' time anyway. It's obvious what drove my exit. I was extremely happy but I needed to protect myself because I wasn't holding very many of the cards at all.*

Most noteworthy and contrasting with the push and pull motivational factors informing their move from school into the PDST, neither push factors from the PDST as the existing career position nor pull factors of other options, presented as reasons for departing the PDST. Rather, in anticipating the inevitable termination of a job they clearly liked, their sole motivation for leaving the PDST simply lay in avoiding a return to school as “*Going back to school was an interruption into this new career so you are forced into a situation where you're left with no options*” (Karen). Tim admitted “*I didn't want to leave the PDST at all. It was the best job in the world. The only reason I left was because I didn't want to go back to school*”. Indeed, for Laura, the only pull factor of an alternative route was permanence, noting that “*If it was permanent, it would have been the ideal dream job for me. No question about it*”. This was the perspective of all eight participants.

## **7.12 Discussion**

The findings for this second *Preparation* phase typically reflect the thoughts and behaviours of individuals on the cusp of another career change. In revealing ascended levels of self-belief and a need to command their next career move, they further underscore the identity transformation that had taken place by the *Stabilisation* phase. Previous studies of teachers seconded to teacher education show that involvement in the broader work of the system along with a growing confidence in second-order competencies, and a host of leadership skills, provides them with a view of a world beyond the school gates, spawning a curiosity about

future career options (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Badali and Housego, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Kosnik and Beck, 2008). The same studies report this as particularly the case where such teachers perceive their new professional identities and skills as now incompatible with school life and culture. These findings indicate that participants at this stage of their secondment had a sharp awareness themselves of their transformation, validated in some cases by visiting their schools and interacting with former colleagues. They therefore predicted school to be an antithetical home for their newly acquired skills and identities given that these could potentially clash with school practices, attitudes and cultures which for some had informed their departure from school in the first place. Compared to the *Preparation* of the first cycle and with reference again to forecasting identity, there is evidence this time of envisioning their “*possible future selves*” (Markus and Nurius, 1986) less favourably. Participants are honest about perceiving a return to school as a retrograde career step with the proverbial ‘going **back** to school’ having the unfavourable connotations evident in the Irish literature (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Sugrue, 2011). These findings however add another dimension to how the return to school from secondment is perceived from the standpoints of identity and the balance of power. Some participants asserted that returning to school in a leadership capacity would reduce the sense of regression which aligns with previous studies where seconded teachers expressed a willingness to return to school if it entailed a leadership role (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Taylor *et al.*, 2011). Likewise these findings suggest that avoiding a return to school is possibly attached to the role of class teacher and resuming a position equal to peers, whereas returning to a leadership role is easier to accept as it satisfies the career anchors of progression and the ability to apply their new skills.

The fact that participants had all initially assumed they would return to school indicates that their identity transformation and the aspirations it would evoke, was an unexpected outcome of secondment, as similarly discovered by Sutherland and Sloan (1990). Accordingly and as Section 4.8.3 of the literature review shows, a significant proportion of teachers seconded to teacher education do not stay in teaching. Indeed, for six of the eight teachers in this study, secondment with the PDST eventuated in a career change. In reflecting the catalytic nature of secondment (Costley *et al.*, 2007), this supports McMichael, Draper and Gatherer’s

assertion that the experience “...creates appetites which cannot be sustained when the work is finished” (1992, p.37). All participants expressed a preference to stay in the PDST, but a dilemma presented for them where such appetites could not be satiated in the temporary and unstable secondment setting. The data also show that any related misgivings about returning to school were compounded by concerns that time on secondment was running out. This supports preceding studies which highlight the angst common among secondees as contract termination approaches or equally where there is uncertainty about its annual renewal (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Kosnik and Beck, 2008). Sugrue (2011) notes that this is heightened in Ireland by the fact that secondees planning to stay with support services remain at the mercy of the DE and their school boards, who at any time can end the secondment. Furthermore, participants of this study were subject to the tighter policy restrictions of a five-year limit. This increased the urgency for them to seek an alternative career position which they deemed to be more suitable to their transformed selves than to their former one at school. According to Nicholson (1987, p.207), citing Langer (1983), “*People are likely to err in the direction of self-attribution for control over favoured choices*”. All participants made it clear in interviews that leaving the PDST was not their preference and that if it were not for the uncertainty and instability of tenure, they would have stayed. So despite most leaving the PDST of their own accord, they still considered their departures to be imposed and premature owing to the terms of policy. Certainly, the findings show high levels of disillusionment about the status quo and the rules that govern it. As well as feeling forced into career decisions, comments indicate frustration regarding policy’s failure to recognise the impact that the secondment experience has on one’s professional identity and the associated lack of career pathways. Teased by a door being opened and then shut to them (Taylor *et al.*, 2011), participants expressed sentiments reported in previous studies relating to deep disappointment about abrupt terminations that lacked closure and a waste of peak potential while ready to contribute optimally to teacher education (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Keogh 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003).

### **7.12.1 The Paradox of *Stabilisation***

It is timely here to frame the findings within Nicholson and Kelly’s models. Nicholson typifies *Stabilisation* as a time when feelings of job inadequacy are replaced by relative comfort, confidence and certainty. However, these findings

clearly show that what ought to be a self-assured phase becomes one of doubt and anxiety with speculation of a whole new set of **detachment losses** (prematurely leaving the secondment setting) and **(re)attachment losses** (returning to school). Fundamentally and as already pointed out in Section 7.10, in relation to the year three 'turning point', the findings posit *Stabilisation* as paradoxically problematic for those seconded to teacher education under the contractual conditions stipulated in Irish policy. Firstly, the transformation synonymous with *Stabilisation* creates a disconnection from their school in terms of attitude and cultural mindsets. Secondly, it signals a pivotal identity shift in being equipped to perform at optimum level as teacher educators. Yet because of policy terms, such development becomes synonymous with seconded teachers de facto embracing a new career instead of staying to embark on what would arguably be their best work with the PDST. Similar to what previous studies found (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Keogh, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003), participants of this research in seeing no place for that learning to be harnessed at school and being ever conscious of the limited time left with PDST, actively sought permanent education positions elsewhere. The paradox finds further expression in Kelly's model where the acquisition of such a rich skill set presents as a significant **attachment gain** to the PDST while simultaneously the lack of a security presents an equally significant **attachment loss** to the PDST. Both gains and losses converge and combine while essentially forcing these teacher educators into the next career cycle.

According to Nicholson (1987), *Preparation* for the next job is a natural function of *Stabilisation* in the current one as it marks the point where individuals consider their current career position, recognise the need for change, develop expectations for alternative roles and act to investigate these. This transpired for participants when they considered the move from school to the PDST. For this second cycle however, *Preparation* was not a function of the customary reflection that comes with having reached the safe shore of proficiency where one can bide time and ponder on next career steps. Rather a new career cycle was imposed by a looming termination which mobilised an urgency to jump overboard before being pushed. Nicholson (1987) contends that propulsion into a new career cycle originates in either the self or is externally imposed by environments, and that between both extremes there is a complexity of motives and causal events. In this case that

complexity presents in a fusion of contractual external pressure (causal) and self-protective choice (motive), the latter being mobilised by the former. The jump from PDST's ship was driven not by the seduction of undiscovered lands, but rather by an avoidance of returning to the place of origin accelerated by the limited time left on secondment and uncertainty of a future in the organisation. Ironically the transformation and proficiency afforded by the secondment gave participants the confidence to take that leap, further propelling their dive into waters new.

### **7.12.2 Taking back the control**

The literature on career dynamics tells us that a common factor prompting a career change is a disturbance caused by various identity mismatches involving duties, relationships or conditions (Louis, 1980; Brett, 1984). These findings suggest that for seconded teachers whether reluctant to leave a job they enjoy, avoiding an undesirable one they voluntarily escaped, or indeed both, this disturbance was deeply rooted in identity issues and who they have become over time. Moreover, the identity instability experienced by many on **Entry** to the role, presents again when faced with another transition, namely a return to school and a realigning of that identity at what participants considered to be a premature stage of their careers as teacher educators. If “...*identity is a key influencing factor on teachers' sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness...*” (Day *et al.*, 2006, p.601), career instabilities like this can shake that identity which according to Laskey (2005) results in a perceived lack of control over a situation. Here the need to reduce the unsettlement caused by the conditions of tenure was a key driver for participants taking back that control by voluntarily departing the PDST before their time was up. Levinson (1981) claims that most individuals are able to anticipate career events before they occur and by acting first, disruption can be minimised. It appears that participants of this study on the one hand anticipated tenure disruption while with the PDST, while on the other they speculated the disruption caused by returning to school. In addition, and with specific reference to Irish policy which requires secondment approval from three different sources (PDST, DE and the schools), the findings show the situation to be worsened by being at the behest of several stakeholders. Further, they had navigated and survived an intense career transition to teacher educator which no doubt rendered them resilient and adaptive. As Pinder and Walter (1984) suggest, the more an individual has changed, the more they learn to change. Consequently,

the teachers interviewed for this study joined the ranks of those in previous studies (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010), who, weary of the tenterhooks attached to annual approval, took stock of their newly acquired capital and quite resolutely refused to be pawns of fate. In recognising their worth and having time to prepare for the next career event, they believed there was more to gain than to lose from seizing control themselves. If self-propulsion enhances one's sense of direction and efficacy for the future (Kohn and Schooler, 1983; Jones, 1986) and if system propulsion has the opposite effect of powerlessness and resistance (Kanungo, 1982), then individuals will orientate towards **agency** described by Pulkkinen and Aaltonen (2003, p.146) as "... *intentional aiming at self-protection, self-expansion and mastery of social reality*". According to these findings, in choosing to act rather than been acted upon, participants adopted agentic behaviours in response to a range of push and /or pull factors that presented on the boundary of *Stabilisation* of one cycle transition and *Preparation* for the next. In the context of Schein's (1990) career anchors, the findings show that working with the PDST satisfied most of these; the expansion of skills and expertise, ability to have greater influence, making a difference; experimentation, challenge and autonomy. However, the crucial anchor of stability was starkly missing. It could be argued that returning to school offered all the stability they needed but it is abundantly clear from these findings (and the literature) that it lacks many other anchors. We are reminded of the unique boundary challenge met by teachers on secondment, where as discussed in Section 4.6.2 of the literature review, they struggle in belonging to neither school nor seconding body. In this instance faced with the inevitable termination of secondment, the "...*lines of demarcation between practices are now uncertain or destabilized because of feelings of threat*" (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p.142). One side of the boundary although providing most anchors they seek in a job, is sullied by its contractual conditions. The other side provides little of these career anchors but it promises the stability that eludes its opponent. For teachers facing this dilemma, the solution lies not only in agentic identity reconstruction (Day *et al.*, 2006), but in a career destination that offers all coveted anchors. And so, they are dared to carve out that alternative 'third space' career destination which transcends the losses they associate with both a return to school and the unstable position of secondment.

### 7.13 Secondment tenure: hidden team tensions

Exploring the experiences of teachers while seconded as teacher educators with the PDST is central to this study's research question. The findings so far have detailed this from the perspective of those interviewed and their experience from the point of entry to the *Preparation* phase of the next career cycle. Here the impact of the five-year rule coupled with the annual renewal requirement already in place, was core to the career dilemmas they encountered having reached the *Stabilisation* phase of the current cycle. What arose unexpectedly however in all interviews and setting this study apart from previous ones, was the broader impact of this policy on the culture of the PDST and how this in turn coloured participants' experience of secondment. Inductive findings reveal perspectives on the practical and human implications of this policy indicating that its destabilising effects go far beyond the individual and their career plans. Reflecting the disillusionment already expressed regarding the conditions of tenure, participants questioned the strategic and financial sense of the secondment policy. They referenced "...that brain drain ...having invested time and resources developing all that expertise, knowledge, and experience" (Karen), "...only to run more recruitment to train others up to that level again (Jackie), "...the frequent and sudden loss of expertise, often in one swoop" (Laura), "...the challenge and paradox of members strategically trying to create and develop a vision together that they might not even be part of" (Peter). Participants contributed other anecdotes and insights adding further weight to these views;

*You had different people on your team at different times. So, like, I had three team leaders within two years. People came and went. You get used to working with people and then it's "Oh, there's another person gone". There was an overall sense of temporariness and each time somebody would go, you'd get reminded of that (Helen).*

*You've got the more experienced members that are there five years versus the new recruits who are just coming in. And I felt that I learned so much from the people that were there longer than me. You know, if everybody is brand new and shiny, you don't have that level of experience. I mean I remember thinking Oh, Jesus, like, I'm only in year two and I'm now one of the senior members of the team, already mentoring somebody new (Katie).*

On the theme of succession, Laura recalled "...my mentor left when I was only a few weeks in the job". Likewise, experienced people who Helen "... depended on, were no longer at the end of the phone to call up and ask them something".



Notably Jackie recalled “...my involvement in a new Assessment for Learning piece and a number of us literally had to wait our turn to shadow this one lady with expertise, because there had been such a turnover”. Peter talked about the cost to team dynamics “We all had such a close bond so when people left, it rocked the team. New people come in and they're great but then you have to navigate new relationships and this happened so often”. These comments doubtlessly draw attention to a host of practical, logistical and financial issues. But the data also uncover the less visible effects on human connections and supports. Here there is mention of budding relationships with colleagues prematurely ended, the disruptive impact of leadership turnover within short timeframes, and concurrent attrition of experienced members. Heavy dependence of many on a few is evident where people quite literally took their place in a queue to tap into the limited well of expertise. Sudden loss of mentors and resulting vulnerabilities during induction added to the tension of what is already known to be a fraught career transition. In what could be considered as a case of ‘novice guiding novice’, some even found themselves occupying a mentoring role while still in the throes of transitioning themselves. The perspectives here not alone support the research on the teacher to teacher educator transition in acknowledging the efforts required to build proficiency, but they make an argument for retaining it for the greater good of the organisation, if not at least to guide others still making the transition. Perhaps one of the starkest findings signalling the impact of policy beyond the individual, is the contagion of insecurity it bred among the collective as indicated when participants elaborated on factors influencing their thinking;

*I wasn't thinking of going and I was quite happy to stay the five years. It was all the others in the PDST asking “What are you going to do next year? Have you seen this ad?” People regularly sent you job applications (Tina).*

*There was always talk of people leaving and sharing different job specs that were advertised. Even though I wasn't that bothered, it gets in on you and you start thinking, right, hang on a second, should I be looking? Lots of my friends were looking over their shoulders and they were only in year three (Tim).*

Framing this in the context of annual renewal, Katie recalled “That awful January, February period, when everybody's asking, you know, what's going on next year?” while Karen remembered that “...the yearly waiting to see if secondments are

*granted or not created a very tense atmosphere at national meetings*". Interestingly however Tina observed;

*The feeling that you might not be here for the full five years and you have to start looking became stronger with groups that started after us. Their mindset was so different...they had heard all about the turnover and they seemed to see it as a short-term role from the very outset.*

As participants individually reflected on their tenure concerns and shared how these had informed their decisions to leave the PDST, it is also evident in the above data that these tensions and the agency they mobilised caught fire elsewhere. Fuelled by grapevine chatter and the trading of exit strategies, the concerns of some infected others who had not in fact considered leaving at all. The yearly apprehension while awaiting secondment sanction already referenced several times as a source of private angst, was compounded when teams gathered, having a bearing on existing levels of comfort and security. The data hint at fears of being left behind while watching others act, further illustrating the power of contagion at a time of threat and uncertainty. Particularly poignant though are the narratives describing the cost to fundamental human relationships where pending annual sanctions fostered cultures of competition and suspicion. Here participants spoke of "...an awful vibe that was unspoken but created disharmony (Tina), "...a lot of anxiety because people did not want to leave" (Karen), "...anger where people felt they were being forced back to school involuntarily and resentment then towards the newer recruits which was unfortunate" (Jackie). With regard to Jackie's point, both she and Laura recalled their discomfort as new recruits in replacing others who had lost their secondment through policy's five-year rule;

*I suppose the fact that you were replacing somebody who had to leave because of the five-year rule, I was benefitting from their loss. I was replacing somebody really experienced who was renowned in my subject circle.*  
(Jackie)

*On my first day, I remember somebody explaining to us that what was an exciting time for us was a tough time for others because they were missing their colleagues who had left before the summer* (Laura).

Deeper tensions abounded regarding exceptional extensions being made for some leading to "...unhealthy competition where derogations became a dirty word... some advisors were able to stay on and others told that they're leaving" (Peter).

Similarly Laura “...noticed things become very political when conversations about derogations came up”. Redolent of what Sugrue (2011) observed in teachers eager to remain on secondment who as a result “toe the party line”, Katie recalled “...a sense of people withdrawing, cocooning themselves like...I'm not going to push myself out there or rock the boat by asking certain questions that might be frowned upon”.

Participants' descriptions here are notably removed from their previous portrayal of the PDST's warm and collegial environment. Accounts of withdrawal and fear of speaking up contrast vividly with the practices of openness and healthy dissonance celebrated earlier by participants as hallmarks of PDST's safe and trusting culture. Participants when discussing the *Encounter* phase highlighted the customary warmth extended to PDST's inductees. Here in an environment of heightened insecurity, those commencing their journey are envied and even resented by those nearing the end of theirs. Although intended by the circular as concessions, the derogations only served to further divide. Individual insecurities are fed when perceived career progress is seen to be made by others. Continuous departures unsettle and disturb, leaving elements of survivor guilt which impact on the team as a whole as well as the individual. The findings indicate a deeply unsettling period for the organisation during this annual 'waiting' period which emerges here as a defining part of participants' experience of the PDST. The stories lay bare the damage inflicted by secondment policy on the human spirit and culture of an organisation which was reported in interviews as privileging transparency and magnanimity within teams. Indeed, participant reflections so far in this study show the importance of team in the PDST as critical for professional identity where there is a sense of belonging to a shared conversation about teacher learning and all its component parts. Dolan's (2019, p.10) description of teacher education structures as communities of practice that are “...either stable or transient” takes on a certain juxtaposition where this data present them as stable **during** the secondment yet transient **because** of secondment. While appreciating the logistical impact of attrition and its associated 'brain drain', the data here clearly demonstrate that the ongoing challenge of forming close professional relationships, and having them pulled apart annually, is where the real attrition takes place.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Findings and Discussion Part 3**

### **Exit from Secondment and Early Experiences of Post-Secondment Destinations**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter sets out and discusses what this study discovered in relation to the **Exit** stage distinguished in this study as the period when participants departed the PDST and first commenced working in their post-secondment destination, i.e. base school or alternative education setting. As flagged in the Preamble to the Findings, this third chapter although deductively laid out according to Nicholson and Kelly's themes, distinguishes itself from the previous two findings chapters by its prominence of inductive headings. This is due to the sizable gap in the field regarding seconded teachers' transition out of teacher education onto the next role and how it compares to their transition into teacher education. The review of the literature yielded a very small number of studies exploring the reverse process of returning from secondment to one's previous teaching position. In relation to those who move to other education settings, with the exception of cursory references to the transfer of acquired communication and interpersonal skills (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990), there are no studies exploring the experiences of those who transition to alternative roles in the system despite the wealth of evidence showing that a significant proportion of teachers seconded to teacher education choose this other route (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Keogh, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). As the Irish policy context has already set out, this is the direction taken by the majority of teachers who leave the PDST, thus challenging the policy circular's assumption that those seconded to teacher education support services return to school. In line with that trend, only two of the eight participants of this study returned to their school positions, one involuntarily having being called back by her school with the second electively returning due to the impact of annual uncertainty on her professional and personal life. Central to exploring this second transition cycle is the transfer of knowledge and learning acquired while on secondment to the post-secondment workplace and its harnessing there either by the teachers themselves or by others. Irish secondment policy is brought into focus again here in claiming that teachers returning to school

following a secondment to teacher education support services bring the accrued knowledge and learning back to the benefit of the school.

The findings for the **Experience** stage of secondment see study participants complete Nicholson's career transition cycle and embark on another *Preparation* phase prior to their departure from the PDST. Accordingly, the *Encounter* phase is also revisited in this next section as participants recall either their experience of returning to school or commencing work in another environment. The beginning of this second career cycle locates Kelly's model in reverse where **attachment gains** and **losses** now apply to the post-secondment destination, and **detachment gains** and **losses** pertain to the PDST as the former work place. It is worth noting that at **Entry**, all participants joined the same organisation but at **Exit**, the destinations differ. The findings and discussion therefore reflect resulting variances in the **attachment gains** and **losses** associated with the destinations.

## 8.2 The second *Encounter* phase

For participants of this study, the *Encounter* phase when joining the PDST was characterised by initial highs followed by some intense lows as the reality of the teacher educator role became clear. Although such extremities were not as apparent during the *Encounter* phase of this second cycle, the assortment of gains and losses reported when transitioning out of the PDST and onto the post-secondment destination, still suggest that it was a period of mixed feelings and emotions. Participants reported their first **detachment loss** as the relationships they had forged while working with the PDST including how these had sustained them at challenging times. Tim remembered "...*that time was horrible...you're still constantly phoning up your PDST friends asking how they're getting on, and they're telling you all the stuff happening*". Laura described "...*losing that sense of family and friendships built up...a group of people who really got you and who you genuinely connected with*" where Jackie "...*missed the opportunity to debrief with someone for replenishment if you had a torrid experience that day*".

Those who moved on to roles in the wider system reported **attachment losses** to their new environments where they "...*missed the collegiality, just trusting each other, working together as a team*" (Karen). The two participants who moved to universities reported that "...*the university is very different, you are really thrown in*

*the deep end and basically left to it...there's no mentoring or anything*" (Karen) noting that "... *its more territorial and competitive, people were a lot more arrogant like 'Oh, you're only new here and we've been here longer than you'*" (Tim). In her new role in a DE agency Laura "...*had to conform an awful lot more because there was none of that creativity you had in the PDST where it was safe to try things out and even to fail*". She added "*Collaboration is not very well valued where I am now and its very conservative*". For those who returned to their school, the lack of variety, flexibility and time for reflection presented as a **reattachment loss** with remarks reminiscent of what they sought to leave behind when joining the PDST. Regardless of school sector there was a shared sense of being "...*micromanaged with no time to stop and have discourse with colleagues*" (Katie), "...*tied to the school building where the days are pretty much set in stone*" (Tina), while "...*following a timetable where every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday is the same*" (Helen).

Aspects of the CTE role bringing them into contact with schools and now absent from their new roles, constituted **detachment losses** across the various destination settings. They "... *grieved the loss of the interaction with teachers and schools and the strong relationships built*" (Jackie) and "... *missed going into schools meeting the teachers, doing something that was really valued and needed*" (Karen). Earlier data reported how principals confided in PDST advisors about the pressures of policy reform. The trusting relationships that ensued with schools as part of the that work was highlighted by Laura where her new environment changed that power dynamic;

*As a PDST advisor, schools opened up and like they would literally tell you anything, whereas in this role, I am viewed very differently. They're far more reserved and there's a lot more scratching the surface to get at the truth.*

Echoing what participants had already described as a premature exit from the PDST, the greatest **detachment loss** for all regardless of their destination, was a lingering sense of less than ideal reasons behind the career move, particularly for Helen who "...*experienced a huge sense of loss as it was not my choice and it was sudden. I didn't even have a chance to consider other options*". Jackie talked about her departure as "...*bittersweet being only in year three so I wasn't exactly jubilant except that I had successfully escaped a return to school*". For those who had made their own decision to leave, the loss was somewhat offset by the

**attachment gains** of stability where for Tim “...*this was not my first choice but 100% the main gain was it was a permanent job*”. Although Laura “...*didn't like where I am at first*” she also reasoned that “...*it was job security and at least I wasn't back in school*” while Tina appreciated “...*no longer having to look over my shoulder every year and knowing where I stand*”.

### **8.3 Influence of acquired experience, knowledge and learning on post-secondment roles**

Earlier findings showed that as participants reached their third year of secondment, they believed that the knowledge and skills they had gained equipped them to undertake a variety of other roles in the system. All but one remarked on the influence this had in securing roles in other settings. Jackie outlined this in some detail;

*If I had come straight from the classroom I wouldn't even have been considered for the role but because PDST allowed me to work with the initial teacher educators, I could make links with CPD. I sought feedback from the first interview and they said, “We couldn't tell whether you were a primary or post-primary teacher, you had such a 360 view of the educational landscape”. So a lot of the proving of myself had been done before I started.*

Both university-based participants spoke of the PDST role as laying foundations for the transition;

*As a research director in the university I am using all I learned in the PDST about leading people and negotiation. I certainly didn't know any of that as a teacher, so if I had gone straight into academia initially it would have been disastrous (Tim).*

*Having gone through one transition I felt much more comfortable. It would have been far more difficult if I'd gone from school straight to the university and more daunting working with adults. So, I was able to hit the ground running (Karen).*

Once in situ, it was clear to participants working in non-school based destinations that they were readily able to draw on specific knowledge and skills that they had acquired on secondment. Tim reported “...*using all of the PDST stuff like digital tools for assessment, content collaboration, embedding digital technologies into lesson plans, with new teachers and with the PMEs*”. Karen “... *drew on my PDST materials every time when designing lectures on specific things like reading strategies*” claiming that she “...*wouldn't have had that depth of knowledge and understanding of something so specialised coming straight from the classroom*”. In

referencing “...the strong emphasis on modelling lessons and best practice in PDST”, Laura now felt “...able to recognise really good pedagogical practice in this job and affirm it and rely mainly on the communication skills that I learned while I was in PDST like giving good feedback”.

For both participants who returned to their former class teacher role, there was evidence of some successful transfer of their knowledge and skills in relation to their own first-order practice. However, both cited curricular demands and the hurried nature of content coverage as militating against a deeper application of what they had learned;

*I went back into the classroom thinking more about what I was doing and why. I am definitely a more effective teacher than before I joined the PDST. But school life takes over. You have a timetable to follow and you have to row in with what the others are doing. It doesn't take long for all those great ideas to become distant memories (Helen).*

*I am much stronger pedagogically. When I first took up the PDST job, I didn't teach phonics or comprehension awfully well, I was only scratching the surface. But there are days I am reminded of those teachers I supported who were struggling to implement all these changes and I can feel their pain. Group work and active learning all takes time and often you need to get through stuff a lot faster (Katie).*

In addition the focus of their work while in the PDST had sector specific implications thereby manifesting as either an advantage or a disadvantage in relation to knowledge transfer. Helen's work with the PDST was rooted in her post-primary subjects and programme specialisms where she “...learned so much more about [her subjects] but even more so pedagogically where my knowledge of assessment, active learning and differentiation was in another league”. On the other hand, Katie had worked on the PDST primary literacy team and found the reverse transition to the full eleven primary subjects challenging;

*A hundred percent, I was very secure with literacy. But I lost touch with the other curricular areas. Definitely that was a downside. You gain so much pedagogical content knowledge in one area, but going back and reacquainting myself with history, geography, science, and everything again was hard.*

Although Laura did not return to school, and while appreciating the benefits of her enhanced pedagogical content knowledge to her new role, her specialising in



primary maths with the PDST had a similar impact on her current role involving the broader primary curriculum;

*If I compare my knowledge base as a teacher educator to those I work with now, my pedagogical knowledge is far ahead because of all I'd learned in PDST. I have greater depth in maths but the others here have like a broader overall subject range which I possibly temporarily lost on secondment.*

By contrast, Karen's work as a primary literacy advisor with PDST proved to be an advantage as a university lecturer of primary literacy;

*Working so deeply with literacy gave me the scope to specialise in this area in the education faculty. As an advisor I modelled best practice in literacy demonstration lessons, so I can break it down for student teachers and help them make sense of all the individual components of language and literacy.*

Irrespective of their current work setting, participants spoke about the confidence they had gained as individuals to stretch themselves professionally while daring to step beyond their comfort zones. Katie described herself as "...standing taller, having been on the frontline with principals and seeing how school are run" and has since "...trained up to be a teacher mentor now as part of the National Induction Programme for Teachers". In discussing her current job Jackie remarked;

*In this gig you wouldn't want it to be your first rodeo, when you're heading into those consultation sessions. But without learning to navigate really challenging situations when with the PDST, I wouldn't have been able to stand up to meet the expectations of this job.*

#### **8.4 Harnessing by others of participants' experience, knowledge and skills in the post-secondment work place**

When participants were asked if and how what they had learned in the PDST was utilised by colleagues in their current work environment, responses varied depending on the destination. With respect to non-school based destinations, all but one categorically reported that their secondment experience was not actively harnessed by others. Laura explained;

*I was really surprised when I joined here because they knew what I had to offer as it got me the job. But, there is no channel for my skills to be shared. Another former PDST advisor here had incredible experience in literacy and she was never asked to contribute. It's the hierarchical nature of the organisation. It wouldn't be appreciated if you suggested sharing either, like it's considered out of step.*

At university Tim was clear that “...in no way would you be given a platform to share skills with colleagues. They’d want to kick the box from underneath you”.

In a similar context Karen reported;

*There was no pull on my skills really even though my PDST literacy background probably got me the job. It’s like a clean slate where people have forgotten your interview. I harness my own skills but I can’t say I have been asked to share them.*

The following remarks indicate that any harnessing of secondment experience in these other post-secondment settings appeared to happen incidentally or covertly;

*Sometimes they did informally or on the QT. I have seen my stuff appear in other lecture designs but I never got credit. They never had that content before I came along and I know because I showed it to them (Tim).*

*It ended up getting filtered accidentally - a few of us met up with an ex PDST advisor - we learned more about primary literacy that day than we had learned in any training provided here but what that girl had to share was essentially ignored (Laura).*

On returning to school, Helen, who resumed her class teacher role, and Tina and Peter who both took up new school leadership positions, noted a distinct staff indifference to what they had learned as teacher educators and a lack of proactivity in seeking it out. The comments also suggest limited awareness in staffs about what their work in the PDST had entailed;

*I was not asked directly ever about what I could share. The busyness of school got in the way, what’s on the agenda and needs to be completed. I once offered to do a staff meeting input and I needed an hour and a half but I only got about 30 minutes. I was told that a quick overview would be enough (Helen).*

*When I went for interview for the Deputy Principal, it came across to me quite strongly that people on the panel weren’t really interested in what I achieved on secondment. Then when I started there wasn’t much interest or concrete understanding of my work in the PDST (Tina).*

*Nobody went out of their way which was surprising given all I could have shown them. It was more a case of me putting it out there rather than being asked. I’m not sure the skills you build up are widely understood or appreciated. (Peter).*

Where efforts **were** made to glean the knowledge of those who returned to school either as leaders or class teachers, the data indicate that this transpired at times of urgency or when compliance matters arose. For instance, in Peter’s case “...where

written plans or school self-evaluation came up” he “...was asked to throw an eye over them”. Katie recalled a school closure for planning when she “...was asked to give staff a steer of what to focus on so that parents would know that the school closure was well spent”. Tina gave an example with regard to a school inspection;

*The school’s inspection hadn’t gone well. There was a follow up inspection due and things had gone by the wayside. So, all of a sudden, I was asked what would you do for this and that. It felt like they were just picking my brain basically.*

In returning to school as a fellow class teacher, it appeared that efforts to share knowledge had to be carefully handled owing to the sensitivities in assuming such a position and how it might be received. The reflections resonate with what Jackie had earlier called the “*low lying anxiety*” as school colleagues anticipated her return and how that might disturb the status quo. Helen “...was really conscious of the staff thinking ‘Here she comes...the expert with her big ideas and she’s been gone for two years’”. Katie “...didn’t know where to stand, or who to talk to” and “...stayed very quiet when it came to suggesting things because their initial attitudes implied ‘Oh here’s Katie coming in and she’ll just tell us to get rid of everything and what needs changing’”. Consequently on return, both felt “The pitch really is vital” (Helen) and “It was important to be humble” (Katie). Similarly, Laura predicted;

*If I had gone back to school I nearly would have been embarrassed about sharing and would probably have hidden the fact that I knew something more about the teaching of maths, I just know that the staff would have been critical of me thinking that I was like the know-all.*

By contrast, both Peter and Tina considered the reverse transition to school to be easier by virtue of their new leadership status which “...made it feel less regressive” (Peter) as well as having some bearing on how they were received and what they had to say;

*For me because I went back as a deputy principal and it really helped. I was viewed differently, almost as though I was never a teacher there. I had a voice now and people sat up when I suggested something. I am not sure that would have been the case if I went back as a teacher and I would’ve toned it down if I had (Tina).*

Overall, Jackie was the only participant whose experience and knowledge were actively harnessed in her new work place. It is noteworthy that in comparison to what others had indicated, those she now worked with appeared to have a greater

understanding of PDST's remit and what her work on secondment had entailed. There are also indications of a culture that is positively disposed towards new learning and change;

*There is real recognition of the work that I did in PDST in this job. PDST experience was considered a real feather in my cap interacting with thousands of teachers up and down the country. It gave me instant credibility. I was also a familiar face to other stakeholders, and found them hungry to gather what they could from me due to my boots on the ground experience. It's like 'Well, this girl understands the school system and the way schools work.*

## 8.5 Discussion

A broad examination of the data for the second *Encounter* phase suggests that for all participants, the shock factor characterising their transition from teacher to teacher educator featured less prominently during this transition. There are no indicators of major identity disturbance or imposterism that weighed heavily during the *Encounter* phase of the previous cycle. As indicated by some participants, this could be attributed to having already made a career transition from school into the PDST. More specifically, the findings for the **Experience** stage clearly showed that the rich knowledge and learning acquired while on secondment engineered an identity transformation which in turn gave them confidence to pursue alternative roles in the system. The data in this section reference the recruitment currency afforded by this transformation and so it is highly likely that this served to considerably ease this transition. It could also be argued however that this second transition in being compared to the notoriously challenging one from teacher to teacher educator, would unsurprisingly prove to be less traumatic. At the same time there is little evidence of the heady excitement and novelty that participants spoke of when describing their maiden entry into the PDST. The data signal this as attributable to motivational and choice factors. During the first transition the school environment presented push factors where these teachers electively sought to escape certain constraints of school life and where the PDST by contrast, offered many of their desired career anchors. In the case of this transition however, six of the eight participants were mobilised to leave the PDST as a result of an imposed tenure condition and in turn pursued other options to avoid a return to school. For the remaining two teachers who returned to their original positions in school, one's decision was impacted by the annual uncertainty of secondment and the other was recalled by her school unexpectedly at short notice. Whether or not participants

had time to exert some control over their next career step, the interviews show that none of them departed the PDST for reasons of true choice which had been the case when they opted to leave school. The findings here and those describing the dilemma they faced as they reached *Stabilisation* in the PDST, show a palpable grieving for a job they loved. Save the widely reported **attachment gain** of job stability in their current positions, departure from the PDST and all the other career anchors that it satisfied, was a **detachment loss** shared by all.

The study yields some fresh findings regarding specific **reattachment losses** where career anchors of the former secondment work setting were now absent or less evident than they were on secondment. All eight participants mourned the loss of peer support and collegiality experienced in the PDST. Reduced collaboration was highlighted as a **reattachment loss** by all but one participant. The same data indicate that the reasons for this differed between those who returned to school and those who moved onto alternative destinations. For the latter, there are explicit references to cultures of conservatism and individualism as barriers to such practices. The findings relating to those now working again in schools mirror those of previous studies referencing **reattachment losses** associated with repetitive routines (Scherff and Kaplan, 2006) and habitual behaviours which deter collaborative cultures (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; McDonough, 2017). It could be argued that schools unlike the PDST are not team structured which facilitates collaborative efforts and shared ways of working. Equally however, the synergies across sectors and areas of priority in the PDST are engineered to deliberately transcend team boundaries, thus signalling a culture which values collaboration and therefore proactively strives to make it happen. The findings also reveal a dearth of induction support for those who secured roles in non-school-based work settings with no reference to ongoing learning opportunities in any of the post-secondment settings. No longer working with schools across the country and building relationships of trust with the profession, was reported as a **reattachment loss** across all the destination categories.

### **8.5.1 Transfer of knowledge and skills to post-secondment roles**

Findings for the *Stabilisation* phase showed participants speculate that the knowledge and experience they acquired on secondment would provide them with capital to undertake a broader variety of roles in the system while managing to

avoid returning to their original roles in school. The **Exit** stage sees all six of the eight participants who pursued alternative routes swiftly secure appointments as school leaders or in positions in universities and other prominent agencies in the system. Indeed, the data illustrate a conviction that the currency they had gained and its facilitation of a relatively seamless transition this time around, was due to their PDST experience. As previously argued, the fact that these participants when first departing their schools had all intended returning signals that this was not planned. Nevertheless, the data show that the PDST served as a career stepping stone. PDST annual reports since 2016 together with its HR records show that the rate of staff turnover steadily increased over the period when these participants left the organisation, with most staff leaving within their first three years. The data also suggest that those joining the PDST after this group had greater awareness of the professional opportunities that the job generates and from the outset seemed sharply conscious of its inevitable transience. Returning to what Sugrue (2011) noted as entrepreneurial opportunism, this hints at secondment being deliberately employed by ambitious teachers as an interim diversion towards an open road of wider possibilities while by-passing the perceived career cul-de-sac of class teaching. In a strategic future proofing of a third space career, it could be argued that such teachers seek to enjoy the many attractive anchors that secondment offers until such time that they gain enough skills and proficiency to seek a role elsewhere, one which can also provide the anchor of career stability.

All participants to varying degrees reported making active use of what they had learned in the context of their own practice. Those who returned to the classroom reported deeper conceptual connections with their teaching and the decisions informing it, as also evidenced in previous studies where individual teachers successfully applied what they learned on secondment to their classroom practice (Russell, 1997; Spiteri, 2010). However **attachment losses** were apparent where both teachers spoke of compromising pedagogical manoeuvres in the race to cover content and keep up with the pace of neighbouring classrooms. Essentially they defaulted to approaches they would have considered to be redundant or even discouraged when working as teacher educators. Resonant of Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002) 'praxis shock' and as reported by others (Badali and Housego, 2000; McDonough, 2017), they soon became reacquainted with the classroom pressures with which the teachers they once supported had also struggled. Indeed

it brings to mind the protective insurance that some participants brokered while on secondment when in having a sense of the reality ahead of them on returning to school, they overtly empathised with teachers and proclaimed their first-order allegiance.

These findings contribute uniquely to existing research in tracking the experiences of those who take alternative career routes in education post-secondment and in ascertaining how they themselves had used their new learning and knowledge. Those holding positions in other settings showed a heavy reliance on material developed while working as an advisor with the PDST and abundant application of the pedagogical content knowledge they acquired. Barriers such as time and space to incorporate this into their work did not feature in conversation with these participants like it had with those who returned to classrooms. Further, this group along with those who took up school leadership positions, talked about applying their accumulated expertise in the broader domains of communication, conflict management and providing professional feedback. The two teachers who returned to the classroom did not reference the continuing use of these skills. Working predominantly again with students in the first-order setting may have lessened the need to draw upon them. Even so, both teachers reported that a return to the classroom also offered less opportunity to employ the curricular and pedagogical ideals promoted by teacher educators. This redundancy of skills indicates the limitations of the class teacher role to fully optimise the identity transformation that secondment brings about and is congruent with what is reported in the literature where teachers feared that a return to the classroom would waste much of what they had learned as teacher educators (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003). This study's findings also isolate a classroom role as lacking the anchors of autonomy, flexibility and influence, further confirming the reasons why participants, where they could, avoided a return to school. There is also a notable irony that the work environment least receptive to what participants learned on secondment is where Irish secondment policy assumes the learning will have its intended impact.

### 8.5.2 Knowledge transfer and sector specific implications

As detailed for the **Experience** stage, this study like previous ones, reveals significant gains in experience, knowledge and skills acquisition for teachers seconded to teacher education. For some participants of this study though, it became apparent during this transition that the subsequent benefits of certain gains hinged on the new role they now occupied vis-à-vis the focus of their previous work in the PDST. For instance, the findings clearly show implications for primary teachers who in line with the PDST's structure, occupied roles on subject specific teams. Granting that the data in this study show that immersion in the primary curriculum domains of literacy or numeracy gave them significant depth of understanding in the discipline, this transpired as disadvantageous for some post-secondment roles including class teaching where work involves the entire primary curriculum. The fact that the narrowed focus was by contrast an advantage to Karen who took on a literacy specialism in a university, indicates that for the primary PDST advisor, knowledge gains and its subsequent transfer is dependent on the role they undertake post-secondment. Those who worked on post-primary PDST teams regardless of their new work setting however, reported transfer gains firstly in having deeper subject knowledge and secondly a considerably enhanced pedagogical knowledge base. More specifically for post-primary participants returning to school, the findings challenge previous studies claiming that subject specific work in school following a secondment period of broader pedagogical orientations, is constraining (Avis, 1999; Keogh, 2000). The data here is more aligned to what Tuohy and Lodge (2003) found where post-primary teachers returning to school considered their subject knowledge enhanced by their immersion in cutting edge pedagogical approaches while on secondment. Given that there are no such equivalent findings in the field for the primary sector, this study therefore provides a new insight into the first-order disturbance that secondment to subject specific roles can create for primary teachers who thereafter transition to work entailing the broader primary curriculum. It is worth recalling the findings for the **Entry** stage showing that a key driver for primary participants when joining the PDST was a desire for deeper engagement in either maths or literacy, whereas all post-primary participants interviewed pursued pedagogical enrichment. Evidently the PDST experience satisfied the wishes of all in this regard but depending on their post-secondment destination, it presented unexpected limitations for primary participants.



### **8.5.3 Harnessing by others of participants' experience, knowledge and skills in the post-secondment work place**

As well as exploring how participants used and applied their acquired learning and expertise post-secondment in the context of individual practice, this study also wanted to discover if this was harnessed at organisational level in the new work place. With the exception of one of these settings, the data show that the benefits in most cases did not travel much further than the individual themselves. This has particular relevance for those who returned to school given policy's claim that the school accrues benefits from the seconded teacher's experience. As already discussed, both participants who returned to their former roles as teachers reported the daily demands of school life as inhibiting time and space for peer collaboration and sharing of knowledge. In any case though and in line with the literature (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Badali and Housego, 2000; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Allen, Park Rogers and Borowski, 2016), these findings also show a lack of proactive pursuit of their fresh capacities on behalf of the school indicating a certain indifference to what the returning teachers had to offer. More telling were the power of school norms and politics which tacitly indicated to these teachers that returning to school with designs of change were not welcome. Indeed, such silent signals had been already detected by some participants when during the course of their secondment, they occasionally met up with their school colleagues. Although the findings do not indicate overt hostility or resentment towards the teachers returning to school as do other studies (Kosnik and Beck, 2008; McDonough, 2017), a deference to school culture is palpable in the protective measures taken by both teachers to keep their expertise hidden and avoid evangelical airs for fear of offending staff or being isolated as 'other'. In that sense the findings mirror the literature which reports that teachers felt subliminally rather than explicitly judged by staff if they were to present in any way as 'returning expert' (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Scherff and Kaplan, 2006; Spiteri, 2010; McDonough, 2017).

Despite previous studies evidencing that teachers returning from secondment struggle to transition back to first-order practice (McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Kosnik and Beck, 2008; McDonough, 2010), these findings show that both teachers adapted relatively well in the context of the own classroom where they endeavoured to enact what they had learned as teacher educators.

The comfort appears to be a private one however as publicly they needed to be humble and understated about their second-order selves so as not to threaten the comfortable predictability of school practice. This familiar boundary tension where they find themselves identifying as neither first nor second-order practitioners, somewhat supports McClay's (2011) contention that teacher educators returning to school can struggle to completely "go home". This study presents the tension as manifesting for the returning teacher not within the walls of their classrooms, but rather as they temper their teacher educator identity towards re-socialising into school culture.

As findings for **Experience** showed, some participants predicted appointment to a school leadership role as a possible way of easing the regression they associated with a return to school, echoing previous studies where assuming a leadership position became a condition for those willing to return (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; Taylor *et al.*, 2011). Certainly the findings for **Exit** reveal that career progression into school leadership positively influences the reverse transition to school and associated knowledge sharing. The favourable impact of positional status is apparent where the data highlight an interesting comparison between those who returned as class teachers and those who returned as leaders. Peter and Tina both claimed that returning to school in a leadership capacity helped reduce the **reattachment loss** of regression while affording them a standing to be consulted and exert influence. Both cite examples of unashamedly proffering their views and ideas to staff. On the other hand, Katie and Helen in holding their original class teacher positions, were highly mindful of how forthcoming they ought to be with their new knowledge with any attempts to do so carefully pitched and gingerly broached to ensure reacceptance into the fold. This indicates that returning to school in a new position of leader has significance for professional identity and the dynamics of power. In returning to old ground as a leader, both Peter and Tina were legitimised as sharers of new knowledge and as agents of change not just by themselves, but by the staff. In this way their new status allowed them be 'other' and to publicly maintain their second-order identities rather than privately confining them as Katie and Tina did within the walls of the classroom. In revisiting McClay's (2011) analogy, it could be said that 'going home' as a school leader provides a readymade third space where the hybrid identity fostered on secondment can continue to thrive comfortably back in school.

These findings support the literature which widely reports the **reattachment losses** for seconded teachers returning to school in the undervaluation and underutilisation of their newly developed skills on behalf of others (Sutherland and Sloan, 1990; McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Housego and Badali, 2000; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007; Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway, 2010). A deeper examination of the data in this study though unearths proactive attempts by school leaders to tap into this wisdom when pressures of policy imperatives or external evaluation presented. There are shades here of what emerged in Tuohy and Lodge's (2003) research where school principals while claiming that the benefits of secondment were largely confined to the individual teacher, were also keenly aware of the 'inside track' knowledge to which these teachers may have been privy while on secondment. Both of those who returned to school as teachers and school leaders reference the schools' use of such insider knowledge for standards and accountability purposes. This is somewhat reminiscent of earlier data illustrating the propensity for the teaching profession to perceive professional learning as being synonymous with system reform and compliance. If such drivers were primary motives for harnessing the knowledge of those who returned to school, it suggests a similar reductive view of professional learning in the context of knowledge sharing and diffusion at school level.

The review of the literature has already drawn parallels between school staff apathy towards the returning teacher's experience and the limited impact of cascade CPD training on knowledge sharing in schools. A number of factors shown to inhibit knowledge diffusion in schools following this kind of CPD, also feature in these findings; steadfast school beliefs and habitual practice (Wilson and Berne, 1999; Opfer, 2016), focus on external over internal accountability and capacity building (Elmore, 2004), staff as indifferent receptacles of what the colleague returning from the CPD event has learned (Hargreaves, 2000) and fears of isolation on the part of the knowledge sharer if perceived to be whistle-blower on the status quo (PDST, 2014; Brookfield, 2017). The literature review also referenced the conditions needed for such knowledge sharing to happen, namely supportive leadership (Fullan, 2002; Schleicher, 2016; King and Stevenson, 2017; Sims *et al.*, 2021), purposeful experimentation and questioning of current practice (Timperley *et al.*, 2007; Brookfield, 2017) and a broader view of professional

learning as an ongoing and embedded part of teachers' daily lives (Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 1987; Day, 1999). The belief that the teacher attending the CPD event will return to such an environment where they will disseminate their learning to receptive and eagerly awaiting colleagues, is comparable to the assumption in Irish secondment policy that teachers return to expectant schools primed to derive benefit from what they have learned and acquired while working in a national support service. In both circumstances there is a failure to recognise the barriers and enablers that impact on the successful diffusion of professional knowledge and learning in schools.

As shown earlier, greater work flexibility and scope allowed those working in alternative settings to make more use of what they learned on secondment. However, with the exception of one of these, accounts align with those who returned to school in that the learning and knowledge they acquired as CTEs was equally underutilised at organisational level despite the role it had played in securing them these other positions. Evidence of incidental use of their knowledge and in one case, covertly and disingenuously, signal cultures of competition and control as hindering the overt sharing of knowledge and expertise where doing so is regarded as either inappropriate or threatening. The exception to this was Jackie whose account indicates a privileging of learning and challenge in her current workplace and a strong understanding of what her work in the PDST involved. In comparing her experience to those of the other participants, it suggests that such factors facilitated the diffusion and harnessing of what she had learned on secondment.

## Chapter Nine

### Study Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 9.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters presented the study findings according to the three pillars of its theoretical framework; **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**, which represent the transition into, through and out of the PDST. The analysis of the findings yielded the following five themes (two deductive, three inductive);

Deductive

- Career transition phases (Nicholson ,1987)
- Career attachment /detachment gains and losses (Kelly,1980)

Inductive

- Knowledge and learning
- Identity
- Organisational culture and dynamics

The five themes in turn divide into subthemes as they interface with each of the three stages of secondment as illustrated in Figure 9.1.

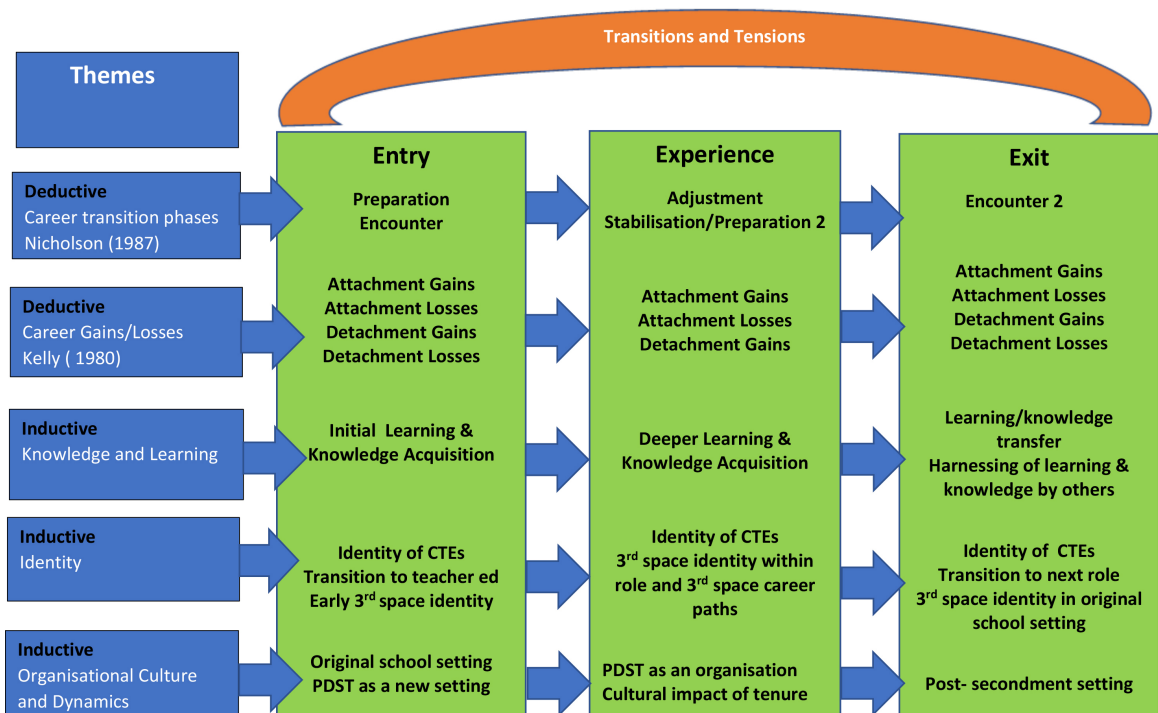


Figure 9.1: Representation of Findings (themes and a selection of subthemes) across the theoretical framework

This chapter outlines the study's conclusions according to these five themes and how they interface uniquely with the **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** stages. This represents a deliberate and important decision at this final point of the study where the three vertical pillars of the theoretical framework are transposed into cross-cutting planks of each theme. Accordingly they are meaningfully woven into the final narrative of the story they have served to shape and guide. As a result they are now contextualised within the themes generated from the findings (See Figure 9.2).

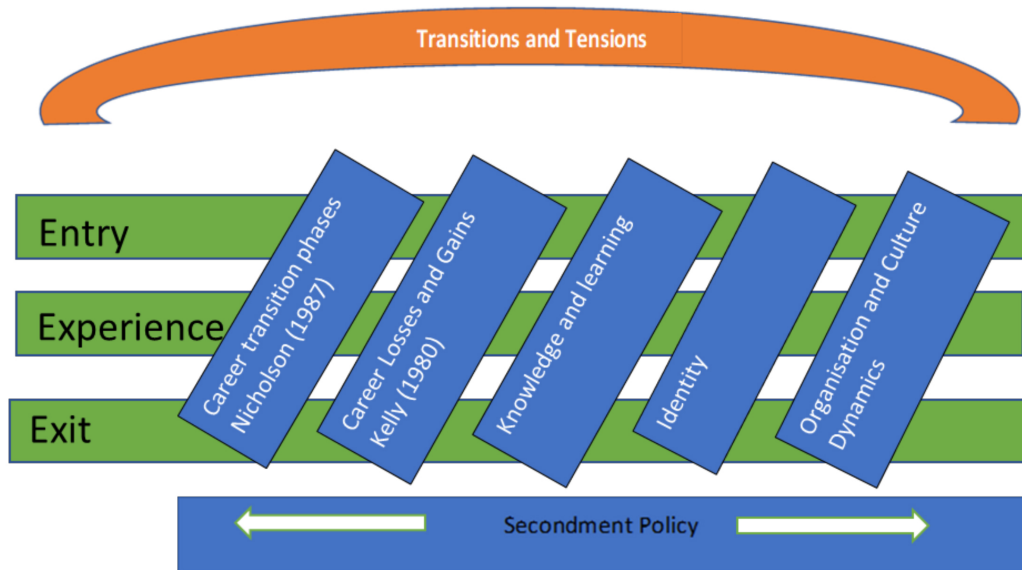


Figure 9.2: Transposed theoretical framework and study themes/conclusions

The conclusions serve to answer the study's main research question and its supporting lines of inquiry;

**What knowledge, learning and experiences are acquired by teachers while on secondment as continuing teacher educators with the PDST and how does this impact on career direction and the positions they hold post-secondment?**

- What motivates teachers to pursue a secondment as a CTE with the PDST?
- What do they experience as they transition into, through and out of secondment with the PDST ?
- What specific knowledge and learning is acquired during the secondment and how is this acquired?
- How does secondment to the PDST shape their professional identity, career motivations and influence future choices/directions?
- What knowledge, learning and experiences are transferred to, and harnessed in, the post-secondment role?

Each of the five themes is afforded its own set of conclusions, with the exception of the two deductive themes driven by Nicholson and Kelly's models which together form a joint set of conclusions. Each conclusive theme begins with an overarching statement before outlining what this looks like for participants of this study at the **Entry, Experience** and **Exit** stages. It is important to note that because the five themes are not mutually exclusive, key ideas appear in more than one set of conclusions. This is not intended as repetition but rather to indicate how some ideas assume unique and specific meanings according to the theme (e.g. the idea of returning to school in a leadership capacity manifests differently within each of these three themes; **Knowledge, Identity** and **Organisational culture and dynamics**). Finally, although Irish secondment policy was not generated as a standalone theme, its implicit and explicit pervasiveness in participants' accounts and its ensuing prominence throughout the findings, earns it a discrete set of conclusions. Figure 9.2 above illustrates the underlying and unifying significance of this particular set of conclusions to all five themes and their conclusions.

The chapter also includes recommendations arising from the study, an exploration of its significance for teacher education and the system, and potential areas for future study. Limitations of the study are acknowledged and linked to some of the suggestions for further research. The chapter brings this thesis to a close with some final words of personal reflection.

## 9.2 Conclusions

### 9.2.1 Career transition phases / Career gains and losses

The experiences of study participants when seconded to the PDST as CTEs reflect distinct phases of career transition with each phase located within one of the three stages of secondment: **Entry, Experience** and **Exit**. The phases are characterised by a series of tensions presenting as career gains and losses.

#### *Entry*

At **Entry** participants experience Nicholson's (1987) *Preparation* and *Encounter* phases of career transition. *Preparation* presents as envisioned **detachment gains** in leaving school (i.e. limited reflective opportunities) and contrasting

**attachment gains** in joining the PDST (i.e. extended learning). The *Encounter* phase reveals **attachment gains** associated with increased autonomy, rich learning and a culture of compatible mindsets. It is also strongly typified by **attachment losses** inherent to identity and proficiency challenges in transitioning from teacher to teacher educator while unexpected tensions specific to the role of CTE emerge when engaging with teacher audiences resistant to change.

### *Experience*

The **Experience** stage of secondment plays host to Nicholson's *Adjustment* and *Stabilisation* phases as well as signposting another *Preparation* phase. Behaviours characteristic of *Adjustment* prevail in adaptive efforts to bridge first and second-order practices. **Attachment losses** manifest when these CTEs question their true allegiance to the policies that they promote in the front-line setting. Job isolation is an **attachment loss** for some with reduced student engagement manifesting as a loss for post-primary teachers. Ongoing **attachment gains** relate to a collegial, reflective work culture, deepening system partnerships with continuing knowledge and skill building presenting as the richest gain of all.

*Stabilisation* typically presents in the third year of secondment to the PDST with **attachment gains** including the mastering of teacher educator competencies and being assigned leadership duties. The paradoxical tension between the transformational impact of secondment (**attachment gains**) and the limits of tenure conditions (**attachment losses**) ushers the seconded teachers into the *Preparation* phase of the next career cycle. For all study participants the greatest **detachment loss** of the secondment experience manifests in a premature and imposed departure from a job that satisfies all career anchors except that of job stability.

### *Exit*

The **Exit** stage entails the *Encounter* phase of a second career cycle. **Attachment losses** present as reduced collaborative cultures and learning opportunities irrespective of post-secondment destination. For those in non-school-based settings, these losses are offset by securing job permanence



while retaining **attachment gains** of flexibility and autonomy. Those reverting to their former classroom roles experience **attachment gains** in returning as wiser practitioners but the lack of job flexibility, classroom hurriedness and the micro politics of school culture, are perceived as **reattachment losses**. These losses are reduced for those returning to school in a new leadership capacity owing to retaining the career anchors of influence and power. A shared **attachment loss** of all participants regardless of destination work environment and one also reflected in the literature, is the underutilisation by colleagues of the knowledge and skills that participants had developed while on secondment.

### 9.2.2 Knowledge and learning

The extent to which knowledge acquisition, sharing and transfer happen for participants at all three stages of secondment, greatly influences their identity development, job satisfaction and key career choices.

#### *Entry*

Opportunities for deeper learning and knowledge acquisition with the PDST are key career drivers during the *Preparation* phase with primary and post-primary participants respectively seeking extended subject and pedagogical content knowledge. Commencing with a robust induction programme at *Encounter* those partaking in this study gain insights into a range of curriculum, policy and pedagogical practices while exposed to current thinking, research and developments. The steepest learning takes place as they navigate the 'trilogy' of teacher educator competences described in Chapter Four.

#### *Experience*

During the *Adjustment* phase there is extended knowledge and skill acquisition as these CTEs modify their first-order selves to fit the second-order role towards reaching proficiency at *Stabilisation*. They develop a host of communication, networking, managerial and leadership skills along with an understanding of wider system intricacies. Knowledge building and learning continue in both coordinated and organic settings, within specific teams and collaboratively across sectoral/disciplinary boundaries with independent learning undertaken by all. 'On the job' professional development occurs across a continuum of CPD formats with school-based work yielding the richest learning opportunities and a

deep understanding of school context. In line with pre-secondment aspirations, sectoral specific learning is evident for the primary CTEs (subject depth) and for the post-primary CTEs ( pedagogical depth) with the cross-sectoral make-up of the PDST facilitating a reciprocal appreciation and understanding of respective sectors. Systems of onsite observations by PDST management and follow up feedback facilitate reflection and individual learning goals. The composite impact of this learning and development builds confidence to pursue other permanent job opportunities rather than return to original school positions.

### *Exit*

The extent to which the knowledge and learning acquired while working with the PDST is harnessed post-secondment either by the participants themselves or by others, varies according to the work environment and position occupied. In all cases accrued content and pedagogical knowledge serve individual practice well. For those returning to class teaching, the hurried realities of classrooms and demands of curriculum coverage hinder pedagogical freedom with few opportunities to apply acquired expertise in organisational communication, conflict management and leadership skills which by contrast are liberally drawn upon by those in other destination roles. The post-primary teachers benefit from their enhanced subject and pedagogical knowledge base. For their primary counterparts, discrete work on PDST primary literacy or numeracy teams is advantageous if their post-secondment job entails these specialisms whereas this single curricular focus presents limitations for roles which involve the entire primary curriculum.

While the pace of school life and that of system reform reduces the ability of those returning to school to share their acquired knowledge and learning, cultural hegemonies at school level also inhibit such opportunities. Returning to school in an elevated leadership capacity affords greater freedom to share knowledge compared to that of class teacher where appearing as more informed peer risks perceived betrayal and isolation. In other destinations, resistance to the notion of sharing acquired knowledge has roots in cultures of palpable conservatism, competitiveness and egoism. In all but one destination there is a lack of proactivity to harness the acquired learning of former PDST staff with cultural undercurrents rendering expertise as largely unsolicited

unless for compliance purposes in schools or through clandestine measures in other institutions. Echoing previous secondment studies, there is a marked redundancy of the skills and knowledge that participants returning to a school had learned on secondment thereby directly challenging policy's assumption that this is where the learning will have its desired impact.

### **9.2.3 Identity**

Participants in this study experience identity tensions specific to the role of the CTE with third space tensions uniquely presenting at all three stages of secondment.

#### *Entry*

At *Preparation* a key motivator for these teachers when seeking a role with the PDST is a perceived gulf between their professional identities and the culture of their school locating them as 'other' among colleagues. Although the *Encounter* phase sees these identities fit well with PDST culture, it is typified by identity misalignment in grappling with the duality of becoming a second-order practitioner while relying on first-order identities to survive the transition from teacher to teacher educator. The role of the CTE amplifies hybrid identity tensions where working with seasoned teachers heightens the pressure to be 'all knowing sage', and where as front-line messengers of reform, they bear the brunt of resistant and disaffected teacher colleagues.

#### *Experience*

During *Adjustment*, third space identity challenges become more pronounced for the seconded teachers as loyalty tensions emerge between their private beliefs as teachers and their public purveyance of policy as CTEs. Their proximity to school realities during their work position them as valuable system negotiators between the needs of schools and the ideals of policymakers while developing the skill of critiquing policy without compromising loyalty to it. *Stabilisation* therefore is synonymous with the reconciliation of conflicting teacher/teacher educator identities where first-order identities are appropriately applied to the CTE role, and where a hybridic self-assuredness replaces previous binary tensions. *Stabilisation* heralds the transformative impact of secondment on participant professional identities which spawns an interest in

alternative career options while simultaneously amplifying a disconnection from school which is now considered to be an incompatible home for these new identities. Third space identity tensions resurface in politically maintaining a public face of teacher intending to return to school while the professional transformation sees their privately distancing from their school. Consequently *Stabilisation* as a teacher educator becomes ironically unsettling as they face an imposed return to school. In refusing other parties' control over their careers while conscious of their ability to secure positions elsewhere, these seconded teachers seek permanent job opportunities in the wider system while being driven by a contractual ticking clock and speculative angst rather than by the lure of brighter fields. Representing the most precarious of third space identity tensions reported by study participants, it explains (in line with the literature) why many teachers seconded to teacher education do not return to school.

### *Exit*

Further identity tensions emerge in transitioning to, and working in, the post-secondment setting where cultures do not invite or tolerate a spectrum of perspectives. For those participants resuming the role of peer class teacher, second-order identities formed on secondment remain largely concealed among unspoken norms that warn against the disruption of comfortable and settled school cultures. Contrastingly for others, returning to school in a leadership capacity supports the retention of newly formed identities.

### *9.2.3a Perceptions of the CTE*

Experiences of this study's participants illustrate some binary perceptions of teacher/teacher educator identities among the general teaching population and a limited understanding of who CTEs are and what they do. A combination of insularity in school cultures and misconceptions of both CPD's purpose and the CTE's role, lead some participants when choosing secondment, to feel viewed suspiciously by teacher colleagues some of whom perceive them as abandoning the teaching profession. Reflecting this myopia, these teachers on joining the PDST bring with them a transmissive and instructor driven view of the CTE role which perpetuates the tension of transitioning to teacher educator. Teacher audiences' expectations of ready-made solutions further demonstrate a prevailing reductionist view of CPD. Colleagues' reserved anticipation of the

teachers' return to school, frames them as a threat to habitual school norms. The underuse of their skills and selective harnessing of these for compliance and accountability purposes, is further evidence of limited understandings of what their secondment work actually involved.

### *9.2.3b Teachers seconded to teacher education: a 'certain kind of teacher'?*

Participant career choices and behaviours when entering, experiencing and exiting secondment suggest particular teacher typologies and related motivations. In reaching a watershed of professional identity construction, these teachers seek satisfaction in the career anchors of flexibility, autonomy and extended learning. In presenting as 'a certain kind of teacher' they can be isolated among colleagues. As Outsider Cosmopolitans (Gouldner, 1957) frustrated with cultural and experiential stasis, they are drawn to work environments of additional challenge where they can be more critically constructive and influential. As well as fulfilling their desired career anchors, the PDST offers a harbour of kindredness where their thirst for healthy dissonance and professional boundary expansion is slaked in a setting of likeminded collegiality. Their willingness and capacity to grow and adjust throughout their secondment, reflects their determination, resilience and self-directedness in navigating a complex career transition and a range of ongoing identity tensions. As the end of secondment signals a threat to the career anchors it satisfies, they demonstrate the agentic behaviours adopted when leaving their schools towards protecting their newly acquired identities. This time the added intention is to secure the vital anchor of job stability in career roles which also offer the trappings of other anchors absent in their former roles as class teachers.

### **9.2.4 Organisational culture and dynamics**

Organisational cultures, norms and dynamics impact on participant experiences at all stages of secondment, contributing to associated tensions and informing key career decisions.

#### *Entry*

During *Preparation*, participants in this research were partly motivated to pursue a career with the PDST as a result of habitual school cultures which hindered democratic values, extended thinking, collaboration and professional growth.

Some school cultures viewed these teachers with suspicion for seeking fulfilment in system positions believed to be elitist and removed from teaching. The decision to join the PDST is validated by an immediate sense of shared values and collegiality in a high challenge/high support environment where autonomy and trust are seen to be earned by a willingness to expand competence boundaries, embrace the discomfort of professional growth and contribute generously to the collective intelligence. PDST's culture of mentoring, critical reflection and professional feedback scaffolds their transition to the second-order setting evidencing some of the 'good weather' that Nicholson (1987) prescribes for this transition phase.

### *Experience*

This study shows that participants occupy a hazardous third space boundary in managing tensions between policy changes and school cultures resisting them. It also shows that policy dictating the annual sanctioning of secondments is a lever for cultural disturbance within the PDST as tenure uncertainty creates dynamics of internal distrust, high alert watchfulness of others and protective efforts to remain below the vocal parapet. Cultures of contagion are fed by in-team sharing of exit strategies while visible haemorrhaging of expertise and disruption of continuous turnover, disillusion people and dislodge professional relationships. Such upheaval features as a defining point of the secondment experience and for some participants it is the tipping point for departure.

### *Exit*

Participants' post-secondment transition is impacted by the value that destination cultures place on collaborative practices, the sharing of knowledge and what former PDST CTEs have to contribute. Static school cultures which drive teachers into secondment in the first place and which for those returning to school remain unchanged, confine learning acquired with the PDST to their individual classrooms with little evidence of the school wide benefits assumed by policy. This research indicates that anticipation of knowledge sharing on behalf of enthusiastic returnees is suppressed by tacit warnings not to disturb self-fulfilling assumptions and practices. The exception is where accountability and reform compliance prompt a harnessing of knowledge by way of necessity rather than recognition. School cultures are more receptive to the experience

and knowledge of those participants returning in a leadership capacity where positional status legitimises them to suggest change and exert influence. Although those transitioning to alternative post-secondment destinations enjoy flexibility and autonomous ways of working, in all but one setting, scarcity mentalities and competitive cultures adversely impact knowledge sharing and transfer which are at best conducted under the radar.

### **9.2.5 Secondment policy: the conclusive unifier**

The Irish secondment policy presents as a common denominator across all of the study's conclusions in relation to the reality of its rhetoric and the ensuing impact on study participants and the PDST as an organisation. Consequently this study reaches a number of specific conclusions in relation to the policy underpinning secondment arrangements to Irish CPD support services.

- Policy's stipulation of annual contractual renewal to a maximum of five years is at odds with the complexities of transitioning from teacher to teacher educator which is shown by this study and the literature to take at least three years (Gatherer and Edwards, 1988; Murray and Male, 2005). Teachers whose secondments are terminated before this point of stabilisation are unlikely to achieve full proficiency and those retained to this point have limited time left to execute it for the betterment of continuing teacher education. This study shows that role stabilisation in the context of time bound rules, creates career dilemmas for all its participants at year three when they are faced with an eventual return to school which they deem incompatible with their transformed identities and skills.
- Policy's assumption that these teachers return to their former roles in school and recycle their learning neglects to recognise the impact of secondment, thereby exposing the lack of defined career pathways towards strategically and meaningfully harnessing its transformative effects. Although this study shows policy's claim that "*Secondment can also be an important element of a teacher's continuing professional development*" (DES, 2018, p.4), to be evidently true, it eludes the legitimacy of secondment as a form of long-term career enhancement

where these participants in developing heightened career expectations, look to a future beyond the classroom. Annual employment arrangements dictated by all except the seconded teachers themselves, lead to premature departures from the PDST, unfinished business and a waste of their peak potential as CTEs. In the absence of suitable career paths that recognise and utilise their new knowledge and learning, these teachers simply pave their own ones.

- This research exposes policy's flawed supposition that the parent school accrues the benefits of the returning teacher's newly acquired knowledge and skills as the policy makes no provision for the practical and normative barriers and enablers that impact successful knowledge application, sharing and transfer within schools. Akin to cascade teacher training where a nominated teacher returns to school with unbridled enthusiasm for change, the participants of this research who return to school encounter an environment hindered not only by the structure of the school day and classroom demands, but by ambivalent and wary colleagues keen to maintain the comfort and the predictability of the status quo. The claimed 'trade off' for their school at best manifests where their knowledge is tapped purely for compliance. Where these returning teachers experience private wins at classroom level, they invariably default to previous practice while publicly moderating their transformed selves in an effort to reintegrate into school culture. This disheartening outcome also pertaining to other post-secondment destinations in this study, highlights secondment policy's failure to recognise the organisational or cultural practices that need to be in place for its rhetoric of knowledge diffusion to be a reality.
- This research shows a link between Irish policy's historical privileging of large-scale transmission CPD models which operate on a conveyor belt basis as national imperatives come and go, and secondment policy's equally defective revolving door of staff to deliver on them. It highlights how a lingering policy rooted in neoliberalism's preoccupation with deliverables, can amplify a myopia of CPD's purpose and the role of the CTE. Accordingly it shows how such a policy compromises the identity of



the CTE and the value of their work, both in its outdated view of teacher professional learning and in its equally outdated tenure conditions.

- The study presents the PDST as a key casualty of secondment policy's stipulation, in suffering relentless attrition, haemorrhaging of expertise, and loss of institutional memory while its internal heartbeat of human relations is annually derhythmised by contagious apprehension surrounding contract renewal. Despite having to respond to unparalleled growth in expectations and a radically changed lens for teacher professional learning, the human resource and contractual foundations of the organisation remain statically subject to annual staff secondment, further exacerbated by a stipulated maximum of five years, while unplanned departures of experienced personnel from the service frequently dismantle its infrastructure and inhibit internal planning and sustainable capacity building. The study also highlights the rules of secondment as disadvantaging the PDST in locating it as both a safe experimental ground for those seeking a job digression and a career stepping stone for others en route to other roles envisaged to feed undernourished career anchors. Equally by stealth, the PDST according to this research, serves as a breeding ground for other agencies and institutions who are attracted to the knowledge and expertise these teachers have gained. Therefore, an arrangement providing a professional springboard for those who are seconded and a preparatory school for other agencies, creates considerable disruption for the PDST which is dependent on the proficiency it creates to fulfil its ambitious and expanding remit.

### **9.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations arising from this study for policy and system consideration pertain firstly to the creation of career pathways for teachers seconded to continuing teacher education, and secondly to the professionalisation of CPD and the role of the CTE. Although specific in places to the Irish CPD context, many aspects of these recommendations are noteworthy for international teacher education and indeed for any occupational context operating under secondment conditions. The recommendations are

summarised here in Figure 9.3. which also suggests the bodies who might undertake them. **Note:** Where the PDST is referenced in this regard, the recommendation equally applies to any future iteration of support services.

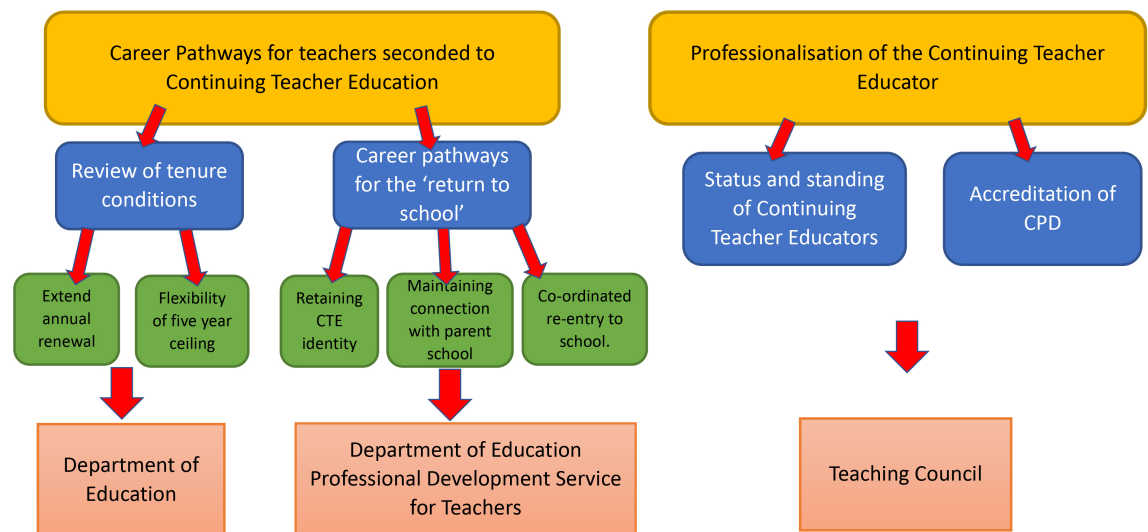


Figure 9.3: Study Recommendations

### 9.3.1 Career pathways for teachers seconded to continuing teacher education

Teachers who develop as CTEs while on secondment need defined career pathways which fully harness the wealth of skills they acquire and which complement their significantly changed professional identities. Given that studies link a lack of professional growth opportunities for classroom teachers with career stagnation and discontent (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Margolis and Deuel, 2009), Robinson, Munn and MacDonald posit that “*Secondments might refresh teachers and prevent them from leaving the profession permanently*” (1992, p.33). However this study supported by the literature (inter alia McMichael, Draper and Gatherer, 1992; Tuohy and Lodge, 2003; Costley *et al.*, 2007), shows that secondments to teacher education in fact lead teachers away from teaching owing to the career anchors that teaching lacks and its limited opportunities for career progression. Whereby there is an argument for career pathways within continuing teacher education, options should equally exist for pathways within school. Suggestions for both are outlined next in 9.3.1a and 9.3.1b.

### *9.3.1a Career pathways within continuing teacher education*

Career pathways in the CTE secondment setting require tenure conditions to be addressed in relation to i) annual renewal and ii) ceilings on successive secondments.

- i) Longer term secondment renewal beyond an annual arrangement is needed to eliminate the yearly uncertainty and tension that results in premature exits from teacher education providers such as the PDST. In the Irish context, a contractual agreement entered into by the DE, the teacher and their school committing to a minimum of five years secondment subject to annual satisfactory performance and willingness to remain in the role, would give greater stability to seconded teachers. This is also in line with PDST's current CPD frameworks which now map out three to five year sustained supports for schools signaling a significant departure from what were once short term and finite 'roll-outs'. This not alone attaches CTEs with a longitudinal role commensurate with work continuity and closure, but it allows providers like the PDST to succession plan more effectively and to retain valuable expertise. Furthermore, the broader skills and competency base of modern curricula mean that CTEs increasingly operate as multidisciplinary teacher educators with diverse pedagogical, digital and leadership aptitudes which are transferable to several CPD priorities, thereby further legitimising a minimum five-year term.
  
- ii) There is also a need to reconcile arbitrary ceilings of successive secondments (five years in Ireland) with the time required to reach proficiency as a teacher educator while allowing sufficient time thereafter to execute and contribute optimally to the role. Although i) above argues for a five-year term, there is a marked difference between stipulating a minimum of five years and a maximum of five years. Recent Irish policy allowances for yearly case-by-case concessions to retain some expertise beyond the five-year threshold, offer some flexibility. However, in serving merely as a reactive annual response with a stipulation that only 20% of those in the five-year plus category can be

derogated, this interim safety valve has not eradicated the problem of tenure uncertainty and resultant attrition. This could be alleviated by an additional option for secondments to be reviewed after the first five-year minimum term and open to renewal for a further three to five years if the expertise is still required and if service is satisfactory. This would afford seconded teachers at least an additional three years to practise optimally as teacher educators at *Stabilisation* where their transformed identities can be harnessed in a job in which they want to remain while also giving the PDST a return for investing in their development. The extended time would also provide opportunities for them to advance to management positions in the PDST.

Taken together, i) and ii) suggest options for secondments of between eight and ten years. Maintaining secondment as a model allows for system flexibility but a fixed minimum tenure with scope for extension, sets out a more stable career path for teachers who will otherwise (and reluctantly so) seek that stability elsewhere. Forecasting a longer-term contribution and a realisation of their potential as CTEs, would significantly incentivise skilled CTEs to stay in the job for longer. The retention of such highly developed expertise can only benefit the provision of quality CPD for the profession and in PDST's case, it would strengthen the current staffing infrastructure. This particular recommendation could be considered by the TES of the DE who manage and sanction secondments in line with the current secondment policy.

### *9.3.1b Career pathways for the 'return to school'*

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) warn of the risk attached to allowing good teachers eager for new learning and opportunities to stagnate in their current roles. This study and its predecessors have shown that secondment to teacher education addresses this problem for many. But secondment schemes do not address the fundamental issues that take teachers away from their schools in the first place or that discourage them from returning. Notwithstanding the big questions of school culture, identity incompatibilities and narrow career opportunities which this study and previous ones show as key reasons for avoiding a return to school, there are steps which could be made to reduce the impact of these on teachers returning from secondment towards rendering the reverse transition

more seamless and attractive. Despite much evidence to the contrary, there **is** scope to 'go home' but only " ...*with the realisation that [the teacher] and others have changed...and that this change must be addressed before anyone can move forward*" (Scherff and Kaplan, 2006, p.165). Redundancy of new skills and disconnection from the school community feature as concerns for teachers anticipating the return, and therefore present as priority areas needing attention.

Avenues for exploration here are

- i) retaining the CTE identity on return to school
- ii) maintaining connection with the school while on secondment
- iii) a co-ordinated re-entry to school.

#### *i) Retaining CTE identity on return*

The underutilisation of teachers' knowledge and skills on return to school and especially the classroom, seriously challenges the rationale of secondment policy but fundamentally it represents a worrying waste of talent and expertise that stands to greatly benefit the school and its learners. Further, it perpetuates the notion that returning teachers essentially shed their teacher educator identity and associated skills. Evidence in this study and in the literature (Davey, 2013; Jordan, Hawley and Washel, 2016) which favours teacher educators retaining their teacher identities as hybrid professionals, is equally applicable to returning teachers in retaining aspects of their teacher educator role. A career path within school can be created that is distinct, but in the interests of inclusivity it needs to be embedded within a leadership context which as this study has also shown, helps to legitimise being an initiator of change when one returns to school. Behaving as an incentive to return, teachers are assured some continuity in a role which satisfied their motivations and values as professionals. At the same time, it recognises a key characteristic common amongst these teachers who before ever applying for a secondment, had craved the chance to support improvement in their own schools beyond their own classrooms and who sought ways to enhance pedagogical practice not just for themselves, but for their colleagues. The notion of teacher leadership within the broader discourse of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006), has gained significant traction in recent times (Cheung *et al.*, 2018; Berry, 2019; Nguyen, Harris and Ng, 2020). Whereby it can be assumed as part of a formal

role (i.e. special duties post), teacher leadership can exist without the need for designated hierarchies (Mujis and Harris, 2003, 2006). Nevertheless, as part of the secondment arrangement and prior to the teacher's release, it needs to be formally agreed that on return, the skills and strengths developed during secondment will be recognised and incorporated into an appropriate list of duties. While acknowledging that such duties "...require time in their workloads if teacher leadership [is] to be a reality" (Mujis and Harris, 2006, p.243), issues relating to remuneration could be offset by affording the teacher release time while bearing in mind the considerable level of professional development accrued to them during the secondment. For the school, this facilitates a strategic approach to internal capacity-building while also presenting as a return for a school generously releasing the teacher for such a valuable career opportunity. The terms to be agreed here in having contractual implications would be a matter for the TES and potentially the Terms and Conditions section of the DE to address.

#### *ii) Maintaining connections with school*

The gulf that develops between the school and the seconded teachers while they are seconded is not helped by diminishing connections with parent schools with principals in Tuohy and Lodge's research reporting seconded teachers to be "...almost out of sight, out of mind" (2003, p.63). This study also captures the discomfort and awkwardness that PDST staff feel when visiting their schools or when casually meeting their school colleagues. A formal system of ongoing contact with the school would help maintain connection and facilitate mechanisms for the school to benefit from the teacher's learning during their secondment. Sutherland and Sloan (1990) in finding that 30% of secondees rarely or never visited their school owing to feeling removed from staff, discuss the advantages of ongoing contact with parent schools in order that eventual return is smoother for all concerned. Autonomous secondment schedules could facilitate seconded teachers to return to their school fortnightly or monthly to work with teachers and put their new skills into practice in natural settings. For primary teachers seconded to the PDST, it would help lessen their distance from the broader primary curriculum which this study has shown to be an issue resulting from belonging to literacy or numeracy specialist teams. Resembling the work of the PDST's part-time associates but in reverse, periodic work in the

school ensures that the teacher stays connected and allows the school to benefit in real time from the seconded teacher's learning while also gaining an appreciation of what they do as teacher educators. It also locates the seconded teacher and the school as co-learners thus reducing the perception of the former returning after a long absence as all-knowing ideological evangelist. Again this recommendation could be undertaken by the TES which oversees the contractual conditions of secondees. It would be prudent that such an arrangement is set out clearly in both the advisor job description and the documentation issued to the school for approving the release of the teacher. The PDST could assume responsibility for the internal operational aspects as well as monitoring the value of this arrangement to both the school and the advisor's professional development from an accountability perspective.

### *iii) Co-ordinated re-entry to school*

This study shows that the induction support provided for teachers when first working with the PDST proved enormously helpful to them in making a difficult career transition. Appreciating that the *Encounter* phase of the second career cycle proved to be less traumatic, the concept of Anticipatory Socialisation (Merton, 1957) referenced in the literature for beginning teacher educators, is also evident in seconded teachers' concerns about refitting into school culture. There is a role here for the PDST or similar services in providing segue exit supports. These could include a series of visits to the school towards the end of the secondment where the teacher has an opportunity to be part of forward planning and also to engage in professional conversations with leaders in their schools about their secondment experience and how they believe they could contribute to the school at this time. This would be greatly enhanced by the presentation of the professional portfolio which PDST staff for instance are obliged to maintain throughout their secondment for reflective learning and development purposes. The portfolio could be accompanied by a report from the service outlining the returning teacher's accomplishments while on secondment and how their strengths could be harnessed by the school.

The PDST or equivalent support service could also provide re-entry guidance for the returning teacher's own orientations when reintegrating into the school and its culture could also be considered. Key to this is the use of appropriate

social positioning and language that respects the existing school culture and the fact that colleagues have not shared the secondment journey. Brookfield (2017) offers simple but effective ways for teachers in similar positions to avoid “cultural suicide” by expressing interest in where the school is at, affirming progress made and seeking out some early adopters ready to entertain new ideas. Above all he highlights the importance of returning teachers “*Grounding critical reflection in a description of the shortcoming of [their] own practice...*” (2017, p.234) in a way that “...*heartens others rather than intimidates*” (ibid.).

### *9.3.1c Next steps*

In the Irish context, plans that are actively afoot in the DE to “*Develop a strategic programme of priority actions for the establishment of a single integrated Teacher Education support service project over the next three years*” (TES, 2021, p.2), proffer a fresh and opportune platform for all relevant sections of the DE involved in this project to review secondment policy to reflect the changes required in its terms and for considering recommendations such as those set out above. Secondment policy overhaul is ideally placed to create career paths which meaningfully harness the skills and expertise acquired while also leading to subsequent destinations where transformed identities can live and thrive. Such a review could potentially serve as a model for other jurisdictions experiencing the secondment related challenges raised by this study and others. There is also a broader issue of career pathways for the teaching profession which highlights the potential of the *Cosán* the Teaching Council’s framework for teacher learning. This is elaborated upon below in Section 9.3.2a.

### **9.3.2 Professionalisation of the CTE**

Mayer and Mills (2021, p.46) contend that “*Teacher education policy reflects idealised neoliberal notions of teacher professionalism*” in their assessment of pre-service teacher education professionalism as being concerned with “...*the production of graduates who are classroom ready at the point of graduation*” (ibid., p.52). An equivalent at CPD level is the large-scale marshalling of CPD remedies which according to Hargreaves “...*treat teachers using injections to pep them up, calm them down, or ease their pain*” (1994, p.430). Neoliberal education reforms after all rely heavily on teachers changing or improving what



they do in order that market-driven standards and success indicators are reached. Accordingly, the work of CTEs is de-professionalised by simplistic forms of viewing their work through the sole lens of reform and in considering their impact according to 'what works' while taking no account of context (Helgetun and Menter, 2020). This study has highlighted the lack of recognition in the literature and across the profession for the identity and work of the CTE and more specifically those who are seconded to the role. According to Swennen, Volman and van Essen the "...*professionalization of teacher education enables individual teacher educators to develop identities functioning as 'tools' that open up new possibilities for agency*" (2008, p.182). This study clearly shows however that any agency arising from developing an identity as a CTE is mobilised not from professionalisation of the role, but rather incidentally by 'passing through' the role en route to one that **is** professionalised. This research has also unearthed the complex career transitions and associated tensions that characterise that route. In the world of teacher education, CTEs stand apart as guiding established teachers through change and career long professional growth. Further, as key players straddling the policy/practice boundary, they are positioned as valuable informers and influencers of both policy enactment and construction. Such a unique contribution calls for professionalisation of their role while clarifying for all what they actually do as is the case for pre-service teacher educators, who, in having formal accreditation powers and research remits, are more identifiable and arguably enjoy greater status.

### *9.3.2a Next steps*

From its outset this study has highlighted the necessity to define the work and identity of CTEs and its findings further validate this concern. Swennen and Van der Klink (2009) contend that teacher educators should proactively assert to policy and stakeholders the need for their professionalism to be recognised and accordingly, promote the creation of shared language and quality frameworks that emphasise their value to the system, clarify their role and how that role is evaluated. But without a definition for the CTE, it is difficult for such artefacts to be developed. If "*Knowledge is produced by the people who need it to solve a practical problem of their own*" (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994, p.3), then CTEs themselves are best placed to arrive at a definition and to craft such artefacts in

the context of active international exchange networks such as the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE), Teacher Academies operating under the Erasmus Programme or indeed the InFo-TED consortium described in Chapter Two. These peer networks in providing spaces for knowledge development and construction, could facilitate communities of CTEs to conceptualise appropriate frameworks and arrive at a shared narrative which makes their work visible in occupying a distinct space on the teacher education continuum. Proposals in this regard could be submitted to the TES who have to date been very supportive of such international partnerships with their services.

The findings of this study suggest that the identity construction and professional status of CTEs in Ireland is further hindered by the tenure instability of secondment and misunderstandings about their role both of which are connected to reductive worldviews of CPD, which notably in this jurisdiction remains an elective endeavour with no accreditation. Revisiting Chapter Two's reference to the Teaching Council and its role in accreditation, there is incentive here to mobilise the implementation of Section 39 (2c) of the Teaching Council Act where it "...will have the statutory power to accredit programmes relating to the continuing education and training of teachers" (Government of Ireland, 2001, p.26). Firstly the accreditation of CPD raises its currency and speaks to Irish teachers' view of accreditation as giving value to time invested (The Teaching Council, 2016). A word of caution here pertains to the premium afforded to the end product as opposed to the process of learning which in turn requires cultures and attitudes towards learning in schools to be addressed. There are possibilities here for formative portfolio solutions (Strudler and Wetzel, 2005; Lawson, Nestel and Jolly, 2004) which are promoted in the Teaching Council's *Cosán* framework for teacher learning in its privileging of reflective practice. Secondly and appreciating the need for quality assurance as a prerequisite, the accreditation of CPD enhances the professional status of CTEs who design and facilitate it. This in turn presents an opportunity to recognise their work and learning efforts. The developmental phase of consultation for *Cosán* currently invites teachers to apply the framework in their particular context. It would appear logical that CTEs as registered members of the profession would do likewise in their unique work context. An examination of the framework which can be viewed in Appendix I, shows that the six types of

recognised learning processes<sup>21</sup> for which accreditation will apply, mirror those of teachers seconded to the PDST with one of these “Immersive Learning” defined as “*Availing of a secondment opportunity with a teacher education provider, support service, etc*” (The Teaching Council, 2016, p.17). Further, the six key learning areas<sup>22</sup> identified for teachers in the *Cosán* framework directly reflect priority work of the PDST and most relevantly include “Supporting Teachers’ Learning”. Portfolio-based solutions are equally applicable to the specific work of teacher educators and as outlined above, this practice is already in train for all PDST CTEs who engage in reflection using digital tools. This formative approach is compatible with *Cosán*’s privileging of reflective practice for all registered teachers but it is also congruent with wider calls for teacher educator professionalism to honour the complex, contextual and often paradoxical nature of the role (Mayer and Mills, 2021) and which reject the prescriptive orientation of codified standards given their tendency to “... *frame and treat teacher educator professionalism as a technical attribute that is acquired, possessed and performed* (Vanassche *et al.*, 2021 citing Vanassche and Berry, 2019).

There is another caution to be observed where formally recognising the work of CTEs potentially insulates them from their teacher colleagues. After all, key to the success of CTEs in the PDST is their relatability and the trust they engender with the profession. In this respect it is helpful that the *Cosán* framework explicitly takes account of teacher varying career patterns and priorities. In recognising the value of sabbaticals and secondments as professional learning avenues it clearly acknowledges that “*The teaching profession is not a homogeneous group*” (2016, p.7). This broad and inclusive position allows for a formal framing and recognition of the CTE’s role while protecting their belonging to the wider profession. Finally as noted in Chapter One, the above-mentioned plans to integrate the PDST with other services, cite the implementation of *Cosán* as central to progressing them, thus signalling a powerful policy synergy to drive the professionalisation of CPD and the role of the CTE simultaneously.

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<sup>21</sup> Mentoring and Coaching, Reading and Professional Contributions, Practice and Collaboration, Immersive Professional Activities, Research, Courses, Programmes and Workshops

<sup>22</sup> Literacy and Numeracy, ICT, Wellbeing, Leading Learning, Inclusion, Supporting Teachers’ Learning

## **9.4 Significance and contribution of the study**

This study contributes to existing research in addressing a number of gaps in the field of teacher education. Moreover in being the first study to focus specifically on CTEs seconded to a national cross-sectoral Irish support service at a point in time when a restrictive tenure policy reigned supreme and when the country's CPD was at peak provision, it emerges as a seminal piece of research. Its significance extends however to the wider Irish and international policy setting and its position on CPD, schools as professional environments, teacher career satisfaction, and also research into career transitions generally.

### **9.4.1 Addressing the gaps in research**

This study sought to address the considerable lack of attention in the research to the work and professional learning of teachers seconded to work as CTEs. In doing so it has added substantially to what is already known in the field of teacher education about transitioning from teacher to teacher educator, the knowledge and skills teacher educators acquire and the complex identity dimensions of their role. By giving due profile to the CTE however, it has yielded a wealth of fresh findings about working with established teachers and school cultures, thereby unveiling the enabling and relatable approaches required to assist teachers interpret, make meaning of, and implement change. Crucially this research has extended an understanding of CTE's work beyond the sole realm of system reform to its immersion in school context and the complex process of career-long teacher professional growth. In particular, it has shown how a myriad of hybrid identity implications play out for the CTE with the invaluable role they play as conduits between policy and practice being of chief import in this regard

As the location for this study, the PDST as a seconding body has not alone enabled contemporary and rich insights into CPD provision in Ireland today and the work of those leading it, but it has provided a context for extending the narrative into teacher career cycles and transitions. The study's in-depth treatment of secondment in this regard has unearthed the transformational impact of what is intended as a temporary career route and its far-reaching effects on career aspirations and agency. Its focus on the professional learning of teachers during their secondment as CTEs, has revealed the skills and

knowledge base acquired but unlike previous studies it has uncovered **how** this happens in diverse learning settings both within PDST's cross-sectoral interdisciplinary environment and certain CPD settings which best serve the very specific learning needs of the CTE. Given the widespread evidence that induction and professional development has been found wanting in teacher education institutions, the study has highlighted effective induction practices and the kind of ongoing learning provision required specifically for CTEs to successfully carry out their work. Additionally where previous research (Murray and Male, 2005) indicates **when** teacher educators reach proficiency in the role (three years), this is the first study to identify a number of defining features associated with reaching that proficiency and career stabilisation in the role. Such data inform what should comprise professional development for teacher educators across the continuum.

This study has uniquely highlighted the specific knowledge base and professional learning needs of primary and post-primary teachers. Articulated hopes by participants that secondment will further develop subject depth (for primary) and pedagogical breadth (for post-primary), indicates the knowledge privileged within each sector and if a greater subject/pedagogical balance is needed. Although the study shows how working in a cross-sectoral organisation that facilitates reciprocal learning can address that balance, it also raises issues about how PDST's single subject remit of its primary sector teams disconnects them from the broader curriculum which for some has legacy career implications.

In targeting the post-secondment period, the study has provided new insights into the understudied reverse transition from teacher educator to class teacher as well as contributing an entirely new body of knowledge about transitioning into alternative roles in the education system. Of key value to the broader research is its attention to the experience of those seconded teachers who did not return to their original roles in classrooms and who secured other positions. By indicating that conditions in these other roles more readily allow the transfer of skills, the study lays bare the limitations of the class teacher role in this regard. Indeed the lens of secondment to the PDST has brought into focus what teachers find motivating and fulfilling in their work and how experiencing more

of this this during secondment than heretofore at school, colours their perspectives of their former classroom roles and future career ambitions. Crucially in this regard, the study identifies the absence of career routes for teachers who in acquiring expertise and skills for a role that is essentially finite, anticipate and/or discover them to be redundant or untapped by others in post-secondment destinations.

#### **9.4.2 Secondment policy**

A key contribution of this study lies in its challenging of the policy assumptions upon which secondment tenure to Irish teacher education support services are founded. While the study's contextual backdrop openly acknowledged these assumptions and the research itself did not set out to question them, it has shown the policy to be fundamentally flawed in blindsiding key concepts; modern CPD developments and expectations, the complexity of becoming a teacher educator, the impact that secondment has on teacher identity and career decisions, and critically, the factors that enable or hinder knowledge sharing in schools. This policy has been the hegemonic model in Ireland since the early 1990s when secondment to support services was a new concept operating in a relatively linear and uncomplicated educational landscape. Almost 30 years later, the composite picture of unprecedented reform, the demands of a changing profession, the resultant need for transformative CPD models and the necessary investment in PDST team development, stand against a backdrop of increasingly rigid tenure conditions. This exposes a stark discrepancy between contracting tenures and the expanding role of a modern support service leading out on the broadest CPD remit in the history of the state. Accordingly the study clearly shows the application of a crude five-year ceiling on secondment and the non-committal nature of annual sanctioning as no longer serving the needs of long-term CPD frameworks, sustained learning for teachers or the realities of developing and operating optimally as a CTE. Statistics quoted at the outset of this thesis showing PDST staff attrition of 65% within three/four years of their secondment with 85% of this cohort leaving before or at the third year, resonate strongly with this study's discovery of year three as the proverbial 'turning point' of this career experience. It is also notable that the review of the literature reveals that secondment to teacher education in other jurisdictions does not extend beyond three years. In showing the limitations

associated with a timespan of five years which by comparison is relatively generous, this study has relevance for secondment arrangements in other teacher education systems and indeed in other occupations. Finally given that Irish policy's rationale for tenure restrictions is rooted entirely in knowledge sharing when teachers return to school, the evidence presented in this study that this happens on a very limited basis both in schools and in other post-secondment settings cannot be ignored. In debunking the very myth on which policy's tenure stipulations are based, this study's call for such conditions to be reviewed is profoundly significant.

#### **9.4.3 What is it about schools?**

While completely recognising the impact of successive reforms in recent times and the pressures points that these have created for schools, this research prompts some questions about how schools serve as professional learning, knowledge sharing and career enhancing environments. In making parallels with the only comparable Irish research published to date (Tuohy and Lodge, 2003), these findings 17 years later suggest that despite seismic changes in education and in the profession, issues relating to the inhibitive power of culture persist in schools with implications for knowledge sharing and construction, teacher professional identity development, basic work satisfaction and willingness to stay in the job. Firstly in highlighting the underutilisation of the knowledge and experience of professionals who if facilitated to do so, are positioned to make an enormous contribution to both teacher and student learning experiences, the study has provoked deep questions about knowledge generation in schools and arguably in the wider education arena. In showing how public declaration or sharing of knowledge is subdued by normative cultures of stasis and politeness, it sheds a light on the micropolitics involved in using /accessing knowledge, the positions/agendas that legitimise its diffusion and accordingly how one needs to behave in order to be accepted and belong. Secondly in illustrating the link between mid-career change, the secondment of teachers and the absence of vital career anchors at school, this study prompts collateral learning about how working in a school (and even more specifically the classroom), can impact teacher career satisfaction. Notwithstanding the above argument for alternative career paths, the study equally asks what is needed in schools for ambition to thrive and for a teacher to have permission to

be one's "possible future self" (Markus and Nurius, 1986) in the school environment rather than seeking it elsewhere. In bringing attention to this the study highlights the potential that expanded leadership roles in school have, not alone in harnessing the capacities of those eager to share them, but in retaining good teachers in schools.

#### **9.4.4 A systemic reconceptualisation of CPD**

The study's broader contribution to the system lies in its unification of big ideas such as effective CPD provision, recognition of the professionals charged with it and the concept of knowledge creation within schools and in the wider education world. In challenging the progression of Irish secondment policy since it was first established, the study points to a long overdue scrutiny of current policy towards a reconceptualised view of CPD, its true purpose beyond reform and its place within schools as learning communities where cultures of reflection and productive disturbance are valued. Core to this is a rethink of current consumable attitudes towards CPD and the equally consumable treatment of the CTE. This study clearly indicates how the policy governing the secondment of teachers to CPD support services continues to serve neoliberal policy imperatives where wholesale CPD provision is attached to finite 'deliverables'. Accordingly, the role of the CPD teacher educator is considered a temporary cloak to be shed on return to school and as such has little bearing on knowledge building post-secondment. Teacher education discourse has long emphasised CPD as a process, not an event (Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 1987; Guskey and Yoon, 2009) with change happening over time (Guskey, 2002; Elmore, 2004). This in turn finds expression in the need to retain for longer those charged with leading that change given the time required for them to master the role and to optimally realise what they are seconded to do. Whereby at its outset, this study could only speculate its significance for two high level policy developments in the Irish system, its findings and conclusions now present tangible and authentic possibilities for both of these with respect to secondment policy, the professionalism of CTE's and formal recognition of CPD undertaken by teachers.



#### **9.4.5 Transferable frameworks**

This study has been well served and strengthened by the structural and logical solidity of its theoretical framework. I believe this framework to be transferable to studies of other career disciplines as it is sufficiently agile to facilitate the mapping of most career experiences onto the concept of career transition while embracing a second career cycle. Its complimentary blend of Nicholson's (1987) and Kelly's (1980) models allows for the breadth of transitional phases to be explored in concert with the depth of tensions between career gains and losses. Further, the framework operates within a unique research design which presents a new concentric model for data analysis connecting the theories of key thinkers in the field (Hyde, 2000, Berkerley, 2014, Braun and Clarke, 2019). In legitimising the interplay of deductive and inductive approaches, the research design would be of use to others wishing to combine both philosophies without compromising the integrity of a qualitative study.

#### **9.5 Study limitations**

A number of limitations of this study are recognised with some signalling opportunities for future research.

- There are limitations in relation to the study's sample size. Chapter Five outlines this study's transparency in targeting a purposive sample in the interests of capturing accurate data from those best positioned to provide it. Consequently and in line with the hallmarks of STI described in Chapter Three, the study is knowingly non-probable and does not claim its findings to be generalisable although it should be noted that many of its findings are supported by previous similar studies. Furthermore Chapter Five details the rigour and attention invested in ensuring optimal sample trustworthiness of the sample regarding its 'information power' (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2015) as well as referencing widespread support for the richness of data over its reach (inter alia Morrow, 2005, Patton, 2015). As also explained in Chapter Five in order to learn about an understudied and complex phenomenon such as that investigated in this study, it was considered necessary to examine how they manifest in local contexts in-depth before advancing to more informed global inquiries. In that regard further quantitative research with

a larger sample could be conducted where the direction of inquiry is informed by the findings of this qualitative study.

- Limitations in relation to the authenticity of retrospective interviewing as a data collection tool are acknowledged whereby memory of past events can be affected by the elapse of time (Keightley, Pickering and Allett, 2012). In this case however the research question demanded that accounts be retrospective in order for the entire secondment experience to be explored while allowing for sufficient time to be spent in post-secondment work. Chapter Five details efforts made to maximise authenticity of historic accounts through the interview environment created, the content of questions and the manner in which they were asked.
- The limitations associated with researcher positionality are noted in that participants are former members of the PDST of which I am Director. Chapter Five has noted the risks associated with my insider status and comprehensively outlines the steps taken to mitigate against these.
- This study investigated the impact of secondment solely from the perspectives of the seconded teachers. However as the policy context shows, there are other parties involved. For example, principals of schools from which teachers were seconded reported a loss of talented teachers (Costley *et al.*, 2007), a finding supported by Tuohy and Lodge who also concluded that the parent school is “...*a largely excluded partner in the secondment process*” (2003, p.v) despite the unsettlement secondment created locally. Sugrue (2011) in referencing the same disruption, raises the case of the teacher replacing the seconded staff member and the career uncertainty to which they are subject. There would be value in further research inviting the viewpoints of these other stakeholders implicated by secondment to support services.
- The PDST is the largest of the DE support services but it is by no means the only one with separate services for Junior Cycle reform (JCT) and teacher induction supports (NIPT). This study’s findings are therefore limited to the remit of its staff of the PDST and its target audience.
- For reasons of data consistency and trustworthiness, this study specifically selected only those occupying an advisor role in the PDST and who were seconded from class teacher roles. Further studies

involving members of PDST management or school principals seconded to the PDST would no doubt yield alternative insights and findings.

### 9.6 Future studies

In addition to further studies arising from the study's limitations, this research prompts avenues for inquiry into key areas that it has raised but that are beyond its scope. Not least of these is the need for professional learning and knowledge generation within schools to be better understood. The study's evidence that the learning acquired on secondment is not optimally harnessed in school brings to mind Eraut's (1994) contention that it is not merely the type of professional knowledge and skills acquired that is important, but the context through which they are acquired and subsequently used, that helps us to understand the nature of that knowledge and how this is embedded. While appreciating widely documented factors such as school leadership, culture, teacher self-efficacy and willingness to experiment, Sun *et al.* (2013), demonstrate that learning acquired by individual teachers who avail of external professional experiences **can** diffuse at school level with Angelucci and DiMaro (2010) providing similar evidence of 'spillover' effects where teachers willingly and successfully interact with colleagues who have fresh knowledge and experience to offer. Using such research as a basis, longitudinal studies which specifically target 'the return to school' and thereafter, would facilitate deeper insight into the contextual enablers and barriers impacting on the transfer and sharing of expertise acquired by teachers externally that have potential for positive change internally.

Not to exclude the case for alternative education environments addressed in this study while maintaining the focus on schools, the notion of **adaptive capacity** in the broader organisational development arena (Staber and Sydow, 2002) has gained currency in education circles (Smith and Starmer, 2017) where Timperley (2011, p.6) describes it as an organisation's ability to continually learn by being "...*aware of the assumptions underpinning [its] collective practice so [it] knows when they are helpful and when to question them and, if necessary, when to let them go*" A number of conceptual frameworks and rubrics developed for adaptive capacity in the education sector (Yoon *et al.*, 2015; De Arment *et al.*, 2013) could be used in future studies to

investigate its potential for extending the expertise of individuals to the wider staff in schools or in other educational settings. There is also opportunity in this regard to explore models of **expansive learning** which Chapter Four briefly references in relation to the learning of pre-service teacher educators. Defined as “*Actions conducted by individuals through the division of labor to move practice toward an object for collective and societal activities*”(Engeström,1987), expansive learning forms “*a safe place /third space*” or “*edge environment*” for professional learning (Rust and Berry, 2019, p.2) while fostering transformative agency (Engeström and Sannino, 2016). Indeed both **adaptive capacity** and **expansive learning** are dynamic processes which embrace ambiguity and complexity acknowledged by this study and the literature (Axelrod and Cohen, 2000; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011) as vital to the navigation and construction of third spaces. Furthermore both bear the core hallmarks of effective learning environments as identified by OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (Dumont *et al.*, 2010) and by long recognised proponents of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Putman and Borko, 2000).

Chapter Four acknowledged an emerging group of school-based teacher educators who work between schools and universities. A similar model exists in Irish CPD support services where teachers are employed as part-time associates and are released from school for up to 20 days per year. Positioned by policy as supplementary capacity as opposed to intentional hybrid CTEs, and acknowledging the constraints of their release and reduced immersion in the role of CTE, an exploration of their experience in straddling the third space boundary while working as practising classroom teachers (as opposed to practising teacher educators), would yield perspectives from a very different yet related angle. It is also likely that their experiences may mirror those of practising teachers who facilitate student teachers during school placements or who act as mentors during the induction phase, signalling cross cutting learning opportunities across the teacher education continuum.

## 9.7 Personal reflection and final remarks

This study has chronicled a career experience characterised by tensions and transitions punctuated with third space identity dilemmas. Throughout this professional doctorate journey I have met with my own tensions and transitions. I have grappled with that third space between my identity as a researcher and that of PDST Director, the latter bringing with it a pre-existing baggage of protective bias towards, and an emotional connection to, the organisation. I have articulated throughout Chapter Five, an acute consciousness of my insider status where my personal biography and ideologies have stared into the eye of an interpretivist study. I cannot deny that occupying this role during incessant phases of staff attrition and expertise, has been analogous at times to the Sisyphean task of pushing uphill the growing boulders of staff induction and development, all the while alert to a pervasive policy mandate that tips them back down the other side. Frustration with policy's strategic and financial sense aside, the deeper losses I have experienced are the reluctant departure of colleagues who had great fidelity to the organisation and who had so much more to offer it. There is a recurring sense of disappointment that comes with the continuous exodus of talented people and a reminder of how this organisation could truly operate in the absence of policy's current stronghold. There is little solace either in learning through this study how such a policy leads collegiate and candid demeanours to be replaced by limbic watchfulness of others and competitive cultures that hurt internal team equilibrium and relations.

The story of PDST at times is one of a vulnerable ship holding its course amidst policy conditions that have threatened more than once to submerge it. But it has remained resolutely afloat while surfing some tumultuous waves and to take a philosophical view in the words of Gide "*One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore*". Nevertheless its survival of choppy waters is in no small way due to the dynamic, innovative and progressive crew of seconded teachers who steer this vessel with me towards honouring its mission to be a trusted and responsive service provider of teacher learning opportunities. After all this story has not been about the PDST, it has been about the group of professionals whose identity and work has for too long gone unrecognised at scholarly and system levels. They come to teacher education

as teachers committed to their craft but the demand to be 'more than just good teachers' often renders them as professional outsiders locked in a manifold role which arguably compounds the difficulty of their securing an identity. Their story is one of resilience in tolerating multiple identities, belonging fully to neither school nor support service, dealing with misconceptions of who they are and what they do, all while inhabiting a myriad of boundary spaces which are paradoxically hazardous yet vital to carrying out their role of CTE effectively and with confidence. Their story is one of career vulnerability where stabilisation in a job they love takes on shades of contradictory and unsettling doubt at the hands of a policy mandate that gives all but themselves control over their destinies. Ultimately though I choose to view their story as one of privileged learning, empowering transformation and personal agency. In committing that story, its transitions and tensions, its gains and losses, to this thesis, it is my hope that due profile and voice has been given to this unique group while inviting an appreciation of the complex career journey they undertake and their enormous contribution to the system.

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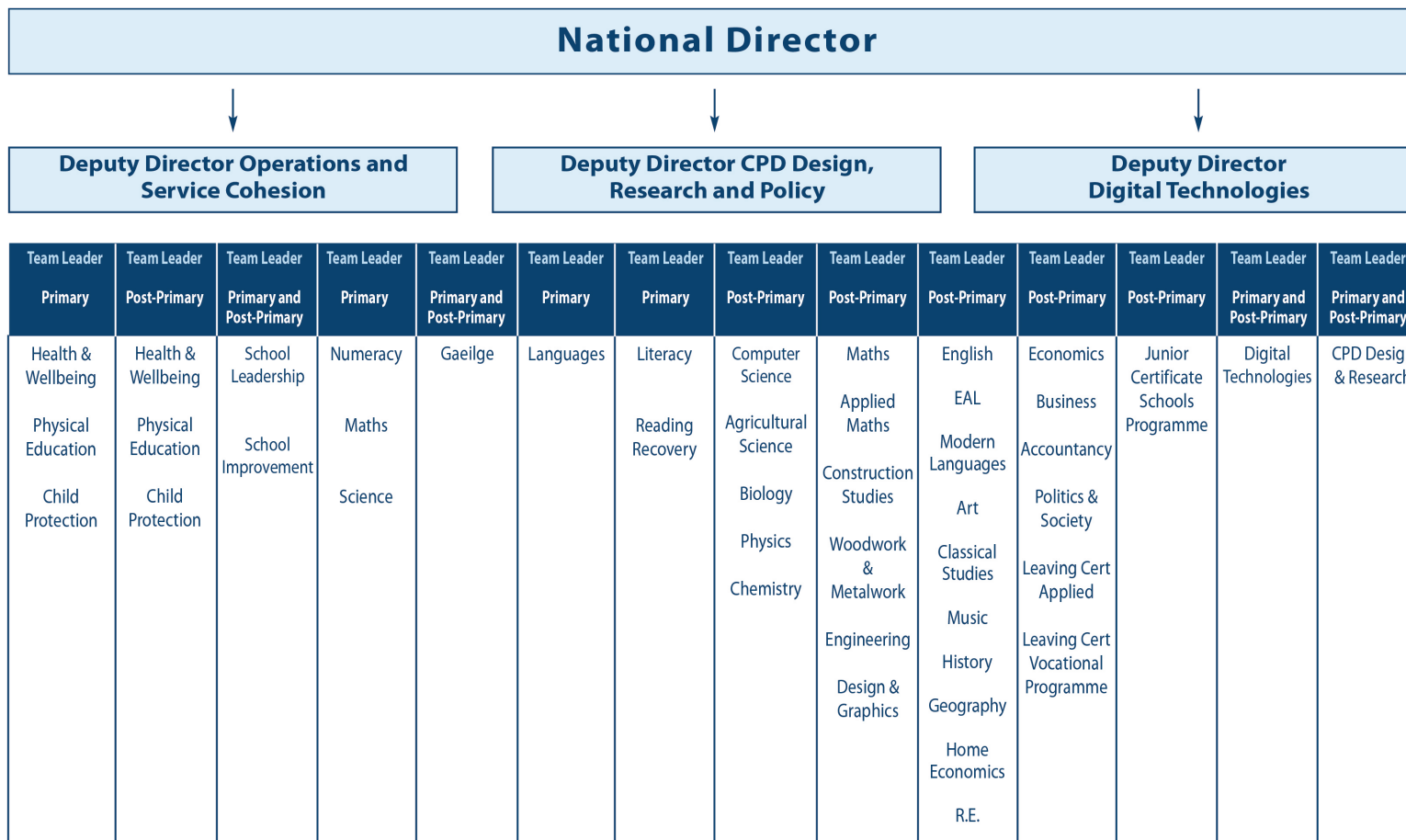
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## Appendix A: PDST Organisational Chart

### Professional Development Service for Teachers



**Appendix B**  
**Professional Development Service for Teachers**  
**Induction and Mentoring Programme**  
***(taken from PDST's Induction /Mentoring Handbook)***

A fully structured induction and mentoring programme is provided to all newly appointed advisors throughout Term One.

**Induction**

The following induction schedule takes place during September and October

- Overview of PDST / national remit/ strategic plan
- Working with the PDST
  - PDST Governance, Protocols and Procedure
  - The role of the PDST Advisor
  - Yearly calendar and scheduling diaries
  - PDST Mentoring Programme
  - Skills Audit and Learning/ Development needs
  - A day in the life of a PDST advisor (current advisors share their stories and experiences)
  - Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)
  - Creating and maintaining a professional learning and development online portfolio
- Using PDST Data Management and Recording System
- Online tools for data gathering/collaboration
- PDST branding and writing conventions
- PDST ICT workflow - e-mails/shared cloud spaces /internal sites
- Ergonomics and Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Your work and your wellbeing
- Distribution and care of ICT equipment
- Child Protection Procedures and Safe Guarding
- Data Protection
- Teacher Education
  - Presentation and Facilitation Skills
  - Fundamentals of Teacher Education and Becoming a Teacher Educator
  - Research underpinning effective CPD
  - School Improvement and School Self-Evaluation (SSE)
  - Unpacking the PDST SSE Toolkit

- The facilitative approach to supporting schools in SSE
- Coaching and the use of Effective Questioning
- Components of Effective CPD design and PDST design protocols
- Fundamentals of Effective Classroom Pedagogy
  - Differentiation/ Universal Design for Learning
  - Co-operative Learning
  - Active Learning
  - Problem Solving and Inquiry based learning
  - The use of Digital Technology in Teaching and Learning
  - Assessment

## **Mentoring**

Mentors are selected and assigned to new advisors by the management team. This handbook clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of mentors, mentees and management with regard to mentoring. The mentor will not be assigned to a mentee indefinitely, as in line with leading practice, the gradual release of responsibility model will be observed. Mentors will be allocated four units of work to meet with their mentee during the transition phase from September to December. The PDST adopts the Wang and Odell (2007) model of mentoring. This reform minded model of mentoring ensures that mentoring is a tool for coaching rather than cloning. It has three stages.

### **1. Humanistic Perspective - giving confidence and reassurance**

A trained mentor will be assigned to each new advisor who will be allocated four units of work between September and December to meet with their mentee. The mentor will use the mentoring handbook as a guide to a consistent and coherent approach to supporting their mentee through this time of transition.

### **2. Situated Apprentice Perspective - helping with day-to-day work etc.**

A comprehensive checklist of all areas of work within PDST is outlined in the mentoring handbook (more details can be found in Section 2 of this advisor handbook). Mentors will support mentees to ensure that they have a full knowledge and understanding of each aspect of their role within PDST.

### **3. Critical Constructive Perspective - critical friend/reflection**

All new advisors will co-facilitate with experienced mentors and can avail of opportunity for constructive/ critical friend feedback.

## Shadowing

All new advisors are provided with opportunities to shadow more experienced members of the team as required. To vary the learning experience, mentees should aim to shadow their mentor and other advisors on different occasions in a variety of settings. e.g. a cluster meeting/seminar/school visit etc. In general, up to three days' shadowing is facilitated. Additional shadowing requirements can be discussed with your Team Leader. The onus is on the mentee to take responsibility for their own individual learning. Mentees will have opportunities for co-presenting, where appropriate. The template below should be used by the mentee when shadowing a colleague. The template is designed not to critique a colleague's work but to note ways of working and practice.

<b>Title of event:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Type of event:</b>	<b>Venue:</b>
<b>Prompts where Applicable</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Advanced planning, room layout, resources, equipment, dealing with the unexpected</b>	
<b>Presentation of Content Key messages, methods of delivery, variation of delivery, dealing with the unexpected</b>	
<b>Facilitation Skills Meet and greet, setting the tone, listening, questioning, ideas/topics discussed, dealing with challenging situations</b>	
<b>Talking Points for post-shadowing</b>	
<b>My Priority Key Learning</b>	

## **Appendix C**

### **Professional Development Service for Teachers**

#### **Continuing team development supports 2016- 2018**

In order to remain abreast of curriculum, pedagogy and policy developments while responsive to the CPD needs of schools and teachers, the PDST team are provided with timely and regular professional learning and reflection opportunities. This takes place at national, regional, team and individual level. Internal professional learning for the areas listed below was provided for the PDST national team over a two-year period 2016- 2018, during which participants of this study worked in the PDST. All those listed are cross sectoral unless otherwise stated. All were provided in-house with the exception of those where external agencies are indicated. Following these national inputs, each PDST team explores the topics within the context of their discrete work and remit. Those accompanied by \* feature each year as refresher professional development for all.

#### **Teacher Continuing Professional Development**

- PDST Sustained School Support : A transformative CPD model
- PDST Sustained Support : How it works in schools, examples from team practice\*
- Hallmarks of Effective CPD
- The Science of Adult Learning
- Facilitation Skills- leading practice and key tenets revisited \*
- Facilitating Professional Learning Communities

#### **Policy**

- DEIS Planning and School Self Evaluation
- School Self Evaluation , Areas for Clarification- Inspectorate updates \*
- Revised 2016 School Self Evaluation Guidelines ( Inspectorate)
- Introduction to the Digital Learning Framework
- Cosán (The Teaching Council)
- Droichead- update ( National Induction Programme)

- The 2015-2020 Digital Strategy
- General Allocation Model for Children with Special Needs ( National Council for Special Education)
- Revised Child Protection Procedures\*
- Anti-bullying Guidelines and Policy
- Overview and exploration of An Polasaí don Oideachas Gaeltachta 2017 - 2022
- National STEM strategy and STEM modalities across the PDST
- Section 24 Training
- Reporting in primary schools and junior cycle (NCCA)
- Aistear and Early Childhood Curriculum Framework ( NCCA)

### **Pedagogy**

- Team Teaching for the Inclusive Classroom
- Pedagogical Content Knowledge\*
- Post Primary : Emerging research/trends in classroom pedagogy
- Embedding Digital Technologies in Teaching, Learning and Assessment\*
- Using Microsoft 365 effectively
- Assessment for Learning\*
- The role of Summative Assessment \*
- Formative Assessment and e port folio
- Philosophy for Children (P4C)
- Lesson Study
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Computational Thinking
- Co-operative Learning
- Differentiated Teaching and Learning \*
- Overview of Solid Works: software for use in T4 subjects
- Inquiry-based Learning and Reasoning Skills \*

- Gaeilge Neamhfhoirmiúil
- Finding and Selecting Information Online
- Creating Digital Images
- Managing and Curating Digital Information

## **Curriculum**

- Junior Cycle Reform update (Junior Cycle for Teachers)
- Junior Cycle SLAR and CBAs (Junior Cycle for Teachers)
- Senior Cycle Review and Reform (NCCA)
- Primary Language Curriculum
- Primary Maths Curriculum (NCCA)
- Physical Literacy and Fundamental Movement Skills
- Exploring the Broader Primary Curriculum - Science Lab"
- Exploring the Broader Primary Curriculum – The Arts
- An Plean Scoile - Primary
- Leaving Certificate Politics and Society – Key Thinkers
- Reading Recovery
- Stay Safe/ Personal Safety
- Looking at the Theory behind Early Literacy
- Gaeilge Ghníomhach; Straitéisí do Theagaisc na Gaeilge
- Guiding Readers to Layers of Meaning
- The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
- DEIS and the Junior Certificate Schools Programme\*

## **Team Skills**

- Collaborative CPD Design\*
- Developing Collaborative Resources
- Using Scoilnet for licenced Digital content
- Distributed Leadership



- Project Management\*
- Conducting effective meetings\*

### **Self-Development**

- Self-Reflection (Johari Window) Provision of effective feedback (CEDAR model)
- PDST PMDS and use of professional learning e-Portfolio
- Emotional Intelligence
- Mentoring Practice in the PDST
- Advisor Wellbeing –Self-care and Resilience\*
- Ergonomics and Health and Safety in the Workplace\*
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator
- Wellbeing for Teachers
- Conflict Management
- Coaching and the provision of effective feedback\*

### **Examples of Team Specific Training 2016-2018**

#### **Primary STEM team**

- Team Teaching for Mathematics
- Skills for Inquiry
- Approaches to teaching science/teacher directed and child led investigations/The Nature of Science/
- Digital Tech Team Development - IZAK9, Microbit and Lego
- Technology Design
- Building Entrepreneurial Capacity in the Science Classroom
- Problem-solving for in the Primary STEM Classroom
- Play-based Maths in Early Years
- An inquiry-based approach to Shape and Space
- Lesson Study – Teaching through Structured Problem Solving
- Primary Science Curriculum
- Lesson Study and school support
- Early Maths /Mental Maths/ Fractions and Place Value/ Measures

## **Primary Health and Wellbeing**

- Physical Education - Gymnastics (PE Advisors only)
- Collaboration with HSE - Facilitation Skills (All Advisors)
- Child Protection (Wellbeing Advisors only) inputs from Tusla, An Garda Síochána, Nurture Rooms, JMBS, Stay Safe
- Digital Technologies (All Advisors)
- Restorative Practice (Wellbeing Advisors only)
- Child Protection (New Advisors only)
- RSE Training (New Advisors only)
- SPHE Training (New Advisors only)
- Stay Safe Workshop Training (Wellbeing Advisors)
- RSE Workshop Training (Wellbeing Advisors only)
- Y-Path Post Primary Physical Literacy Programme overview for Primary PE Team
- SPHE and Visual Arts
- Developing Manipulative Skills through Small-sided Games - Physical Literacy (PE Advisors)
- Teacher Wellbeing Training (New Advisors only)
- Folk Dance Training (PE Advisors)
- Webinar Design Training
- Anti-Bullying Training (New Advisors)
- Shared learning day with Inspectorate - for Child Protection
- SEN Team Training
- Childhood Bereavement Development Day - SPHE team
- Restorative practice - SPHE team
- Restorative practice - Train the Trainers - SPHE team
- Shared learning day with Inspectorate - for Child Protection

## **Primary Languages Team**

- Revised Primary Language Curriculum (Stages 1-4)
- Key components of Oral Language, Reading and Writing
- Gaeilge, agus Ceacht Cleachtas.

- Content Language Integrated Learning (Cambridge University)
- Primary Language Curriculum (PLC) and Modelled Lessons
- Team Teaching for Literacy
- Spelling, Phonics and Phonological Awareness
- Play based learning - Professor Grey
- Literacy Instruction
- Teaching Oral Language Text Types and the PLC
- National PLC Seminar 2018
- Sustained Support: School Self Evaluation and the PLC
- Oral Language Interactions
- Exploring the Pedagogy of Play and Playful Learning
- Múineadh na Gaeilge: An Teagasc Foirm Dhírithe
- Motivating Children as Readers and Writers
- Exploring Learning Outcomes (Supported by the NCCA)
- An Cur Chuige Cumarsaideach
- Transfer of Skills
- Scríbhneoireacht i gCuraclam Teanga na Bunscoile
- Effective Vocabulary Instruction
- Planning and Teaching a Guided Reading Lesson
- Writing - Theoretical Underpinnings and Practical Application
- Phonics as Gaeilge
- Strategies for scaffolding teaching and learning especially for students in EAL contexts.

#### **Post- Primary STEM team**

- STEM Policy
- Lesson-Study
- Microbit Training
- Lesson-Study Cycle Review
- Solid Solutions Training

- Technology for Maths
- Coding and Computational Thinking
- Assessment and T4

### **Post- Primary Health and Wellbeing Team**

- HSE Facilitation Skills
- Child Protection training
- Restorative practice
- Introduction to Olympic Handball
- Webinar training - PE team
- Shared learning day with Inspectorate - for Child Protection
- TENI Sexual Orientation Support
- HSE Substance Use Training
- YPath PE4ME programme

### **School Leadership team**

- Leading School Improvement
- Team Building: Trust: Dr. Finian Buckley
- Polasaí Gaeltachta and SSE
- Leadership Development and Teams: Dr. Seán Ruth
- Section 24 Procedures
- Coaching Skills for Action Learning Communities
- Distributed Leadership
- SSE and DEIS
- PDST Leadership Programmes ( Misneach,/Tanáiste/ Forbairt)

### **Digital Technologies Team**

- Designing Webinars
- The Digital Learning Framework: Training of trainers
- Digital Learning Framework and School based CPD
- IZAK9 Cubes and Microbit
- Safe and Ethical Use of Technology
- Webwise – Sexting and online Coercion

## Appendix D

### Professional Development Service for Teachers

#### Team research supports 2016-2018

The PDST research committee organise and facilitate three annual research events for all PDST personnel. Taking place once per term, these events focus on fostering a 'research disposition' (Grace, 2013) and promoting a culture of reflective inquiry across the organisation. The fora also aims to model the forms and features of professional development that the organisation espouses. The advisors themselves experience active learning, critical dialogue and constructivist approaches to developing understanding of teacher learning, change in schools, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Themed events involve working with leading thinkers in the field and analysing related research articles. PDST engagement with research papers uses the framework below.

<b>Summary or overview:</b>
<b>Prompts for discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Connect:</b> In this article, what connects with your current or previous understanding about this topic?</li><li>• <b>Extend:</b> In this article, what extends your thinking about this topic?</li><li>• <b>Challenge:</b> In this article, what challenged your thinking?</li><li>• <b>Agree/Disagree:</b> Overall, do you agree or disagree with the main arguments in this article?</li><li>• <b>Quotations:</b> Identify a number of quotations that resonated with you.</li></ul>
<b>Implications for PDST's CPD practice:</b>

The following took place during the period that study participants worked with the PDST.

#### **Research Fora 2016 – 2018**

- Input by the PDST research committee to PDST personnel at the September 2015 National meeting on OECD research regarding Inquiry Based Learning.
- Exploration of Timperley et al.'s (2008) Best Evidence Synthesis of Effective Professional Development.

- Sharing of In-house post-graduate undertaken by PDST personnel.
- Research methods and action research (Prof. Jean McNiff)
- Themed Event: *Meaning/Purpose of Education*: Readings selected for Analysis and discussion of the research
  - Satisfying the 'learning in depth' criterion (Kieran Egan)
  - What's the Point? Select Committee Ponders the Meaning of Education (Robin Alexander)
  - Breaking silence: educating citizens for love, care and solidarity (Kathleen Lynch, Maureen Lyons and Sara Cantillon)
  - Future directions for learning environments in the 21st century (Peter Istance and Hanna Dumont) –chapter 13 of the OECD Nature of Learning
  - What is an educated person? (Richard Pring)
- Themed Event: *Pedagogy*. The readings selected for analysis and discussion included:
  - Towards a comparative pedagogy (Robin Alexander)
  - What is 'good' teaching? (Devine, Fahie, McGillicuddy)
  - Positioning pedagogy: a matter of children's rights (Devine and McGillicuddy)
  - Those who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching (Lee Shulman)
- Self-Study and Action Research (Dr Mary Roche, Network for Educational Action Research Ireland)
- Signature Pedagogies for Teacher Learning : by Dr Melissa Parker and Professor Mary O' Sullivan
- Themed Event: *Impact of professional development* (Dr. Fiona King, DCU Institute of Education).
  - Journal Club: analysis of peer reviewed articles
- Themed Event: *Inclusion*: Dr. Emer Smyth : Social mix in schools and outcomes at primary and post primary level. Informed by "Growing Up in Ireland"
  - Practice implications for the PDST Advisor using an inquiry-based approach.

- Themed Event: *Special Educational Needs*.
  - Paul O' Raw, Learning Sciences Researcher at Trinity College, Dublin. Paul explored the variety of definitions of Inclusion for Special Educational Needs and he outlined the ten themes for inclusion which provide a framework for good practice across different contexts.
  - Dr. Susan Crawford, ASD specialist who shared her passion about addressing quality of life issues for individuals on the ASD spectrum.
- Visual Ethnography as a qualitative research methodology. In this context, advisors were asked to ethically capture or source an image or photograph that they had permission to use. Advisors shared the associated narrative of this photo/image in small groups. They described briefly how this photo/image informed or challenged their perspective on inclusion and special educational needs.
- Themed Event: *What is Teacher Research; its purpose, content and context?*
  - Dr. Joe Oylar, NUI Maynooth. Engaging critically with research, strategies for reading research critically taking cognisance of the motivations, assumptions and biases.
  - Growth Mindset. The implications of drawing a critically reflective lens explored through question and answer sessions exploring perspectives on theme, methodology, journal metrics, values and assumptions, bias etc.
- PDST Action Research Self-Study Project : sharing the learning from advisor experience of action research in working to support schools.
- Themed Event: *PDST and the Ends of Education: what we value and what's valuable*.
  - Prof. Ciarán Sugrue: Exploring opportunities and challenges in the context of change in education, our values in relation to professional development, determining what's valuable and how these professional values steer our role as advisors in the context of our PDST vision and strategic planning against the backdrop of Department policy.

- Exploring the concept of change itself and how change can bring about a certain inner dissonance for us, how we explore and manage that as advisors, teachers and school communities within the system, endeavouring to promote a growth mind-set therein.
- Journal Club : *Opportunity and challenge in the context of change and education.*
- The Change Gallery: advisors critically engaged with various stimuli such as quotations and visuals on the theme of change.



**Appendix E**  
**Secondment and teacher education**  
**Overview of previous studies**

Study	Jurisdiction	Focus of study
Gatherer and Edwards (1988)	Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for up to three years</li> </ul>
McMichael, Draper and Gatherer (1992)	Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education (and other government offices)</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for up to two years</li> </ul>
McEachern and Polley (1993)	Canada (Ontario)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of post-primary teachers for one year</li> </ul>
Perry <i>et al.</i> (1999)	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of early childhood teachers for one year</li> </ul>
Badali and Housego, (2000)	Canada (British Columbia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for up to two years</li> </ul>
Costley <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for up to three years</li> </ul>
Kosnik and Beck (2008)	Canada (Toronto)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary teachers for up to three years</li> </ul>
Allen, Mader and Smith (2010)	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for up to three years</li> </ul>

Reupert, Wilkinson and Galloway (2010)	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for between two to four years</li> </ul>
Reupert, and Wilkinson (2011)	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservice Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of a primary teacher, a school principal and a consultant for two years</li> </ul>
Sullivan and Sloan (1990)	N. Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing Teacher Education (and other government agencies)</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers for between two to four years with some exceptional extensions</li> </ul>
Keogh (2000)	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of post-primary teachers to Irish post-primary support services.</li> <li>• Lengths of secondments varied with some extending beyond five years ( current five-year rule had not yet been introduced in Ireland)</li> </ul>
Tuohy and Lodge (2003)	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing Teacher Education</li> <li>• Secondment of primary and post-primary teachers to a range of Irish support services and other educational institutions</li> <li>• Lengths of secondments varied with some extending beyond five years ( current five-year rule had not yet been introduced in Ireland)</li> </ul>
Taylor <i>et al.</i> (2011)	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing Teacher Educators</li> <li>• Secondment of post primary teachers to a pilot service for one year</li> </ul>

## Appendix F

### Interview questions: categories and rationale

The categories of questions for the interviews and their rationale were guided by the study's theoretical framework mirroring its elements of breadth and depth. The broad categories of **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit** reflect the framework's breadth in observing what this study posits as the three sequential phases of secondment, while facilitating the application of Nicholson's four career transition stages *Preparation*, *Encounter*, *Adjustment* and *Stabilisation*. Within each category, the questions provide scope to investigate participants' experiences, knowledge acquisition and professional learning throughout the three phases of secondment through the lens of Kelly's model of career **attachment /detachment losses and gains**.

1. **Entry** (*Deciding on a career change to teacher education, induction to the PDST and early experiences in the role*)

The purpose of this category of questions was to explore participants' experience of transitioning from teacher to teacher educator when first entering the PDST. In line with Nicholson's *Preparation* career stage, it inquired into participants' motivations for embarking on secondment as a teacher educator with the PDST, their expectations of the role and their speculated **attachment /detachment losses and gains** in making this career choice. It looked to elicit participants' personal and professional experiences of leaving one role/ work environment and joining another with a focus on the actual **attachment /detachment losses and gains** accrued at that point in time. Early experiences in the role were explored in line with Nicholson's *Encounter* career stage.

**Attachment /detachment losses and gains** were discussed in the context of becoming a teacher educator. This encompassed the unique features of the role that distinguish it from that of the class teacher, any tensions arising from associated identity misalignments, barriers and enablers of the transition, mechanisms employed to survive the transition, achieving a balance between acclimatising to the role of the teacher educator and actively developing as one.

- What motivated you to apply for the position as a teacher educator with the PDST?

- Describe your feelings in leaving your school/ first joining the PDST?
- What were your expectations of the PDST role at that time?
- How did these expectations compare to your actual experience of the role?
- For you, what were the main adjustments involved in making the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator with the PDST?
- What support/ strategies did you draw on to help you adjust to /learn the new role?

**2. Experience** (*The period of the secondment itself from post-induction to pre-departure*)

This category of questions sought to delve deeper into the lived experience of the participants as seconded teacher educators with the PDST as they negotiated the *Adjustment* stage of career change. Again with **attachment and detachment gains and losses** as a focus, it aimed to explore the knowledge and professional learning acquired in relation to policy, curriculum, pedagogy and skills of the teacher educator as well as experiences of working in the support service context and the broader educational landscape. The questions explored the specific work of the teacher educator in the CPD setting and invited participants to talk about the specific opportunities and challenges of the job. Attempts were made to uncover their views on where the role located them in the system and how it was perceived by others. Evolving identity concerns regarding teacher/ teacher educator role dichotomies, navigation of role hybridity and boundary crossing were key to the line of inquiry in line with the *Adjustment* stage of career transition. This section sought to establish at what point (if any) the participants felt advanced/proficient in the job towards reaching the *Stabilisation* Stage. It also explored factors impacting on departure prompting a return to the "*Preparation*" phase of the career cycle.

- Describe the knowledge / skills /dispositions you developed while working as a teacher educator with the PDST?
- How did this learning and development take place? Consider formal and informal opportunities.
- What challenges did you face in this role ?

- How do you believe you were perceived/ received by schools and teachers?
- What links if any, did you maintain with your school ?
- Describe any key changes you noticed in your views/ behaviour / practices as a result of your learning and experience as a teacher educator with the PDST?
- Was there a salient point at which you considered yourself to be proficient and comfortable in the role of teacher educator?
- In what way was the knowledge, learning and experiences being acquired while with the PDST impacting on where you saw yourself going / doing professionally after secondment?
- What factors informed your eventual departure and choice of onward career destination?

### 3. **Exit** (*Departing the PDST and commencing the role in the post-secondment career destination*)

This third set of questions focused on the participants' exit from the PDST while continuing to explore impending contractual termination which according to the literature, sees many secondees "thinking ahead" and taking control of their professional destinies. The category aimed to explore **Attachment and detachment gains and losses** in departing the PDST and moving to post-secondment positions. For participants who returned to school, it sought to discover what transpired including any **attachment/detachment gains and losses** that presented during this 'reverse' transition from teacher educator to class teacher while revisiting themes such as identity alignment and tensions arising in terms of professional practice and beliefs. In particular as emphasised in the research question and reflecting policy's rationale for secondment, the inquiry aimed to ascertain the extent to which the experience, knowledge and learning acquired during secondment was harnessed both by themselves and by others in the post-secondment work setting.

- Describe your feelings / experience of leaving the PDST/ first returning to school/ joining the new setting?

- Having worked as a teacher educator with the PDST, what were your expectations/hopes/ thoughts regarding your return to school/ move to a new place of work?
- Tell me about the role/position you assumed on your return to school/ move to a new setting?
- What knowledge, learning and experience gained while on secondment did you find helpful in your return to school/ new environment?
- To what extent were you able to use/ share / disseminate any of this knowledge, learning and experience in your school/ new place of work?
- To what extent was this knowledge, learning and experience harnessed by others in your school/ new place of work?

## Appendix G: Illustrative extracts from the code book

- Deductive coding : Career transition phases( Nicholson, 1987) and attachment/detachment gains/losses (Kelly, 1980)
- Inductive coding : Identity

<b>Deductive Theme: Career transition phases ( Nicholson, 1987) and attachment /detachment/ gains / losses (Kelly,1980)</b>		
Colour highlighted quotes indicate where the same data were assigned to more than one code.		
Sub Theme	Code	Quote
Attachment Gain	Induction supports	<p><i>The biggest help was shadowing, like seeing others present and facilitate...then co presenting which was a great security before going it alone.</i></p> <p><i>I was given a list of every contact on the team from the Director to the various administrative staff. And I was told to contact them at any stage and it wasn't lip service , they were all there for you</i></p> <p><i>They looked after you from the moment that you started, like we got assigned a mentor.</i></p>
	Expectations /Trust	<p><i>I found that there was an immediate element of trust. We've brought you into this organization and we trust that you're going to do a good job. And I was very empowered by it.</i></p> <p><i>You must show up and work really hard. There's an expectation that you are part of the greater good of the organization, you're expected to share as well as gathering the ideas of others</i></p>
	Voice/ Freedom of views	<p><i>What struck me was the professionalism and the way that people could express themselves. And yet they could have banter with each other.</i></p> <p><i>Like I suppose in my staff, it would have been a case of if somebody disagreed with you, people nearly got annoyed</i></p> <p><i>In PDST was people were challenging each other- like professionally and you kind of went that's okay.</i></p>

	Work with likeminded people	<p><i>There was a comfort, you know, everybody in the broader organization was quite like-minded in a sense in that we were open to new ideas, research and insight.</i></p> <p><i>I shared a lot of the values of the organization already because I was that kind of teacher</i></p> <p><i>I found kindred spirits or you found teachers and teacher educators that had the same values</i></p>
	Invigorating culture and sense of stretch	<p><i>Cutting edge - it just seemed to be a productive organisation, in terms of subject content, we were always being introduced to new concepts.</i></p> <p><i>The energy that was there and the interest and the people that you've met and their hunger and thirst for new learning gave me energy.</i></p> <p><i>I was totally taken out of my comfort zone and I felt privileged</i></p>
Attachment Loss	Job isolation	<p><i>I found it difficult working in isolation by myself because I like chatting to people.</i></p> <p><i>There's no session central offices that you all go and meet every day. That's something you know, in terms of having your classroom and the safety of your classroom and your colleagues.</i></p>
Detachment Gain	Lack of career progression/ plateau	<p><i>I almost liked plateaued in work, but I almost kind of outgrown it as well in a sense</i></p> <p><i>I had learned as much as I could and felt that things plateaued for me I wanted to spread my wings</i></p> <p><i>I am, I suppose, the kind of teacher who says what can we do next?, what are different schools doing? Can we change it up? I felt different from my staff in that way</i></p> <p><i>There were very few opportunities outside the classroom for teachers within their school.</i></p>



Unhealthy culture	<p><i>I was out of sync with their almost herd mentality. the larger group think would kind of be like, look, would you not just do the easy option, whereas I'd be kind of like, well, not if it's not the right thing or the best thing for the students.</i></p> <p><i>I am, I suppose, the kind of teacher who says what can we do next?, what are different schools doing? Can we change it up? I felt different from my staff in that way</i></p> <p><i>Like I suppose in my staff, it would have been a case of if somebody disagreed with you, people nearly got annoyed.</i></p> <p><i>I just felt that I wasn't being listened to ...that my views were a nuisance or not important. I was disillusioned by the leadership in the school</i></p>
Lack of reflection on pedagogy	<p><i>A lot of time you're so busy in a school that you're going from class to class and you're in a, you're in a routine. And you don't, you don't really stop and really talk about teaching and methodologies</i></p> <p><i>My school wouldn't would have been very focused on policy development, over pedagogy development, as I think a lot of schools are, it's getting the paperwork</i></p>
Rigid routine	<p><i>School by comparison was almost religious, you're a slave to the bell and, you know, everything is time tabled to a T .</i></p> <p><i>I didn't miss the routine of meeting people for coffee and sitting in one chair in the staff room,</i></p> <p><i>There's something about being removed from a school bell, I guess It's the thing that I find most challenging about being in school is the school bell.</i></p>

Detachment Loss	Grieving former role	<p><i>I remembered thinking, God, back in school I was the one people came to for advice and ideas.</i></p> <p><i>You've built experience up over the years and you're part of the school community. And you're an established teacher. Now you are starting again.</i></p>
	Missing students	<p><i>I was really conscious of my sixth years who I'd had since they were first years. And we were really close.</i></p> <p><i>I felt a guilt at leaving them and wondered if I was walking out on them" do remember feeling tearful actually</i></p>
Nicholson Preparation	Push – career Plateau	<p><i>I had learned as much as I could and felt that things plateaued for me I wanted to spread my wings.</i></p> <p><i>There were very few opportunities outside the classroom for teachers within their school.</i></p> <p><i>I was going to become disengaged If I didn't have something more to rejuvenate me and replenish my well. I was beginning to become a functionary. I needed another angle, another opportunity, another perspective.</i></p>
	Push -School culture	<p><i>In one way I was running away because I didn't want it to bring me down and, you know, suck the energy out to me</i></p> <p><i>I was out of sync with their almost herd mentality. the larger group think would kind of be like, look, would you not just do the easy option, whereas I'd be kind of like, well, not if it's not necessarily the right thing or the best thing for the students.</i></p>
	Push – escape routine	<p><i>I find school quite religious, you know, it's very much you're led by the bell and, you know, everything is tying table to a T.</i></p> <p><i>I didn't miss the routine of meeting people for coffee and sitting in one chair in the staff room.</i></p> <p><i>There's something about being removed from a school bell, I guess It's the thing that I find most challenging about being in school is the school bell.</i></p>

	Pull – attractive looking role	<p><i>I saw these two teacher educators giving this training and I was blown away by them , their knowledge and energy</i></p> <p><i>I said to myself, I'd love to work with these people and actually to learn from these people how to actually educate properly. Anytime I'd go on a CPD day, I'd just be so fascinated about the job that the facilitator was doing</i></p> <p><i>I was aware of the PDST and I kept thinking, God, that's the kind of thing I'd love to be doing in an age and kind of helping and making it, you know, making a difference.</i></p>
	Pull - Safe career move	<p><i>That's where the peace came. Well, this isn't forever. This is actually so that I come back better and I come back rejuvenated</i></p> <p><i>I suppose one beneficial of the time thing, you know, that it's not a huge commitment, because you kind of go back to school at any stage, I wasn't trying to escape school</i></p>
	Pull -Wider system exposure	<p><i>I liked the idea of getting an insight into national policy and how things work out there</i></p> <p><i>I imagined having some kind of influence on education in a more national sense. I guess, the shape of education on a larger scale.</i></p> <p><i>I taught in was a three-teacher school. So I was eager to work as part of a bigger team</i></p>
	Pull – passion for pedagogical or content depth	<p><i>I suppose my expectation was that I would learn more and become a better educator beyond my two subjects.</i></p> <p><i>I mean, it was a literacy role and I have a passion for literacy. In dealing with 11 or 12 subjects as a primary teacher you don't really gain an in depth- knowledge into any of them</i></p>
Nicholson Encounter	Affective support and welcome	<p><i>I was given a list of every contact on the team from the Director to the various administrative staff. And I was told to contact them at any stage and it wasn't lip service. They were all there for you.</i></p> <p><i>They looked after you from the moment that you started, like we got assigned a mentor. So any questions that you have, you feel comfortable to ask a person that.</i></p>

Level of trust	<i>I found that there was an immediate element of trust. We've brought you into this organisation and we trust that you're going to do a good job. And I was very empowered by it.</i>
Level of induction training	<i>It was the big stuff like adult learning, self-evaluation, the digital strategy and ... lots of time given to facilitation training.</i>  <i>We had an entire series of inputs on effective CPD and we were given articles to read in advance of group discussion". I couldn't have asked for a better preparation.</i>
Dynamic culture	<i>In PDST was people were challenging each other- like professionally and you kind of went that's okay.</i>  <i>I was new there with very, experienced professionals, but yet I always felt that I could have a voice</i>
Realisation of the role (Link with limited view of CPD)	<i>You tend to think of the workshop on the delivery as all you do but there was so much more</i>  <i>So I took on the job in one area and I ended up working in maybe six, seven, eight different areas and which I didn't expect.</i>  <i>Oh my God, there's so many more facets to this, you know, you're, you're facilitating, like we say, in school management meetings, you'd be sitting there with the principal, the deputy principals.</i>
Imposter Syndrome	<i>I was waiting for somebody to take me on the shoulder and telling me you've been found out</i>  <i>You're nervous and sick to your stomach. We all started the morning of a national meeting so it was particularly daunting with all these people. It's that kind of intimidation, you know, imposter syndrome</i>  <i>I was very worried, although I might have sold myself well at the interview, but I was very worried about being up to the mark</i>  <i>When I first started I had serious imposter syndrome. I mean the fact that you were replacing somebody who had long experience.</i>

Shock of adult learning	<p><i>The ability to go into schools to stand up in front of 35 teachers, there's a difference between teaching teachers, adults and teaching students, you don't hold the balance of power like you do in the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>You can't hoodwink adults. They want to actually leave that room having had a life changing experience, that's a tall order, you know, and that's what really frightened me even more so. I think you need to develop a thick skin - I mean, you get a bit of a rude awakening - taking on board feedback is really important becoming familiar with adult learning .That was a big, big learning curve for me</i></p>
Need to provide	<p><i>What if I'm asked something and I don't know ? You know I'm meant to be the one advising here</i></p> <p><i>I thought it was about having the right answer and information, because a lot of the time teachers just want that</i></p> <p><i>The need to show a certain level of expertise I have an tips to share, and somewhat feel better about myself.</i></p>
Reliance on /Credibility of first order identity	<p><i>I always told audiences I was a teacher like them, you are maybe lacking in confidence you need to be more armed in the beginning.</i></p> <p><i>I remember being very defensive when I started out, unsure of myself, nearly pretending that I knew what I was about, you know feeling that I had to prove myself</i></p> <p><i>If lessons or ideas had worked for me in the classroom, I took them out to show teachers.</i></p> <p><i>I was a really good teacher and if it was something I could get across to audiences, then they'd respect me.</i></p> <p><i>People told me that I'd be great at this job because I was a good teacher so I pulled on that a lot in the early days.</i></p>

**Inductive Theme : Identity**

Colour highlighted quotes indicate where the same data were assigned to more than one code.

Sub Theme	Code	Quote
Identity: push factors during Preparation	At odds with school culture	<p><i>I was out of sync with their almost herd mentality, the larger group think would kind of be like, look, would you not just do the easy option, whereas I'd be kind of like, well, not if it's not the right thing or the best thing for the students.</i></p> <p><i>I am, I suppose, the kind of teacher who says what can we do next?, what are different schools doing? Can we change it up? I felt different from my staff in that way.</i></p>
Identity: challenges on transition (Encounter)	Teacher of adults	<p><i>There's a difference between teaching teachers, adults and teaching students, you don't hold the balance of power like you do in the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>You can't hoodwink adults. They want to actually leave that room having had a life changing experience, that's a tall order, you know, and that's what really frightened me even more so</i></p>
	Need to be provider and expert	<p><i>What if I'm asked something and I don't know ? you know I'm meant to be the one advising here</i></p> <p><i>I thought it was about having the right answer and information, because a lot of the time teachers just want that</i></p> <p><i>The need to show a certain level of expertise I have an tips to share, and somewhat feel better about myself.</i></p>
	Reliance on credibility of first order identity	<p><i>You could go in and stand high and proud and say to them that you are a teacher yourself. We were able to kind of say, well, yeah, I've walked the walk.</i></p> <p><i>I always told audiences I was a teacher like them, in the beginning, you are maybe lacking in confidence, you need to be more armed in the beginning.</i></p>

	Imposter Syndrome	See Deductive coding for Nicholson's Encounter phase
	Grieving former role	See Deductive coding for Nicholson's Encounter phase
Third Space Identity	Loyalty tug between policy and practice	<p><i>Oh God, I struggled with loyalty to policy because regardless of how you might feel you can't publicly disagree with it</i></p> <p><i>Like there was many a time a teacher or a principal cried because they just felt so overwhelmed and I felt so conflicted because in a way I was one of those applying the pressure and I didn't necessarily agree with it.</i></p> <p><i>As a CPD participant , I used to be mindful of PDST people's identity as teachers. And, you know, I can recollect people saying, you know, this guy's coming in here telling me how to do it.. So you're trying to be very careful that you're saying I am a teacher too, but you're neither.</i></p> <p><i>You're straddling two horses because you're mediating a message to teachers and yet you are one too.</i></p>
	Balancing dual identity	<p><i>There were many times when you needed to revisit your teacher identity, you'd be in a meeting and say, well, if I had my teacher's hat on... I remember reading through the specifications for the Junior Cycle and thinking if I was a teacher, that part is a little bit kind of patronizing.</i></p> <p><i>I would have kept up the classroom modelling as part of ongoing school visits. So I did still have that identity of I'm a teacher.</i></p>

	<p>Belonging to school and the PDST</p>	<p><i>When I met school colleagues I was often asked if I missed the classroom and was I ever coming back? I always felt a pressure to say that I did miss teaching. But I didn't miss it one bit.</i></p> <p><i>When I used to meet my colleagues from school, there seemed to be a low-lying anxiety or fear among them that I was going to come back with all these big ideas and create a mountain of work for them.</i></p> <p><i>It was a case of foot in both camps. We did stay in touch, you know, here and there, but the principal who started then apply for support and requested me. So I actually went back then when he was there three or four times</i></p> <p><i>I no longer felt like a school staff member but I was included in correspondence and all the social stuff so you are kind of torn but I never felt like I was a teacher when I met them.</i></p>
<p>Identity of CTE and role</p>	<p>As perceived by beginning CTE</p>	<p><i>My anticipation of it was that we'd be going out doing day-long seminars and I used to think only of CPD as workshop delivery.</i></p> <p><i>So much of the job you wouldn't see that as a teacher, you wouldn't be aware of it at all. They have a narrow view of seminars and giving instructions and quick fixes ...we will get all the answers here today.</i></p>
	<p>As perceived by CTE when in the role</p>	<p><i>You are the punch bags for the system. It's not you per sae. Its teachers' frustration with change or terms and conditions, but you're the one they meet, they don't see the gap between the PDST and they department</i></p> <p><i>Ironically enough, as you develop into the role, you need to be less of an expert. You're a facilitator. I suppose part of the tension is you're going in and explaining to them, I am one of you, you know, and there are no experts, we're all in this together.</i></p>
	<p>As perceived by school staff when departing for PDST</p>	<p><i>Once I got the job I was categorized as a past colleague really quickly. I had literally only told them in the staffroom and they were practically saying goodbye to me</i></p> <p><i>I told nobody from school that I was going for the PDST interview because I was afraid that they'd be angry with me. And when I got the job they were like, Oh, you're one of those now... they were annoyed at me for moving on</i></p>



As perceived by school when returning	<p><i>If I had gone back to school I nearly would have been embarrassed about sharing and would probably have hidden the fact that I knew something more about the teaching of maths, I just know that the staff would have been critical of me thinking that I was like the know-all.</i></p> <p><i>When I used to meet my colleagues from school, there seemed to be a low-lying anxiety or fear among them that I was going to come back with all these big ideas and create a mountain of work for them.</i></p> <p><i>For me because I went back as a deputy principal it really helped and I was viewed differently almost as though I was never a teacher there. I had a voice now and people sat up when I suggested something</i></p>
As perceived by other destinations	<p><i>There is real recognition of the work that I did in PDST in this job. PDST experience was considered a real feather in my cap interacting with thousands of teachers up and down the country. It gave me instant credibility.</i></p> <p><i>Another former PDST advisor here had incredible experience in literacy and she was never asked to contribute. It wouldn't be appreciated if you suggested sharing either, like it's considered out of step.</i></p>
As perceived by CPD teacher audience	<p><i>As a CPD participant , I used to be mindful of PDST people's identity as teachers. And, you know, I can recollect people saying, you know, this guy's coming in here telling me how to do it. I know how to do this. So you're trying to be very careful that you're saying I am a teacher too, but you're neither.</i></p> <p><i>Oh, here comes the expert, the so-called expert, like yeah and negatively as well that sometimes there's a perception out there that, Oh, it's a grand job. They wouldn't recognize you actually had to do a weekend preparation to get that stuff ready for Monday.</i></p> <p><i>So much of the job you wouldn't see that as a teacher, you wouldn't be aware of it at all. They have a narrow view of seminars and giving instructions and quick fixes ...we will get all the answers here today.</i></p>

Typology of teacher seeking a role in continuing teacher education	Seek further challenge	<p><i>I'd just done a lot in the school and moved up through a lot of levels. So I kind of felt that it kind of plateaued a little bit. I just kind of felt that I'd plateaued in work, but I had kind of outgrown it as well in a sense.</i></p> <p><i>I am, I suppose, the kind of teacher who says what can we do next? what are different schools doing? Can we change it up? I felt different from my staff in that way.</i></p> <p><i>Breaking out routine to know something different and pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. I was going to become disengaged if I didn't have something more to rejuvenate me and replenish my well. I was beginning to become a functionary. I needed another angle, another opportunity, another perspective.</i></p>
	Crave wider influence	<p><i>I was always very interested in having some kind of influence on a more global level, you know, in education.</i></p> <p><i>I liked the idea of getting an insight into national policy and how things work out there</i></p> <p><i>I imagined having some kind of influence on education in a more national sense. I guess, the shape of education on a larger scale.</i></p>
	Self-starters	<p><i>I started looking at loads of stuff and went to Google scholar a lot . I spent the whole weekend looking at how to teach adults and all this type of stuff.</i></p> <p><i>we'd get a list of articles and I'd immediately go home, download them and distil them</i></p> <p><i>I'd make sure that I knew everything that I was delivering inside out. So, I made sure kept up to date with everything so that I could be on par with colleagues.</i></p>

## **Appendix H**

### **Information for study participants and consent form**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

My name is Ciara O 'Donnell and I am doctoral student on the *Ed. D in Teacher Education* programme in Maynooth University. As part of the requirements for this qualification I am undertaking a research study in the area of Continuing Teacher Education. The study is concerned with teachers who were seconded to work as teacher educators (advisors) with the Professional Development Service for Teachers and who departed the service between the last one to three years. The study aims to explore the learning and experience gained while working with the service and ways in which this may have impacted on career choice and/or roles undertaken post secondment.

#### **What will a participant be asked to do?**

You will be asked to participate in an online recorded interview lasting no longer than 1.5 hours. You will be asked to allow gathered data during the interview to be used to inform my study's findings and conclusions. You may also be asked to engage in any follow up checks or debriefs to ensure that the information you provided is represented accurately and as you intended in the written-up findings.

#### **Why have you been asked to take part?**

You have been asked to take part in this study as you were seconded to work as an advisor with the PDST and have since departed the service within the last three years. The interview will focus on your experience of working as a teacher educator with the PDST including the knowledge and learning gained during that time. It will also explore if this impacted in any way on your subsequent career choices/direction and in particular how the experience and knowledge you acquired was used in your post secondment role.

#### **What are the potential benefits of this study?**

This study aims to benefit knowledge and capacity building in the education system by investigating how the participant's experience as a PDST advisor

informed their learning and knowledge as professionals and ways in which this may have been transferred to / harnessed in their role and work environment after leaving the PDST. It is also hoped that this may inform national policy regarding the future of continuing teacher education. For you as a participant, I believe that the interview will facilitate a professional reflection where you will have an opportunity to recall and offer insights into your learning and experiences at a particular time in your working life and professional development. To date there have been no such studies regarding secondment to the PDST and you will be part of the first study of its kind. Your contribution therefore would be most valuable in informing the field of continuing teacher education as well as the knowledge base and policies needed to best support it.

### **Where and when will the interviews take place?**

The interview will be conducted at a date and time that suits you using the online platform Microsoft Teams and, with your permission, I will video record the interview. All on-line privacy settings will be fully activated and you may want to consider your physical environment in advance to protect your privacy.

### **Do you have to take part?**

Your participation is entirely voluntary so you are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. I do hope you will agree given your past experience as a PDST advisor and given what I believe will be a very valuable contribution to the field of continuing teacher education. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and/or to withdraw your information up until such time as the research is finally submitted.

### **What information will be collected?**

The categories of questions will focus on the three key junctures of your secondment journey: **Entry**, **Experience** and **Exit** as follows;

***Entry*** (The period during which you first decided on a career change to teacher education, your induction to the PDST and early experiences in the role)

- What motivated you to apply for the position as a teacher educator with the PDST?
- Describe your feelings in leaving your school/ first joining the PDST?

- What were your expectations of the PDST role at that time?
- How did these expectations compare to your actual experience of the role?
- For you, what were the main changes involved in making the transition from classroom teacher to teacher educator with the PDST?
- What support/ strategies did you draw on to help you adjust to /learn the new role?

**Experience** (*The main period of your secondment from post-induction to pre-departure*)

- Describe the knowledge / skills /dispositions you developed while working as a teacher educator with the PDST?
- How did this learning and development take place? Consider formal and informal opportunities.
- What challenges did you face in this role?
- How do you believe you were perceived/ received by schools and teachers?
- What links if any, did you maintain with your school?
- Describe any key changes you noticed in your views/behaviors / practices as a result of your learning and experience as a teacher educator with the PDST?
- Was there a salient point at which you considered yourself to be proficient and comfortable in the role of teacher educator?
- In what way was the knowledge, learning and experiences being acquired while with the PDST impacting on where you saw yourself going / doing professionally after secondment?
- What factors informed your eventual departure and choice of onward career destination?

**Exit** (*Departing the PDST and commencing your role in the post-secondment career destination*)

- Describe your feelings / experience of leaving the PDST/ first returning to school/ joining the new setting?
- Having worked as a teacher educator with the PDST, what were your expectations/hopes/ thoughts regarding your return to school/ move to a new place of work?

- Tell me about the role/position you assumed on your return to school/ move to a new setting?
- What knowledge, learning and experience gained while on secondment did you find helpful in your return to school/ new environment?
- To what extent were you able to use/ share / disseminate any of this knowledge, learning and experience in your school/ new place of work?
- To what extent was this knowledge, learning and experience harnessed by others in your school/ new place of work?

**Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, all information that is collected during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identified at any time or used in any written material, presentation or discussions concerning the research project. Recorded interviews and written transcriptions will be filed in secure electric folders to which only I and my supervisor will have access. All hard copy information will be held in a locked cabinet.

**What will happen to the information above after the project?**

Data gathered will only be retained until such time that the project is fully completed. On completion of the research, raw data recorded, written notes and transcripts will be permanently deleted or destroyed. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you so wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your own discretion.

**What will happen to the results?**

The research will be written up and presented as an Ed.D Thesis. Findings and conclusions that are relevant to the system may be presented at education conferences or to policy makers in the Department of Education and Skills. You will not be identifiable in any way as a study participant in any of these contexts. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

**What if a problem or issue presents, before/ during/after the interview?**

You are free to find out more about the questions above in advance of the interview or to raise any issue you have with any of them. At any stage during

the interview, if you are uncomfortable about any of the questions or do not wish to answer any, you are entitled to say so or decline to respond. You are free at any stage to stop or discontinue the interview. Following the interview I will discuss with you how you found the experience and if you were comfortable with the process. A copy of the research findings can also be made available to you before the project is submitted.

**Any further queries?** If you need any further information, you can contact me at 087 1210932 or by e-mailing [ciara.odonnell2018@mumail.ie](mailto:ciara.odonnell2018@mumail.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**

## Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in this research study.

Please tick each statement below if you agree

I understand the purpose nature of the study having read the information provided above.

I am aware that I can ask further questions about the research/interview procedure at any point before, during or after the study.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview to be video/ audio recorded.

I understand that I can choose to stop participating in the interview at any time and that I am free to decline to answer any specific interview questions.

I am aware that the interview discussion will be used to provide data for a research study.

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 specific data provided right up to the submission of the study.

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and stored and that I may access it on request.



I understand that the all information I provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and that no names will be identified at any time or used in any written material, presentation or discussions concerning the research project.

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in conference presentations, reports to policy makers, further research projects, and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview   
or

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I agree for my data to be used for further research projects   
or

I do not agree for my data to be used for further research projects

I agree for my data to be used for as part of conference presentations of the research   
or

I do not agree for my data to be used for as part of conference presentations of the research

I agree for data to be used in relevant reports to policy makers and education stakeholders   
or

I do not agree for my data to be used in relevant reports to policy makers and education stakeholders

Signed..... Date.....

Participant Name in block capitals

## Appendix I : *Cosán* Framework for Teacher Learning (The Teaching Council)

