

THE INSECURITY FOR TEACHERS ENTERING THE FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTOR

**THIS THESIS IS TO EXPLORE THE EXPERIENCE OF FIRST TIME FURTHER
EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE ADULT & FURTHER EDUCATION AND
TRAINING SECTOR IN IRELAND.**

*What are the barriers that are preventing first time teachers/tutors from
gaining secure employment in the adult & further education & Training
Sector?*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the experience of first time teacher/tutors in gaining secure employment in the FET Sector. Since 2009 Ireland has experienced the onslaught of austerity measures, mass unemployment and emigration; has led to a great deal of uncertainty in Irish society. The Adult and further education sector has also been shaped by neoliberal policies that promote adult education to the needs of the economy.

Precarious work has become a global pandemic and it is part of a neoliberal agenda in FET sector. Now! What has become apparent is a professional qualification to teach in FET is not enough to gain secure employment. Those who are deemed lucky enough to gain employment in the sector, are faced with insecurity, uncertainty and unsecure work. This thesis will illuminate some of the barriers to secure employment facing first time teachers/tutors in FET sector.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

My plan is to explore precarious employment which first time teachers/tutor are experiencing in adult & further education. Neoliberalism is a dominate discourse which is being pushed as a method of economic prosperity for Irish society. In the strategy for the FET sector adult learners and first time tutors/teachers are been told to forget job security and prepare for a life of up skilling, and learning to remain employable. The sector is been reshaped to suit business logic; commercialisation of education is on the agenda. Furthermore it's the responsibility of individuals to sustain national and international economic competitiveness, the individual, and workforce will need to adapt to the rapid changes of markets.

The precarious working conditions is been promoted by international elites as best practice in adult & further education. The insecurity, uncertainty, and unstable employment experienced by many working in the FET sector are effecting how tutors and teachers plan their lessons. The social lives of first time tutors/teachers in FET sector are dramatically affected by precarious working conditions I will explore the literature building towards a conceptual framework to understand the precarious nature of employment in adult & FET sector. A critical review of neoliberalism, as a dominate discourse; exploring the concepts/issues of precarious, Identity, status will form part of the framework. I will also draw on the perspective of Foucault and the concept of governmentality so to illuminate how power is exercised not merely from top down or bottom up but power has it is produced in the social body and exercised by the individual and how technologies of control are sustained to produce good workers. This research study will be shaped by the critical voices of respondents.

Background

FET

Further education & Training (FET) in Ireland sits in a unique position in Irish education. The sector is distinct by it diversity of learners and practitioners. According to DES "Further Education" embraces education and training which occurs after second level schooling but which is not part of the third level system.

This includes programmes such as Post Leaving Certificate courses, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (second chance education for the unemployed), programmes in Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres for early school leavers, adult literacy and basic education, and self-funded evening adult programmes in second level schools (DES,2004).

Other authors have continuously argued that the sector is being continuously shaped by neoliberal discourse. The sector has been formalised and professionalised while situated on boundaries of formal and informal education. The creation of SOLAS in 2013 as the further education authority with responsibility for the strategic planning, coordination and funding for the sector (Murray, et, al, 2014). Neoliberal FET policy overshadows the true purpose of education adopting provision to the needs of the economy (Hurley, 2014).

ETBs

The Educational Training Boards was created from the stream lining 33 Vocational Educational Training Boards into 16 ETBS. Each individual board is hierarchal in its structure descending from the CEO. ETBs are the main employers of teachers/tutor of adult education in Ireland.

SOLAS

SOLAS created in 2013 from dissolution of FÁS. The state body operates under the auspices of the Department Of Education And Skills and in conjunction with the sixteen Education and Training Boards; they are responsible for the integration, coordination and funding of a wide range of further education and training programmes (SOLAS, 2013).

Abbreviations

DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETBs	Education Training Boards
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FET	Further Education and Training
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teachers/Tutors
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SOLAS	Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna

Rationale

I really believe this is a very important question in light of changes brought on by the neo liberal economic agenda in adult & further education. The issues/barriers to secure employment for many first time further education teachers/ tutors needs to be explored. Precarious work effects quality of practice for these practitioners, it effects identity and maintains the low status and marginalisation of learners and tutors in the sector.

Methodology

This research study will use a qualitative research method. Using semi structured interviews. I plan to allow the critical voices of the respondents to guide the review of the literature. I will draw from a critical paradigm and drawing on Foucault and feminist theory to understand the power dynamics and resistance that these theories can offer. The literature will be contrasted; discussed and analysed from the reflections of the respondents in thesis study. I will finally discuss the implications to adult education and first time tutors/teachers in the sector.

Limitations

This research study was conducted over a short time span. The study began approximately six months after they graduated and were new to the world of employment. The area studied is Irish further education and training sector. The research respondents restricted to first time teachers/tutors who recently qualified with the professional higher diploma in further education.

Structure of the thesis

CHAPTER 1

I presented a brief statement of the thesis and the thesis question I proposed to answer. I outlined some of the issues and background and my assumption to the cause and effect that these issues presented to teachers/tutors and practice. I put forward a conceptual framework in which to explore a number of issues. I outlined my theoretical perspective to understand the dynamic at play. I presented a definition of abbreviation that will be used throughout this thesis. I offered the rationale and limitation in conducting this study.

CHAPTER 2

I present a critical review of the literature as shaped by the voices of the respondent in thesis study. The conceptual framework was developed and research in this chapter. The concept of governmentality was explored to understand power dynamics at play.

CHAPTER 3

I name my ontological and epistemology position in thesis research study. I have taken a critical paradigm approach. I outline the type of research methods.

CHAPTER 4

I present the findings from the research respondents from the focus group and interviews conducting during the research study.

CHAPTER 5

I combine and contrast the finding from chapter two with the finding from the critical voice of the research respondent drawing out the implications for first time tutors/teachers and practice and theory. I concluded with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the increased policies emphasis on work to support an employability agenda in adult & FET in Ireland. The review of the literature will be conducted from a critical perspective to demonstrate how neo-liberalism and managerialism are reshaping and the purpose and practice of adult and community education and the professional lives of practitioners. The way employability agenda, which is dominant throughout these policies will be conceptualised, critically to illuminate the effect the education for social justice, emancipation, critical citizenship that newly qualified further education teachers embrace. The concept of hegemony and governmentality drawn upon as a theoretical framework to understand how newly qualified further education teachers/tutors practice and employability is been shaped and disciplined by a neo liberal policies in adult&FET sector. In these neo liberal times, I will also explore the literature to illuminate some of the barriers to employment of NQT in the sector.

Neoliberalism

A theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005, p2)

Harvey suggests that everything must be controlled by the market and free trade. The roles of the state are diminished to the extent that it sets up the market and ensure its “*proper functioning*”. The state cannot be biased when making economical decisions because it is always under the scrutiny of trade unions and social justice and environmental activists (p.21). Harvey contends that Neo liberalism was promoted as an economic theory back in the Reagan and Thatcher’s years of the British government in the 70s and 80s. It was the breakdown of “Keynesian and social democratic consensus with its key characteristics of mixed economy of a free market with strict state control through the” nationalisation of key industries; a commitment to full employment, the building of a welfare state and national health service”(Moir, et, al,2014p.48).

According to Moir, et, al (2014) the trade unions had much more control of negotiation between capital and labour which legitimised the Unions role in the economy and society. However, it was Thatcher's government that brought the demise of the trade unions and promoted the neoliberal ideas as a solution to the economic problems concurred throughout the 80s. Consequently, it became the "*dominant common sense a new paradigm shaping all policies*" (Gamble, 2001,p.129).

The 90s was distinct with the mantra of "*No Alternative*". In the neoliberal ideas state markets did not need to be controlled, because the state did not understand how markets and the economy work. The elites IMF, World Banks, TNC etc. had the right knowledge to regulate and make the right decision for all the member states (Harvey, 2005).

Through a process of deregulation and free trade, this allowed markets to expand globally and consequently created oligopolies or monopolies, the new economic elite (Pp.34-35). Other authors noted neoliberalism distinctive characteristics,(George, 2001; Gamble, 2001, Bourdieu, & Wacquant 2001). Its goal is a reduction in public spending, and the rolling back of the state's responsibility in society and the economy. It also uses the ethos of business to operate public services, and oversees the deregulation of flexible labour markets by marginalising and decreasing the trade union powers. Neoliberalism affords the state less responsibility in providing secure and stable jobs. Furthermore,neoliberalism demands reduction in welfare and public spending and the shifting of responsibility onto individuals away from the state dependency to self-responsibility. If you can't get a job it's the individual who is at fault.

Neoliberal policy, precarious work in FET

Grummell (2007,2014) Finnegan (2008) arguments highlighted the impact of neoliberal policies discourses on adult & further education. Accordingly, development of educational policies is being shaped by neoliberal discourses "that adapt adult education principles, such as lifelong learning and emancipation, for its own economic and political logic". Grummell further states that through the discourses of individualism, consumerism, promoting of competitive markets in adult educational policies, this lends to an ideology that creates individual's responsibility for success for their own employability and "*life*

chances”(Ibid,p.1).These ideas are passed on to society and become accepted as normal, and in the best interest of the public.

Finnegan’s (2008) study on neo-liberalism and Irish adult education, describes neo-liberalism“*as not simply an economic ideology, but also a powerful and complex form of cultural hegemony*” (p. 58).CulturalHegemony is a Marxist theory associated with Gramsci, who characterises it has “*spontaneous*” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group;this consent is “*historically*” caused by the prestige which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.¹

Neoliberalism is being strongly contested across the globe, these ideas simply do not work. The trickle down economic or trickledown theory is a term often used to critique economic policies which favours the rich/wealthy while been framed as good for the poor/under privilege. According to Galbraith (1982) referred to the horse and sparrow theory, meaning if you give “*a horse enough oats some of it will pass through onto the road for sparrows*”. This metaphor suggests that the rich gain the greatest portion while the poor made do with the crumbs.

The neo liberal language and ideology is dominant throughout policy and strategy for the adult further and community education sector.

The FET sector according to Grummell & Murray (2015) state:

“Further education represents the vocational, technical and practice-based forms of education, which is now repositioned in a neoliberal era driven by a performance-based and market-orientated vision of education in the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere” (p.432).

Furthermore, according to these authors in 2000, the government White Paper on adult, community and further education firmly positioned further education and training within the context of adult and community education, the authors state that this was an integral part of a “*life wide*” commitment in the development of an Adult Education system (Department of Education and Science 2000, p. 84).

Accordingly, the Department of Education and Skills (2000, p.84) stated that ‘*adult education and training*’ should be aimed at ‘*up skilling and reskilling people who*

¹ Gramsci, (1972) Selections from the Prison notebooks,ed and trans.Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith

are unemployed’, where providing *‘skills for work is a priority’* (Ibid). However, findings this research indicates a clear lack of employment, irrespective of what skills or qualification one processes.

The neo-liberal state has been transforming school systems to make them a consistent part of the *‘market society’*, pushing education in the direction of *‘human capital’* development and job preparation. According to Standings *‘It has been one of the ugliest aspects of globalisation’* (Standings, 2011, p.68). This in effect as noted by Grummell and Murray (2015) ties adult further education with the global and politic order. This global and political strategy is evident in Ireland acquisition of human capital and repositioned education and adult & further education towards performance based and market vision for the sector (Ibid, 2015).

In the FET strategy 2014-2019 offers substantial evidence into neoliberal employment agenda introduced by SOLAS the FET authority. The strategy highlights that Skills will be regarded as a resource for economic growth; outlining a skilled, innovative and flexible labour force had become a key resource for sustained economic growth. In effect, the growth of the economy is entwined to the learner’s and practitioner’s capacities to up skill and become innovative and be flexible workers.

Accordingly, one of the six focus points highlighted in the strategy entitled *“Skills as an insular from unemployment”* (SOLAS, 2014, p5) is central to this particular focus on lifelong learning and flexible employment. The strategy stated that:

“as job security give way to Labour market flexibility and the focus moves from a job for life to work for life only through continues skills development and lifelong learning can participants in the labour market ensure employability” (SOLAS, 2014,p5).

This statement above has very serious implications for this and the next generation of workers. Job security is paramount and a requirement for anyone engaging in the market. For example, job security is needed to purchase a house, it is also vital in planning for a family, educational and health plans, even buying a car requires job security. The state presumably benefits from not paying out pensions, or welfare benefits in years to come, only the very rich will be able to afford to buy houses, reproduce, and have the money for educational, health benefits.

In 2015 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) released its *world employment on social outlook: The changing nature of jobs report*. Its executive summary painted a bleak picture of its assessment of the character of work at the start of the 21st century, highlighting the shift away from standard employment model, in which workers earn wages and salaries in more stable secure relationship to their employers (p.13). ILO noted:

“In advanced economies, the standard employment model is less and less dominant. In emerging and developing economies, there has been more strengthen of employment contracts and relationships but informal employment is common in many countries, and at the bottom of the global chain very short-term contracts, and irregular hours are becoming wider spread.”

It could be argued that much of the changes taken place as noted by ILO is part of a discourse a distinct set of policies which acclaim to array of market “freedoms” “free trade”, the freedom for corporation in engage in mergers and so forth (Herod, & Lambert,2016, p.2).These corporation need to adapt quickly to the ever-changing markets; they need to be able to adapt inflow and output of workers very quickly to be successful. Also noted was the relaxing of government regulations and freeing financial capital through the deregulation of markets. This has been the dominant discourse,for many governments over the last few decades (Ibid).

The central goal for neo liberals is the drive towards more flexible labour market workforce. According to Herod et al,(2016) that flexibility is often understood as freedom of workers’ wages to work at a wage agreeable by both employee and employer and the freedom to hire and fire at will. This is in line with SOLAS FET strategy 2014-2017 were the move to flexible labour market workforce is a primary goal for FET learners and practitioners.

Precarious Flexibility

Flexibility in the workforce was developed from the reaction of the stock markets in New York to react in minutes to events in Asia therefore encouraging the need of firms to adapt and to respond quickly to markets also (Heron, et,al 2016). There are two types of labour flexibility; numerical flexibility, and functional flexibility, meaning that companies had enough labour to draw upon when demand is required, it also had the opposite effect in reducing its commitment to that labour when needed. This can be achieved through flexible working hours, or reducing work to part time hours, or hiring more workers on fixed term contracts. The functional

flexibility allows company to use pools of easily hired and fired workers, the idea is to have workers develop numerous competencies so that they can be switched between jobs or do multi tasking; this model is also referred to, the American model (Avanitis, 2005). This model is being adapted as a strategy for the FET 2014-2017 sector moving away from secured employment to precarious work and a future of uncertainty.

Securing a job and working with adults is a goal for many participants in this research study. The educational training boards are the main employers today in the FET sector. Finding a job in these ETBs has been the focus of NQTs since graduation, summarily this will be the focus of the next generation of FET teachers/tutors for years to come.

For many participants in this study working is an important activity for these individuals, as it links individuals to networks of fellow teachers/tutors and is also central to their identity (Kalleberg, 2008).

The study of work has long history in the field of sociology. Social theorists had grasped the complexity of working relationships between employer and employee and society in general. From Classical social theorist Durkheim, in his *Division of Labour*; Marx, in his theories of alienation and labour process and Weber rationalisation of bureaucracy and social closure (Ibid).

In the advancement of globalisation today and more specifically neoliberalism which created the demands which shaped the socio-economic and political forces, through Hegemony (Finnegan, 2008), (Gramsci, 1971) to make work more precarious and publicly accepted. To say “accepted” may be to final of a word where hegemony is concerned, there is also room to counter this, for example TUI have been fighting for labour rights and working conditions for teachers over the decades.

A research of the literature on precarious work for teachers/tutors the FET has been quite scarce. O Neill (2016) quite articulated narrative research titled

Ar lorg na slí, highlights the precarious lives of tutors in FET and Fitzsimons, (2017, p.207) substantial research study into *Community Education and neoliberalism* see it as

“employment precarity as an erosion of job security and expectations on employee flexibility, both viewed as hegemonically framed as typical feature of globalisation”(Fitzsimons,2017; Kalleberg,2009; Lorenz,2012; Spillane ,2015).

Kalleberg suggests that precarious work is employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the perspective of the worker, as a result leading to distress (2009, p.2). Similarly, Anderson (2010) has defined precarious work as atypical and insecure employment that has implications beyond employment, directed to a related declining of social relations.

Other authors Standings (2011) who recently argued for revisiting the concept precariat who felt it was the bases of new class, one that had little confidence in the interaction with capital or state, but without any social contract associations of the proletariat as defined as “labour security been provided in exchange for subordination and allegiance”(Mc Kay,2012;Standings,2011).

However, Standings argument had been strongly contested by Seymour (2012) who argued that precarity was not a new class of worker but “is built into neoliberal capitalism in which growth is predicated on financial risk and indebtedness, in which labour markets are weakened and social protections rolled back”.

The nature of Neoliberal precarious work

The limitations of what is and what is not precarious work are fuzzy. According to the European Commission (2011) had argued “important indicators” of precariousness are job security, access to training, career prospects, pay and productivity. The International Labour Organization (ILO)’s definition focuses on security: precarious employment is a 'work relation where employment security, which is considered one of the principal elements of the labour contract, is lacking. This term encompasses temporary and fixed term labour contracts, work at home and sub-contracting' (ILO, 2011).

Perceptions of insecurity

Combining the different arguments cited above together, the idea of insecurity presumes to point to a combination of the following characteristics. Uncertainty – where work does not enable workers to plan their futures; Income – where income is insufficient to enable workers to live decently; Dismissal – where protection from arbitrary dismissal is absent; Employment – where future employment is uncertain (Mc Kay et al, 2012).

In Mc Kays et al, study on precarious work found has been particularly associated with female employment and women remain over-represented among precarious workers, as the 2010 report to the European Parliament on Precarious women workers demonstrates (European Parliament, 2010). Women across Europe are more likely to work part-time than are men, but are also more likely to be working as involuntary part-time workers.

The identification of women with precarious work was associated with p.50

Characteristics: Women with children, particularly in the case of single parents; Part-time work; Low levels of skills; Low pay; and Working in female-dominated sectors. p.51

Young people were also identified in the study with precarious work in three

Situations, where they were:

- Newcomers to work and lacked any experience;
- Lacking in qualifications relevant to work; and
- Qualified, for example with a university degree, but where this had not prepared them for the work that was available. Of the three it was a lack of work experience that was most likely to be raised by the interviewees as the reason why young people were in precarious work. (p.56)

Employment protection law indicators

The OECD's employment protection indicators (EPL) identify and compare levels of employment protection. Of the 12 countries studied there are EPL indices for ten of them. In relation to the formal strictness of employment protection, the most recent OECD update finds that the UK, Ireland and Sweden are below the OECD average, while the Netherlands is exactly at the average and Poland, Italy, Germany, France.² In this context employment protection laws were seen as 'a barrier to job creation' (Mc Kay, et, al, 2012, P.128).

The issue of precarious work has been debated substantially in policy and academic circles in Ireland over the last decade, and is quite controversial. A system of Joint Labour Committees, responsible for the setting of terms and conditions in sectors considered weak is currently under significant review. In the 1990s a concern to protect the rights of precarious workers stimulated "protective legislation", while today, the Irish public authorities see "atypical work" as an important source of flexibility for companies and the economy (Ibid).

SOLAS strategy 2017-2019 reported that FET workforce is characterised by extensive experience and long service within the sector. The report further states "not only does the FET workforce have relatively long service, it is also characterised by a high level of stability within job roles". Once people join the sector, they tend to stay for a long career and often do not change jobs (SOLAS, p22). In the report SOLAS find that most of:

"ETBs had a pool of sessional staff engaged, to varying degrees, over the course of the year. For example, a tutor might be contracted to deliver one programme annually. The difficulties experienced by part-time and occasional staff in accessing professional development support were a common issue raised during the consultation workshops that informed the strategy (Ibid, p. 22)."

Since SOLAS takeover of the FET sector in 2013 which also marked the cutting down of 33 VEC into 16 ETBs; the employment in the sector as increasingly got worse. In a very recent study conducted by Camilla Fitzsimons in *Community Education and Neoliberalism* published in March 2017 captured the experience of community educator who "out of the blue" received a letter to say she was been let

²Venn, D. (2009) Legislation, collective bargaining and enforcement: Updating the OECD employment protection indicators. www.oecd.org/els/workingpapers

out after three years of working in the sector. The interviewee also expresses how “hurt” she felt that she had to continue correcting learners’ portfolios weeks after she had been let go. She further described that she “*never felt so exploited in a work situation before*”. She also discovered from other tutors in the sector that up to 30 others had received the same letters also (Fitzsimons, 2017, p.220, 221).

The experiences of many tutors/teachers who are employed in the sector are predominantly of a non-full-time nature. The sector is plagued with neoliberal precarious working conditions, and no clear focus on continuous professional development or recruitment for newly qualified further education teachers in the sector. The aging workforce also highlighted as a potential challenge to the sector, it also highlighted that the sector is dominantly female (Ibid,p.21).

The sector as traditionally relied on the experience of second level teacher to deliver many programmes. This acts as a barrier for those who recently qualified to teach in the further education sector

A recent study *A Study on the Prevalence of Zero Hours Contracts among Irish Employers and their Impact on Employees* 2015 by University of Limerick (UCL) and commissioned by the then Minister Gerard Nash of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The findings painted a slightly different picture of employment in the Further education sector. They found:

Context educational field

According to the report there are 154,000 employees working in the educational sector at the end of 2014. The report noted that the Irish education system stretches across primary, secondary, third level higher education and further education. That further education takes place in post second level but not part of third level system. Programmes include PLC courses, Adult literacy, BTEI courses and self-funded courses (p.78). In regarding employment, the report found that the economic crisis 2009 had a significant effect on workers in the public service and educational sector. The report highlighted that the government commitment to pay cuts, reduction in employment numbers, incremental pay freezes, restrictions on promotions and increase in fixed term contracts.

The report also found that approx. 2000 WTE Adult education tutor’s posts and that they worked in the further education sector, teaching FETAC courses, self-financing

programmes, back-to-education programmes, PLC courses, and adult literacy.³ The report stated that hours were dependent on the programme, the hours required and the subject area (Ibid, p.82).

Also, SIPTU cited in the study noted that:

“Tutors often do not know how many hours they are going to work from week to week; these are very much as and when required contracts. It cited the example of a tutor who could be on If and When hours for many years. At the beginning of a teaching cycle, they are employed to teach a programme, which could involve for example 240 hours teaching, but the programme could be discontinued at any time if there is insufficient demand and funding to sustain it and the tutor most likely reverts to social welfare payments” (p,82).

The report also found that funding was a key driver for “if and when contracts” in the FET sector. The report stated for an example for adult education tutors, “the programmes that they deliver are demand-led and for the purpose of meeting community needs”. However, it also stated that in some cases, courses are cancelled because the funding was not available to resource them (p, 85). It was stated by the ETBs that they had difficulty in managing tutors because of tight budget restraints placed on them (ibid).

The report also found that another driver of if and when contracts that the interviewee in the report stated that a lot of private colleges were producing too many graduates, and this led to an oversupply of teachers, it stated that this had an effect of not enough hours available for teachers in employment.

The employers group and trade unions who took part in the study stated;

“that there was a shift away from the traditional full time permanent posts towards fix term contracts fulltime/part time and contracts of indefinite duration.”

The study also noted that since the introduction of the Protection of employees Act 2003

“that employers are more cautious at recruitment stage, that it has become the norm that new recruits would be offered a temporarily, fix term contract rather than a permanent.”

The study also noted that “no permanent contracts had been offered by ETBs since 2001” (Ibid, p84). I must dispute this finding because; it doesn't consider contracts of indefinite duration, which are awarded to staff in Youthreach (TUI 1999). It also

³Whole time equivalent (WTE) is a unit that indicates the workload of an employed person. It can also include more than one person could that could make up one full WTE position.

didn't consider the diversity of provision and staff in the sector, were 22 hours is the total any teacher can be employed for (Ibid).

The financial crisis and its aftermath has been one driver affecting risk of precariousness in Europe.

From an international perspective, it was found that the financial crisis and in its wake, had been viewed as a driver affecting the risk of precariousness in Europe, the study found that:

“As employers and employees find themselves operating in a more competitive and uncertain context post-crisis, new hiring's have increasingly taken place on the basis of temporary and marginal part-time contracts” (Europal,2006,p10).

Furthermore, the European study also found:

“Workers on fixed-term types of contract are at a higher risk of precariousness from a range of factors, such as working conditions, job security and lack of control over the duration of their contracts than those on permanent contracts. These risks are even higher in the case of temporary agency workers” (Ibid, p. 99)

Many of the participants in my research had experienced the difficulty of gaining employment and those who had gained employment, experienced the precarious nature of fix term and hour to hour contracts in FET sector in Ireland.⁴

There is not a lot literature on first time teachers/tutors experience of employment in the further education sector in Ireland. In order to bridge this gap; this thesis will explore some of the barriers to employment by first time tutors in further education sector in Ireland. SOLAS strategy provides some background to profile of the workforce in FET sector.

Workforce Philosophy in FET

A review of SOLAS further education professional strategy 2017-2019 was developed for all those who worked in the FET sector in Ireland. The strategy, which is the first of its kind, was developed by SOLAS in close collaboration with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and its member Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and the report reflects a comprehensive evidence gathering, stakeholder consultation and research process⁵. The integration and reform of the FET sector creates a challenge to ensure that its workforce is supported to meet changing

⁴ Findings from interview and focus group conducted in 2016/2017 chapter 4

⁵ SOLAS professional strategy 2017-2019

needs, and an opportunity to provide a consistent system of professional development for those working in the sector (Ibid,p7). The research has boosted to be one of the largest research exercises in FET in recent years in Ireland.

There is recognised change in terms relating to the identity of teacher/tutors in FET sector; the strategy has incorporated the term practitioner to all workers, assumingly to create a uniform understanding of the sectors workforce. The term practitioner is defined as anyone working in sector, or working with learners, or acting in a support role or influencing the learner experience in FET sector (Ibid,p.16). The term practitioner is used quite dominantly throughout. According to SOLAS

“This encompasses a diverse range of roles and embraces a wide array of professional development needs and practices. The term ‘FET practitioner’ reflects the important role of all staff in contributing to the quality and success of the sector. This is at the heart of the principle of inclusivity in the strategy” (SOLAS, p16).

I agree with Murray (2014) *What’s in a name?* who presents a crucial argument on the use of terminology in FET. Murray’s key argument of the role of teacher/educator; illuminates the efforts in defining terms, “either by policy makers or practitioners, as Murray states this is an “exercise of power”. In terms, the principle of inclusivity in the strategy quoted above I believe is an attempt to mask the differentiating factor between “adult education” and “second level education on the power dynamics of the relationship” (p.116).

Also, it could be argued that the government strategy (SOLAS 2017-2019) for the FET sector is to make every worker in FET sector responsible for the success of the sector as highlighted in the quote above. This is in light of the fact that the state controls the budget and the types of programmes suited to the needs of the economy. How much control does the providers, teacher/tutors in deciding the fate of adult education? There are currently conflicting philosophies in the FET sector. Philosophies that underpin the discourse of performance and market economy are viewed as best practice for adult learners; as opposed to the critical feminist pedagogy; which can enable civil society, to free itself from domination, and the oppression (Hooks, 1994 Friere, 1970). This involves according to Fitzsimons (2017) *“challenging essentialist notions of gender that attach fixed traits through perceived biological difference with insufficient regard for gender socialisation”*.

She further states It involves working in ways that ensure both “*female and male realities are heard*” (Fitzsimons, 2017, p. 117).

Tensions exist between philosophies in the sector. The dominate philosophy potentially dictate teaching practice and therefore the teachers employed. I do agree with Fitzsimons when she illuminates the possibilities “*false tensions can be created by potential allies*” highlighting the blindness to the possibilities of “*uniting counter hegemonic actions*” throughout educational society (Fitzsimons, 2017, p. 117).

There has been a steady move towards professionalization in further education sector highlighted in the white paper on adult, community and further education (DES, 2000).

Professional Identity

The APLINE (2008) Adult Learning Professions in Europe research study provided a deeper understanding of the state of professionalisation and professional development of the different groups of practitioners working in Non-Vocational Adult Learning across Europe (trends and developments). Accordingly, the findings were used to identify key issues and challenges, highlighting the need of development of adult learning professions as an attractive proposition.

The study of current trends and issues of adult learning professions in Europe by APLINE (2008) showed that there were numeral pathways in becoming an adult education professional. Firstly, the study highlighted that some European universities offered master degree programmes relating to general knowledge of specific processes in adult (p.83). There are few academic centres currently offer a specialisation in adult learning at the BA level. The study also found that there a several pathways out from universities that contribute to pathways into the profession:

“Adult learning increasingly appears to be offered on top of, or as an element in, other courses such as sociology, economics, human resource management, international management and public relations. Graduates of such programmes find employment in different sectors of the economy. Adult learning in the traditional sense is not their core business. However, their knowledge of, and qualifications in, adult learning provides important added value to their professionalism” (Ibid, 85).

The study concluded that there was no specific initial vocational training programme for adult learning professionals in most European countries. The study also found that most people working in adult education did not originally start their careers as adult educators. They not only studied other subjects, they also had other jobs. Many of them, however, were working as teachers, pedagogues or trainers in or through the systems of schools, colleges, universities and other formal education institutions (p.95).

In Tierney and Clarke (2008) reported in *challenges and implications in the Irish further education and training sector* also highlighted the numerous backgrounds of teachers in further education; stated:

“the backgrounds of teachers, trainers and tutors working in the FET sector. They include post-primary teachers with a degree and teaching qualification, those with subject specialist degrees such as ICT, skilled professionals and craftspeople with professional qualifications and experience and volunteer tutors who may have no teaching experience or qualifications” (Tierney & Clarke, 2008 p.138).

The teaching experience and qualification was also noted by the DES. The White paper *adult education learning for life* (2000) also highlighted the practitioners that lacked third level qualification. It stated that those employed in the Adult Education field had been recruited based on a second-level teaching qualification or a trade or business qualification. It further stated that a number of them will have taken a variety of orientation and other programmes relating to working with adults, the highlighted in most cases, no professional recognition was awarded. So, in effect many with an Adult Education qualification, but who lack a teaching qualification, may find it impossible to secure stable employment in their chosen field. There are also many workers in the community and voluntary sector with expertise and experience in this area, however lack the professional recognition of a formal qualification (DES, 2000, p.152). As of present a teaching qualification does not guarantee a job let alone secure stable employment in the sector. What qualification does?

However, in Ireland development of adult education as a profession had received some state recognition.

Teacher council of Ireland

The states in 2006 established the teaching council of Ireland in order to regulate the teaching profession. Its role included approving teacher training courses for all levels of education except higher education (Ibid). The council regards education as a public good and to that affect states “that reiterate that it is the primary responsibility and direct role of the State, in co-operation with the Council, to support high quality teacher education”⁶. The council stated that in order for them to:

“fulfil their responsibility, the state should guarantee through its Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), an adequate supply of highly qualified teachers, as has been the tradition for many decades. In this context, the State and the profession share a responsibility for the continuing professional development of teachers. The State consider the negative impact of the casualisation of the profession where many teachers remain in part-time or short-term employment for extended periods”(Teaching Council,2011,p.6)

These considerations have been ignored to date by the state, as precarious working conditions persist as a recruitment strategy by many of the FET providers, and as experienced by some of the participants in this research.

It has also been noted that the function of the teacher council vision was seemed confined to primary and second level education as outline in the teacher council act 2001 and amended act 2006 (DES). The neglect of adult educator as a distinct profession was clearly evident. The low status and marginalisation of adult educators as a distinct group was also enforced by the lack of voice; recognition and representation to the membership on the teaching council committee at the time of launch⁷ cited in Jeffers study (2012).

The functions of the teaching council under 2001 act; to promote teaching as a profession; establish, publish, review and maintain codes of professional conduct for teachers, which include standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence as well as establish procedures in relation to the induction of teachers into the teaching profession (p.8,9). Without a voice or representation on the council committee, it is

⁶Teacher-Education/Policy-on-the-Continuum-of-Teacher-Education 2011

⁷The membership of the Council at the time of the launch consisted of thirty-seven delegates: eleven primary, eleven post-primary, two Colleges of Education, two Universities and Named 3rd Level Colleges, four school management; two Parents Councils and five Minister’s nominees(Teacher council act 2001.

unclear how the democratic views and interests of teachers/tutors of adults in FET sector can be maintained.⁸

Regulating the profession / Initial Teacher education

In November 2009, the teaching council set out the entry requirements for teachers to be registered as a condition to unify requirements to entry to the teaching profession at primary, post primary and further education levels 2009/2010 annual report. The report highlighted the further regulation to come into effect in 2013 “*all new teachers in the VEC and further education sectors will be required to have an approved teacher education qualification*”.⁹The Minister for Education and Skills had indicated his intention to commence Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 during the 2012/13 school year. This made it mandatory requirement for all state funded positions be registered. The professional accreditation was to in affect to ensure that programmes prepared graduates for entry into the teaching profession (Ibid, p .5).

The first code of professional conduct was published in 2007 and this was renewed in 2012. A hard copy was produced to be handed out to all successful applicants upon registration. The purpose of the code was to act as a guide for all teachers throughout their careers. The code was to ensure that the honour and dignity of the teaching profession was upheld especially in the eyes of the public (Ibid).¹⁰

The public was also to play a principle role in Irish education; the Fitness to teach provisions of the Teaching Council Acts 2001- 2015 was implemented, meaning that for the first time any person would be able to make a complaint to the Teaching Council about a registered teacher, committing the public to the policing of Irish education sector.

Accreditation

The Teaching Council have the power to review and accredit programmes of initial teacher education (ITE) provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the State. The Council's states that the professional accreditation function is distinct from

⁸Review of recent election 2016 of teaching council committee adult education had no elected representation, a list of ministers on the committee could not be accessed.

⁹ Teacher council annual report 2009/2010 p5

¹⁰The Teaching Council Overview of 2012 and looking ahead in 2013 ACCS Annual Convention 2013.

the process of academic accreditation which programmes already undergo. The council also stated that Academic accreditation is based on the appropriateness of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma; according to the council in the case whereas professional accreditation is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares graduates for entry into a profession (Ibid,p.2).

Further development FET sector in 2011 the Council published *Further Education; General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications* (Teaching Council, 2011). It outlined the new requirement for registration for further education teacher/tutors to the teaching council of Ireland. The policy outlined the details for qualifications required into FE applicants into FET sector. The applicant must hold a primary degree and a teacher education and or accredited further education qualification. It also stipulated the requirements of ITE programmes. They recommended that the programme be of level eight or higher on the National Framework Qualification (NFQ) and be registered with an awarding body with a minimum 60ECTs.¹¹

It also had a built-in flexibility clause for providers to adopt a “broad approach” when considered the learners applications reflecting the diversity in education background.¹² It was also noted that secondary school teacher could teach in the further education sector without undertaken compulsory adult education learning programme. This has allowed for second level teachers to gain additional hours from there legitimate employment. This as the effect of creating a barrier to employing newly qualified further education teachers/tutors.

FET teacher’s professional qualifications

The purpose of the teacher education qualification is to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to be able to carry out their teaching role and responsibilities. A primary outcome of programmes presented for

¹¹ The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System regulates and facilitates the comparison of courses of study throughout the European Union. It permits for learner transfer between courses and aids curriculum design.

¹² A recent review of the eight Teaching Council accredited Further Education ITE programmes shows that seven of the institutions and have structured either full-time or part-time delivery schedules. The remaining institution delivers a concurrent three –year undergraduate and ITE degree both full-time and part-time at ‘evenings and weekends’.

accreditation must be the award of a teacher education qualification designed for teaching in the further education sector (teaching council, 2011, p. 10).

Aim of Teacher programmes in further education:

- To prepare student teachers to develop their knowledge, skills, competences and understanding in order to teach in further education
- To provide a foundation in the theories and practices of lifelong learning, including pedagogical and andrological approaches to teaching and learning
- To develop teaching styles and methodologies appropriate to a wide range of learners and contexts
- To develop the theoretical understanding and practical skills to devise and implement programme-appropriate assessment for national certification
- To provide supervised and supportive practical teaching experience in authentic further education settings (Ibid 2011, p.12-15). The rigour of this programme guarantees the high quality of further education teacher entering the field. However certain condition of subject knowledge in ITE programme creates a barrier to employment for some of the participants in this research project.

The inclusion of subject knowledge identifies with the traditional teaching methods however many of the subjects offered by providers in further education, does not reflect the many studies in Higher education institutes, i.e. hairdressing, dog grooming, security studies. Therefore, leaving those whose undergrad studies, which incorporate the Social Science/ Humanities subjects such as Sociology; Anthropology; Civil Law; Social Policy; Medieval Irish and Celtic Studies; History and Geography; in a very precarious situation. There are not too many academic subjects been offered to learners in the further education sector? Newly qualified further education teachers are restricted to applying for jobs outside their degree subjects which they don't have much experience in. The condition of having a subject with the H –Dip set out by the teaching council is acting as a barrier to employment for newly qualified further education teachers.

In reflection since the professionalisation of FET sector, and recognition of the teaching council, many students that studied various subject to honours degree level

were attracted to the further education profession. Their degree subjects are not the same as traditional adult tutors entering the field. While this new cohort may hold a recognised professional teaching qualification for the FET sector, they lack the teaching experience of traditional teachers in the field. This lack of experience is perceived as a barrier to employment in the sector by many of the newly qualified FE teachers in this research study.

In addition, the department of education and educational providers does not recognise this new cohort of student teachers, on joining the profession; they are not like your traditional adult tutor. The sector maintains a narrow and out of date provision in the absence of 21st century skills and knowledge, and subject theory that these subjects and student teachers can clearly provide. In this instance not having the right subjects is a barrier to employment.

In Ireland, a need for a proper system of initial teacher education for FET practitioners was recognised according to Hurley (2012) in the Murphy report (1973), The Kenny report (1984), the Green Paper (1998) and the White paper (2000). Furthermore, there was a wide consensus that all educators should engage in continuous professional development (CPD) throughout their careers (DES, 1994, TUI, 2011, Hurley 2014, p. 41).

Importantly the report (Teaching Council, 2011) noted that learning to teach just cannot occur on initial teacher education programmes alone, and it highlighted the council's important role in providing continuing professional development and induction into the profession.

Learning to teach in further education

There is momentarily no induction into the teaching profession for further education teachers. There is a clear lack of research into the implications for newly qualified further education teachers' post-graduation entry into the profession. Furthermore, it is unclear what kind of professional supports are being offered to newly qualified further education teachers in maintaining or developing their teaching skills in the FET sector. It was felt by the participants in this study that a proper induction into the profession would help to lower the barrier to employment in the sector (chapter, 4).

I asked several newly qualified further education teachers, colleagues of mine to take part in this qualitative research project approx. six months after graduating with a higher diploma in further education. Six agreed to be interviewed, and ten others responded to a small survey in April 2017.¹³ Eight out of ten felt that there was no support for them. The survey was not designed to draw substantial conclusions; however, it supported the need for investigation into the supports available to new qualified further education teachers.

The fact is there is no induction into the profession for further education teacher per say. There however have been several studies for beginner teachers in primary and second level education commissioned by the teacher council. In a review of the literature I found a study conducted by Conway, et, al (2009).

Their study titled *learning to teach and its implications for the continuum of teacher education: nine country cross –national study*, carried out for the benefit of primary and second level beginner teachers, mirrors the experience of the beginner teacher’s in further education in my study. The participants in my study are registered with the teaching council. They all have recently graduated from the professional higher diploma in further education, so the findings in this study I found to be significant. Firstly, induction is defined as a specific programme of teacher education according to the teacher council “*takes place during a critical period at the beginning of the newly qualified teacher’s career, usually the first year after qualifying as a teacher*”.¹⁴

The study found that induction.

“In Ireland, the transition from student teaching to full teacher status is now view in all major policy documents and in the national pilot project on teachers’ induction as a critical stage in becoming an effective teacher.”

The study also stated that induction happens with or without a formal programme, Conway et, al (2009) found that without a formal induction programme into the teaching profession as a consequence “*beginner teachers*” are “*inducted informally*” into the existing dominate culture of the teaching and learning practice.¹⁵ Conway et,

¹³ Findings from interviews and survey (2016,2017) summary chapter 4

¹⁴ Teacher council website page <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Induction-Probation/>

¹⁵ Conway et, al 2009 Learning to teach implication for the continuum of teacher education: nine country cross –national study, UCC a report to the teaching council.

al further stated that this sits in contrast to the needs of the new professionals who are faced with the growing expectation in a knowledge led society. They also found that exemplar programmes are distinguished by their strategic and deliberate professional learning structures to introduce new teachers into new forms of professional commitment.

From a wider prospective the study found from their cross-country survey as part of designing induction programmes found that “*best practice principles*” for NQTs: where to be viewed as “professionals on a continuum”; and been supported and not left to sink or swim (Ibid, p. xxii). Considering these findings and number of past studies DES *learning to teach* (2006) and *Beginning to teach* (2007) Conway et, al (2009).

In September 2012 development of induction programme into the profession after graduation was announced by the then Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan, TD. These induction programmes that are specifically designed for primary and secondary teachers are critical to newly qualified teachers careers especially in the first year of qualifying however these programmes do not accommodate newly qualified further education teachers in their careers and in their first year of graduation. Therefore, leaving these teachers without support or a chance of building on their new acquired further adult education skills in a sink or swim scenario pointed out also in Conway’s et, al (2009) study. Induction programmes can be beneficial to both educational providers and NQT in providing additional teaching experience and Tutor/teacher new knowledge to the sector. In its absence acts as a barrier to employment.

In (Avalos, 2011, p.11). Fantilli and McDougall (2009, p.814) cited in Jeffers (2012) suggested that beginning teachers assume the same responsibilities as experienced teachers almost immediately when they enter the professional field. In this context the induction programmes, post-graduation is very important. Murtagh (2012) had noted that induction programmes for tutor was a weakness in the system. Murtagh recalls an interview with a principle that:

“suggested the need for induction training for new tutors as ‘there is no induction process for adult education tutors. Just because you have a

qualification doesn't mean you can go into a class and teach a course. It is a weakness in the system" (p.128).

The Induction Programme into the teaching profession is a flexible learning programme, funded by the Department of Education and Skills and designed to meet the particular professional learning needs of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Newly Qualified Teachers is referred to a teacher who have met the Council's requirements in terms of qualifications, but who has not completed the required period of professional practice.¹⁶ In this document post qualification professional practice procedure 2016-2017 , defines a newly qualified teacher (NQT) refers to all newly registered teachers who are beginning their teaching career, or may be returning to teaching after a period of time, despite of the date of qualification (teaching council, 2016-2017).This document directed at the primary, secondary school sector had not considered the distinct teaching methodology of further education teachers, recognised by teaching council in their ITE programme for further education (Teaching Council, 2011). Status and representation is important for NQTs in overcoming barriers to employment in the sector.

The recent reports highlight also the commitment of the teaching council since its establishment to primary secondary education level education in Ireland. It shows the tremendous effort of all the staff and distinguish highly motivated council committee in it approach to sustaining quality standards for Irish education which stands as an exemplar for international best practice for NQTs. Presently contemporary Ireland is driven by knowledge society, where even more effort is put on even higher standards for all NQTs that education is performance orientated (Grummell, 2014) as a requirement to sustain the present and future economy.

However, a lack of induction programme suited to teaching adult in further education further undermines the status and contributes to the marginalisation of first time further education teachers. With no clear representation from teaching council's educational providers are free to ignore NQTs when applying for jobs in the sector.

¹⁶ Post-qualification Professional Practice Procedures and Criteria 2016/2017 p.3

Status

The task of improving the status of adult educators as highlighted in the White paper 2000 hinted towards the professionalisation of the FET sector¹⁷. Increasing recognition and status for adult further education teachers, it was expected with the introduction of the teaching council qualification requirements. According to Hoyle (2001) in terms of teaching, status has three independent components. Outline below;

- *occupational prestige: as the public perception of the relative position of an occupation in a hierarchy of occupations*
- *occupational status: a category to which knowledgeable groups allocate a particular occupation*
- *occupational esteem: the regard in which an occupation is held by the general public by virtue of the personal qualities which members are perceived as bringing to their core task. These qualities can perhaps be grouped into three areas: dedication, competence and care. (paraphrased, Hoyle, 2001)*

In addition, a study of the public perception of teaching profession designed initially by Treiman (1977) Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS) “School teacher is ranked among the semi profession along with Social worker and Librarian” and situated below the elite position of “Doctor and Lawyer”. In the study when School teacher is contrasted a primary school teacher is ranked lower than a secondary school teacher. In all the professions studied there is no category or mention of adult further educator/teacher (Hoyle, 2001).

Furthermore, Hoyle found that the public image of the school teacher, are fixed to the relation of teacher and child. There are a number of other factors that according to Hoyle (2001) function to lower the prestige of the profession; salary rates, lower

¹⁷ The vision is outlined thus: ‘If the Adult Education sector is to make the quantum leap envisaged for it in this White Paper, it can only do so on the basis of a highly trained corps of adult educators and trainers who are dynamic and equipped to lead change, to play a key role in the policy debate and to reflect the distinctive identity of the sector in the field of professional practice and research. ... it is a question of widening the existing mechanisms for recognition of qualifications in education and training ... and of providing mechanisms for accreditation of the learning of many practitioners in the sector who have considerable expertise and experience, but who lack formal qualifications’. (DES, 2000 p.150)

entry requirement to the profession in contrast to elite professions. It's clear however that children's education is not the remit of adult education, it is suggested by that public perception of the sector is bedazzled; it does not have a clear identity, it is difficult to ascribe a status to its workforce (Robson, 1998).

In study on the experience of tutor in early childcare setting Jeffers (2012) found the lack of identity of further education teachers and the lack of career potential, unsecure working condition, and no induction or support for newly qualified further education teacher contribute the lower status, low esteem of further education profession. The study also through attention poorly formed identity contributed to lack of status (p.179).

Other authors in the study described adult further education as the 'Cinderella service' (Anderson, 2012). Furthermore, policy makers and stakeholders acknowledge the lack of status afforded to adult further education tutors in Ireland (DES, 2008; Lipinski et al, 2007). These issues remain in the identity and status of the FET sector. ERSA report highlighted that:

"The diverse nature of the sector was seen as making it difficult to form a clear identity for FET. The FET sector was viewed by stakeholders as being less clearly defined and of lower perceived status than Higher Education (HE). This was regarded as reflecting broader societal norms and expectations, but was also seen as relating to the fragmentation of FET provision and perceptions of current provision" (ERSA,2012).

According to (Robson, 1998) Teacher/tutors are not endowed with a high public profile and the profession is not really understood (Robson,1998).

Trying to establish an identity as newly qualified further education teacher/tutors in the field is difficult. Newly qualified further education teachers are held back by the lack of full-time contracts and as a consequence developing a sense of 'team' among teachers/tutors in adult FET sector is quite difficult (Mueller et al, 2010;Robson, 1998).

Theoretical perspective

Critical theory views thinking critically as being able to identify, and then to challenge and change, the process by which a grossly iniquitous society uses dominant ideology to convince people this is a normal state of affairs (Brookfield,2005, p.).

In this research project, my aim is to explore the experience of first time further education teachers in order to highlight the barriers to secure employment.

Foucault was particularly interested in the way power operates through the construction of particular “knowledge’s” and it’s through discourse that power/knowledge is understood. He understood power not to be exercised from the top down or bottom up and through networks. Foucault views power as something embedded in the everyday lives of citizens and in the everyday activities of adult learners and educators (Brookfield, p.129) He posits “a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise within the social body, rather than from above it” (1980, p. 39).

Foucault writes that “power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power . . . individuals are the vehicles of power” (p. 98).

I applied the concepts of governmentality to understanding policy making as a technology of government.

Foucault concept of governmentality focuses on the structures of power in which conduct is organised and which governance is related with the “self-capacities of individual subjects”. It focuses around the different models of governing individuals and groups in society (Ibid, p.35).

It seems to me, in fact, that with the current economic crisis and the great oppositions and conflicts that are developing between rich and poor countries . . . , one can see a developing crisis of government. By ‘government’ I mean the set of institutions and practices, from administration to education, through which people’s conduct is guided. This set of procedures, techniques, and methods that ensure the government of some people by others appears to me to be in crisis now We are perhaps at the beginning of a great crisis of re evaluation of the problem of government (Foucault 2000k: 295–296) cited in (Lemke, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I outline my research methodology. This involves that I describe my philosophical and theoretical positioning, the data collection tools and methods I used to construct this research study. I have also described the core principles, and most importantly the ethical considerations that I have used to guide me through this research process. The purpose of this research study was to profile a select number of first time tutors, their educational backgrounds, qualifications, and work experience. The aim of the research was to explore the experience first time tutors of precarious employment in the Adult & Further education sector. My objective coming from a critical perspective was to understand the issues facing first time tutors/teachers in finding a secure job in further education. The study began in September 2016 and ended in June 2017.

Research methodologies

In this chapter, the word Methodology directs us to a debate in methods used in research studies. The ology part of the word signifies debate. The debate can help me define how I approached the research and explain why I choose certain methods over others, and what I am going to do and how I am going to gain the information needed to conduct a research study. In order to conduct any research study, as a researcher I had to decide from quite a substantial array of research option available in academia. So, I search from within myself, my own experience of the world, to name a philosophical position, a worldview which guided me towards an approach to be used in the research study. By disclosing my own world view I my stated up front my own bias, I believe it is important to critic and illuminate social injustice in society. I don't believe that everyone is treated equally or valued as humans. That precarious working conditions facing many in society cause uncertainty, insecurity a degree of distress.

In this research study, I chose a critical paradigm to research, directly because of the complex and dynamic social reality that I am exploring. These social realities were

best explored through qualitative research which allowed, not just to interpret social construction of the reality of the research participants but to illuminate and critique the issues they face in the further education sector; highlighted in the literature review in chapter two. This enabled me to take a critical position in this research study

Critical Research

According to Merriam (2009) critical research has its foundation in numerous traditions and varied approaches. Karl Marx was very influential with his critical analysis of socioeconomic condition and class structures of late 19th century and his contemporary Antonio Gramsci who critiqued and developed his theory of hegemony around the base and superstructure debate (Merriam, p.9). Critical research has also been strongly influenced by feminist theory Wendy Brown; Bell Hooks; Tett; Lather; Greene; Connolly to name a few all have illuminated the inequalities experienced by women in society. Critical researchers also take a position that the social reality is historically created and is produced and reproduced by humans. The aim for critical research according to Crotty (1998) is to critique and “*challenge to transform and empower*” (1998, 113). This positions the critical part of my research study I frame my questions around who has the power structures how is it distributed what impact this has on the field of further education. By choosing to conduct critical research is to stay true to my epistemological position which is to illuminate inequalities to empower and try to change some of the issues facing first time tutors in the field.

Methods Qualitative Interviews

I have conducted six unstructured in-depth interviews and focus group with higher diploma graduates of further education from Maynooth University. According to Mason ‘*The term qualitative interviewing*’ is usually intended to refer to in-depth semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. Burgess also refers to these as ‘*conversations with a purpose*’ (1994, 102). The validity of graduates’ lived experience their opinions and stories are recognised as a valuable source, where information can be gathered from (Mason, 1996). The interviews conducted in this research study were unstructured and open. This allowed the participants to talk freely about issues or topics in the interview. The interviews were arranged to suit the

participants, some were conducted in the participant's home at a time that suited them, some at my own home, other were conduct over the phone. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed and stored on a laptop which could only be accessed through entry of a password. A copy of the transcripts was offered to all the participants. Before each interview ended I asked the participants if they any further topics, themes that they would like to discuss that may have been missed. According to Mason (1998) this ensures flexibility in the interviewing process, these permits for the inclusion of themes the researcher may not have thought of, it demonstrates also a reflexive approach to research. The emerging themes and topic from each interview were added to the following interviews to be discussed.

Sampling

The sampling technique I used in this research duty was purposely selected. I knew the participant in this research study. This was quite important because they were quite relaxed and quite willing to discuss the various topics during the interview and research process. The cohort consisted of three males and three females. Some of them had found employment and some are still looking. The size of the samples can vary depending on the type of study. According to Charmaz (2006) you can stop collecting the information from interviews when the themes are saturated and when collecting new information no longer adds new insights for the study. The participants and I stayed in touch through a closed online website. I used this website to send out open invitations to take part in the research. I left my email address for people to contact me. Those who showed an interest in the research study I contacted email first and then arrange a time to call, this gave an opportunity to discuss the research study outline the formalities and confirm a time and place for the interviews. I was flexible with the arrangement with the participant made. Some requested me to call to their home others wanted to call to mine. Two agreed to be interviewed over the phone due to time restraints and distance between us. Most of the interviews were one on one, face to face, I phoned the participants from time to time to let them know how the research study was getting on, we discussed some of the themes that were emerging and I was able to clarify some points found in the transcripts. The information emerging from these interviews was the primary source on the topics it also guided me towards documents, articles, Journals and newspaper articles which became part of my literature review.

Focus groups

The interview with a group of two female and one male took place in the afternoon in my home. The session lasted for about twenty or so minutes due to the time constraints of one of the participants. A dominant theme emerged from the one to one interviews conducted previously. I invited the group to discuss this theme, “lack of experience” in order to go a little deeper into my research

Ethical issues concerning research study

As a student researcher, I had to be aware of formal ethical issues before I started my research study. Understanding that ethnics has a very important factor to consider in any research project. Ethnic in research refers to upholding participants anonymity, providing confidentiality, been trustworthy, honest, have integrity, and dignity in the research study produce a valid, and reliable results. There are always challenges when the research study involves other people. Critical research is embedded in the social world of first time tutor in further education. The gathering and analysis from the experience of these graduates may have inevitably impact on the lives of others and institutions. I am fully aware of these implications and I had taken the appropriate steps to address these concerns.

Before research study began formal permission was sought from NUI Maynooth Department of Adult and Community Education. I highlighted in my proposal that I was aware of the Maynooth University research ethnic policy (2016). According to Bond (2015) argued that there are three components to consider in formulating an ethnical approach to research. First risk assessment, second information, for example the participants are fully informed about the research studies aims and process, and thirdly to gain informed consent. According to Citro, et, al (2013) it important to consider the research from the participant point of view including showing respect which includes gaining full consent of the participants, I stated before and during the research study that the participants were free to withdraw at any stage of the research. During the interview the names were mention which I had to mask out to protect the identity of the participants and the names of the institution that were not part of this research study. I ensured the participants that I would try and protect their identity as best as I could. I tried to mask out certain slang that may lead to a person identity been uncovered. According to Citro et, al (2003) it is important to protect the

wellbeing and to promote fairness during the research process. I used my own phone to call the participants; I also provided my own transport to their homes. I tried to be fair by selecting an equal number of males and female. I was interested in getting diverse perspective on the topics discussed in the interviews. All participants received a consent form; I did not pressure anyone into signing the consent form. I felt it was important that the participant felt comfortable with the research study and they felt free to with draw at any stage.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This thesis sought to listen to the voices of graduates of a higher diploma in further education, to provide a space for their voices to be heard. My intentions were to develop a deeper understanding of the issues they face in finding a job in further education sector

In this chapter I will present my findings from the interviews that were conducted with six higher diploma graduates. This chapter represents the space for their voices though quotes of transcribed interviews. These transcribed graduate's narratives will be utilised to provide meaning to the ascribed headings which I will contribute nominal connective links to coagulate the findings. My intention is to present the findings under the headings which emerged organically from the coding. During the research process several themes emerged in relation to graduates experiences in the field.

In this chapter, it is crucial for a researcher to take a step back and be guided by what the participants are saying and to be aware of any bias or critical position or perspective they may have. It is here that I provided a place for these graduates to express themselves but also most importantly declaring that their voices are the most important part of this thesis. In my introduction to the findings I will briefly introduce the graduates and the names that were used for the purpose of this research study.

The names and any identifying features will not be made visible however I do believe it is important to provide a contextualisation for the readers in order for the richness of the graduate's words and lives beyond a suspended animation of texts and sounds.

Six graduates consisting of three females and three males took part in this research study. It was from this wealth of knowledge from narratives which provided the fabric to which I drawn my data from. Each individual graduate had varying degrees of educational experience but none had any teaching experience prior to completing the higher diploma in further education. As I stated in my methodology chapter, some of the interviews took place in my home, the graduate's home and some over

the telephone. The interviews were done at a time that suited the graduates, which was morning, afternoon and evening. The interviews averaged from twenty minutes and up to and over an hour. I will now introduce you to the graduates.

Sharon

Sharon built up substantial work experience in her brother's firm. She was employed as a manager looking after the day to day running of the office which included a diversity of administration tasks. It was shortly after the financial crash that Sharon lost her job and looked to return to education as an opportunity to gain a qualification. Sharon continued on to third level and completed her double honours degree. Upon enrolling Sharon viewed the higher diploma as a way of achieving a professional qualification to enable her to teach. She had seen it as a way of earning money, while continuing her educational journey on to the Masters. She gained her experience of facilitating adults and youths through her teaching practice placement. I knew Sharon previously from my under grad days and as a colleague on the higher diploma programme. The interview took place in the morning at Sharon's home and lasted for about twenty minutes.

Fiona

Fiona is currently unemployed. She had a variety of work experience, some in the industrial industry. She too had lost her job following the financial crash in 2009 and returned to education as a mature student. Fiona completed her double honours degree at third level prior to enrolling onto the higher diploma programme. She also viewed the higher diploma as a professional qualification which would enable her to gain a teaching job in the further education sector. She also gained her experience of facilitating adults and youths through her teaching practice placement. Fiona was also a colleague of mine who I met through the higher diploma programme. The interview took place at my home in the afternoon upon Fiona's request. The interview lasted about an hour.

Darren

Darren is currently working part time as a [REDACTED] and contemplating returning to education to complete his masters. Darren expressed his passion for learning as a literacy student and how that enabled him to go on and complete his degree at third

level, prior to enrolling on the higher diploma programme. Darren had no prior experience teaching in the further educational sector and gained his experience of facilitating adults and youths through his teaching practice placement. I met Darren for the first time on the higher diploma programme. This interview was also conducted in the afternoon at my home upon Darren's request. The interview lasted about an hour.

Mark

Mark is currently employed as a substitute teacher in a second level institution. Mark gained substantial work and education experience nationally and internationally in the construction industry. Mark was also able to begin his international study in communication engineering. He returned home to Ireland to further his career in the electronics industry until he established his own business. Mark ran his business successfully for a time until it closed during the financial crash in 2009. This spurred Mark on to change career, upon receiving sound advice from his past school principle he returned to education as a means to gain a qualification. Marks focus and passion for learning enabled him to complete his double honours degree prior to enrolling on the higher diploma. Mark had no teaching experience before completing the higher diploma. Mark however had gained valuable experience facilitating adults and youths while on his teaching practice placement. This interview was conducted over the phone due to long distance between both of us and the time constraints. The interview took place in the evening time at Marks request and lasted over an hour.

Nicola

Nicola is currently employed as an Adult educator in the community education sector. Nicola had developed substantial working experience prior to retiring from the financial services sector. She also availed of the educational opportunities studying for her master's, from the Open University during her employment in the financial services.

Nicola returned to education through the spring board initiative where she completed a business degree with the social welfare springboard. She had no teaching experience prior to enrolling on the higher diploma and gained a lot of experience,

facilitating adults during her teaching practice placement. Nicola had gained employment directly from her teacher practice placement. Due to the long journey between us and time constraints the interview took place over the phone at a time that was suitable to Nicola. The interview lasted about fifty minutes.

Brandon

Brandon is currently continuing his professional developing; studying for a certificate in teaching English as a foreign language while waiting for his first teaching job. Brandon had gained a lot of work experience in the construction industry while serving his time as a tradesman. This soon developed into a steady business prior to folding during the financial crash in 2009. Brandon showed sheer determination and found a course through back to education initiative. Brandon's passion for learning continued as he completed his double honours degree prior to enrolling and completing the higher diploma. Brandon also had no previous teaching experience but gained valuable experience of facilitating adults and youths on his teacher practice placement. The interview was conducted over the phone in the evening time. The interview lasted about an hour.

Findings

I began each interview by asking the graduates to share their experience from the time they returned to education. This was an open-ended question to allow the graduates the opportunity to explain the reasons why they returned to education. A number of interesting themes organically emerged from the question. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews I placed under headings.

All the graduates shared that they were employed in various occupations before being made unemployed. It was during one of worst economic down turns in Ireland, that many of them lost their jobs and businesses.

Sharon, described the event "*the whole ass fell out of you know; the economic crash and all the rest*". "*There were no jobs*".

Fiona became newly unemployed. "*I lost my job in 2009.*" Mark and Brandon were running successful businesses up until the financial crash in 2009.

As Mark recalls "*it was like someone switched off the lights*".

Sharon went back to education because she wanted to gain additional qualifications “*I didn’t have the qualifications to support the job that I was doing*”. As an opportunity to become employable.

Precarious, insecurity, uncertainty, flexibility

Nicola viewed tutoring as a professional career to date highlights the precarious nature of the profession:

“I think it is a professional career but I think like everything else that all the jobs that are been advertised its quite disheartening, they are looking for resource teaching and the majority of people going into them jobs are tutors and teachers and they are getting them on the cheap basically”.

Nicola explained the precarious nature of employment and the uncertainties and instability of the sector

“I was looking on line this term my hours were reduced they weren’t getting people into the ICT, my hours went from six hours to four hours but that suits me currently this year,

Nicola was constraint to the days she could work due to family commitments. She said that: “*I am free to look for jobs Monday and Wednesday*” however Nicola noticed that the jobs been advertised in her sector is for resource teachers.

“That’s getting you on the cheap to work thirty-five hours per week; then you have non-teacher rate and then no teacher holidays”.

In certain centres that deliver courses to the community, “*they offer 35 hour contracts at half rate*”.

Nicola reflects on the reasons for precarious part time work and the uncertainty around term to term contracts and the impact it is having on her family life.

“I got into to work around family life, but that not working for me”. I am on a term by term contract for an example I finished up on the 8th of December and I started back on the 10th of January with a two-hour coordinator roll, but didn’t start back tutoring until the 23rd of January. So, you are down the income, and next term to term I have less hours, I am paying a child minder like it is expensive and you have a lot of uncertainties. I just had that conversation with my husband like I couldn’t even go for a loan because I am not in a permanent job, not in a steady job, but that’s the role.

Nicola further illuminates the uncertainties going forward in her career.

“Traditionally in the ETBs its year to year so if not, enough people going on the course, the following September you are out of a job, you lost your hours”.

Nicola further states:

“Naturally enough if the managers think your good enough will try and work you into what they are offering. They want you qualified in the subject that you’re teaching. I am in business and there is stuff coming up in the business, there a lot of that’s going on, yeah, a lot of uncertainties with the hour you don’t know what hours are going to come especially in Community Ed I don’t know what hours I going to get this term to next term, its depending on numbers. In each ETB, I think it’s the same depending on numbers coming through the door unless you are permanent. I don’t know how the permanency end starts or works.”

Nicola also reflected more on the kind of jobs being advertised. *“a lot of the stuff being advertised is maternity leave”.*

I asked Mark what he thought about Tutoring as a profession.

“the difference between tutor and teacher. I will tell you salary and job security”. He further stated that as a *“casual worker you don’t get the same benefits, sickness, holidays, etc.”*

Professional Identity

Sharon said that *“definitely, I feel like a professional, I feel very confident”*, she further states *“it’s a profession I am always going to have.”* Darren compared his profession with that of traditional teacher, *“yeah I feel I am just as qualified as a secondary school teacher with degree and H-Dip”*. Mark also identified it as a profession, *“you’re a teacher a qualified teacher and you are registered with the teaching council of Ireland as a teacher.”*

Mark also responded when I asked him *“do you see tutoring as a profession?”*

“That’s just a play on words, tutoring. You’re a teacher a qualified teacher; you are registered with the teaching council of Ireland as a teacher. This whole idea that you are a tutor; what is the difference between a tutor and a teacher? I will tell you, salary and job security that’s the only difference”.

Mark further explains.

“Salary wise you get paid a higher rate because you are casual worker, you don’t get the same benefits, sickness, holidays, etc. etc. Tutor teacher is the same thing”.

The lack of experience was identified as a barrier to secure employment. Sharon illuminates the issue

“I think the way it is now it is very hard for anyone coming out of college, trying to get a job, I think when it comes to a job someone with experience are above you.”

Mark also felt that

“The biggest disadvantage that you have when you finish the h-dip is you have no experience because teaching practice is not considered experience.”

Mark further states that

“So straight away you are at a disadvantage because you have no experience. But unfortunately, you are in a catch twenty-two situation, where you’re never going to get experience if no one gives you a job and you are never going to get a job without any experience. It is like been caught between a rock and a hard place. For me I do it for nothing just for the experience.”

The lack of experience was further discussed through a focus group. Fiona, Sharon, and Brandon agreed to discuss this issue.

Sharon felt that it was a major issue affecting people getting jobs in the further education sector

“Why people are not getting jobs; yeah that’s a major issue. If three people go to an interview; one has a qualification but no experience, one has experience, or the third person has experience and qualification, who are you going to go with? You are going to go with the person with the experience and the qualification; it’s the safe bet”

Fiona thought the idea of experience was unrealistic

“I was just thinking, looking for experience for new graduates, it kind of unrealistic expectation, because we are now graduates, how do you get experience? Another thing I found is that they sometimes take people with experience more than people with qualification. I know someone working in youth reach teaching and all that. They do not have a degree.”

Fiona highlighted how a person with experience and without a formal qualification was preparing learners for the leaving cert.

“One of them came to me and asked about my H-dip you; has an H-dip and all that, I just assumed he had a degree but didn’t have the h-dip. So, I gave him my number and some information about when the application was coming out. So, after a couple of months he didn’t say anything to me, so I went back to him and asked him, how did it go with your application for the H-Dip? And he said that he didn’t have enough qualifications, I couldn’t

get in. So, I said what do you mean, you do not have enough qualification. Oh, I found that you have to have your degree first before you can get in."

Fiona developed the conversation by stating that how shocked she was.

"I was shocked when he said that, he didn't have a degree! I didn't want to embarrass him- what do you mean you didn't have a degree and all that, it just came out".

Brandon responded by saying *"he probably had a diploma"*.

Sharon also said that *"my understanding was if you are teaching you could not teach at the level you were at; you always had to teach a level below"*.

I asked the question then; had that person much experience?

Fiona responded, *"Yeah he was there for years"*.

Fiona felt that this person would have the advantage of experience to draw from if both of them were at an interview.

"So that kind of person like both of us applying for a job me and him, he can say he is teaching for years".

Fiona thought that legislation should be introduced and this would allow newly qualified graduates in further education to get into employment.

"So, I think the government need to legislate things, a minimum degree and your H-Dip and so teachers that don't have that; means that newly qualified teachers can get in the door".

Status

Induction into the profession emerged as one solution to the lack of experience that the participants were experiencing.

Fiona suggested that *"like nurses when they graduate, they work with the hospital for a year; you are not getting a full nurses wage,*

Fiona further explains: *"Yeah you are getting the experience; even if they could start us off on something like that"*.

Sharon said, *"that would be perfect"*.

Fiona thought the places are very limited to where you could apply. She states;

"See this thing with the ETBs the only place you can apply, is absolutely ridiculous. If I could ask anyone one of you, when you were in your placement in least one of the centres; if it was up to them, you would have a job".

Sharon agreed with Fiona *"Yeah that is very true"*.

Brandon inquired about the role of the teacher's union of Ireland. I noted Brandon frustration of the lack of support for newly qualified teacher of adults in further education sector.

“What about the role of the union, when they register surely they should be contacted by the union why should we have to go chasing them. The TUI for examples they represent further education teachers, where are they? They are meant to be supporting teachers. I can't get a job, where are they? They are supposed to be supporting, where are they?”

Sharon started the conversation about the H-Diploma further education.

“I think the problem is the H-Dip in further education, does not hold as much weight has secondary school teaching”. Sharon also highlights that “Yeah it does not seem to have the same recognition”.

Brandon also shared his experience at an interview in a secondary level institute.

“I was at an interview I was high jacked; things were going well I thought I have this thing in the bag, and next of all the guy pulls me on the qualification. He said this is further education, yeah, this is a secondary school!”

Fiona felt it was kind of annoying as well.

“It is kind of annoying as well. I know someone is doing their master's in education; it is a two-year degree, in the first year doing the masters he was able to register for further education”

Sharon also felt that further education graduates, “we are not on par”. Sharon continues “they have a higher status than us”.

Fiona responded by saying that “they are paid for their placement”.

Brandon agreed and said “that's right, my friend C.... He got loads of hours”.

Sharon continued “yeah that they are seen as professional from their placement and that ties in to your higher status”.

There were strong feelings about secondary school teachers been able to apply for jobs in the further education sector. Fiona stated that there seems to be a lot of secondary school teachers on her placement.

Darren felt that it was unfair competition in the further education sector.

“That primary and secondary teacher can apply for further education but we can only apply for further education”.

Sharon also felt very strongly about the limitations of the higher diploma in further education

“I don’t think it is fair, we are being treated as second class citizens to the rights of secondary school’s teachers. There definitely seems to be like they are a level above us. And they can teach in every sector, where if you do the h-dip in Further education you can only teach in further education or everything outside the primary, secondary school.”

Darren also stated that he would need to diversify from his degree subjects. He highlighted the uncertainty around his degree subjects as route to employment in further education sector.

“I realised after I done the H-Dip that I would need to diversify, if I want to teach, History and Archaeology are not going to take me to where I want to go”.

Brandon also felt he needed to continue his professional development to gain employment.

“I registered online to complete TEFL course teach English as a foreign language. There will be loads of position coming up over the summer”.

The subtheme competition emerged again in the focus group discussing.

Brandon

A subtheme that emerged organically from the interviews was the uncertainty around gaining employment. They highlighted some of the issues around administration and recruitment.

Darren’s highlighted his experience of the online application system as “rubbish”.

“It’s just the layout I think you should be able to print it off write it down and email it or post it. This online thing you have to have an up to date computer for it.”

Mark also experienced some difficulty filling in online application forms.

“So, I applied to a centre from the ETB jobs online process is a nightmare. Because usually you put in the information, but if you have a different version of word on which the application was created, things don’t line up, things go into the next line you know so, date of birth ends up in my address.”

A number of the graduates also vented their frustration at not receiving any reply or feedback from their application. Mark one of the participants stated

“And then when you spend eighty million hours trying to get it right. And by the time you get the application done and sent off, you never hear a thing back. You made the application you seem to tick all the boxes and you look through the criteria, what is required and you don’t get anything, or a letter to say that you were unsuccessful on this occasion.”

Darren similarly stated about his experience of application for jobs in the further education sector.

“I got two replies from sixteen applications, but no interviews.”

Sharon also stated that

“I never heard back from the interview from this particular centre. I thought they would reply, how and ever I never heard back from the interview even though I thought the interview went extremely good.”

Fiona had not got any information about the online jobs that were being advertised.

“I didn’t apply for any jobs I did not know about the vacancies online.”

This subtheme of recruitment process emerged again during the focus group interviews. I asked a question about the qualification and lack of experience.

“Do you think it is enough to stop person from continuing their professional journey?”

Brandon responded to talk about the length of time he was out of work. How this may affect his employment.

“it depends on how long you are out of work, we qualified in 2016 and it now nearly 2018 the summer is flying in let’s be realistic, and you are still without a job, how long is this thing going to continue”.

Brandon went onto explain that; *“the harder it is to get a job, it’s on your CV, you qualified in 2016 and you haven’t taught a class since your teacher placement practice. It does not really look good, does it?”*

Sharon expressed how crucial it was to gain employment in your post-graduation year as a teacher and how this affects your professional skills and confidants.

“Even though you have this professional qualification, your skills are diminishing the whole time you are not working. It is also the persons own confidence that starts deflating”.

Brandon felt that. *“It’s the frustration more than anything. That’s what I found the last few months”.*

Summary

I found that many issues emerged during consolidation with respondents. The key ideas that emerged from the data were precarious, associated with uncertainty and insecurity of flexible employment in the FET sector. Precarious employment had affected many respondents; it made planning for family, and for the future career very difficult. The other issue that emerged from the data was professional identity had been identified with qualification and registration with a state body. Some respondent quite distinctly associated the qualification with having experience to enter the profession. The third issue to emerge was status. Some of the respondents that said their qualification wasn't as good as the second level qualification.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion/Analysis

Introduction

This research project was to explore the barrier of first time tutors/teacher in gaining employment in the adult & further education sector. The thesis aims to answer the question what are the barriers that are preventing first time tutors/teachers from gaining employment in the adult & further education sector in Ireland?

In order to discuss and analysis this chapter firstly required a “constant comparative approach between the conversations and the literature” (Charmaz, 2006, p163) I achieved this by the exploration of relevant literature discussed in chapter two with critical voices of the participants in chapter four. This enable to maintain a critical perspective in order to shed light on the some of the barriers to employment experienced by first time further education teachers in the Adult & Further Education sector.

Analysis/Discussion

From my findings in chapter four I found that all the participants in this study were successful and graduated with the professional Higher Diploma in Further Education. For some they did not find a teaching job after graduation, they had to sign back on to the live register and for the others to who found precarious employment, the reality was that they still relied on support from welfare state (chapter 4).

Precarious

So why are there so many jobs been advertised when there seems to be no recruitment in the sector according to SOLAS no one seems to be leaving. I found from the literature in chapter two “ETBs had a pool of sessional staff engaged, to varying degrees, over the course of the year. For example, a tutor might be contracted to deliver one programme annually”.¹⁸ When this is contrasted with the sectors not recruiting fulltime staff in over twenty on years (UCL, 2015) this indicates a distinct move towards the neo liberal precarious fixed term, part time contracts for new tutors, teachers in the sector.

¹⁸SOLAS report in its strategy 2014-2017 referred to in chapter two.

In chapter four Nicola shared her experienced on the precarious working conditions in the FET sector. The feelings of uncertainty that Nicola had experienced in her employment concurs with the literature in chapter two; Mc Kays (2012) European study of precarious work and social rights, and with O Neill (2016) Fitzsimons (2017) study of Irish tutors in community and FET sector. Similar Kalleberg (2009) in chapter two suggested that precarious work is employment that is uncertain and unpredictable. The precarious nature of work currently in FET sector is a barrier to secure employment.

In chapter two also Nicola also highlighted the difficulty of financial planning, discussing with her husband about not be able to get a loan, because the job is not permanent. Not knowing from term to term if your hours are going to be decreased or increased presents more problems, paying a child minder as also mention in chapter two. From the literature in chapter two theEuropean Parliament (2010) on precarious women workers I found that women dominantly worked in part time jobs. Also highlighted in chapter two Fitzsimons (2017) noted the importance of critical feminist pedagogy for males and females to name domination and oppression in their lives (Hooks,1994,Friere, 1971).

In chapter two some of the participants found employment from placement and from a substitute panel; had experienced the reality of uncertainty and unsecured precarious employment in the educational sectors. In the literature chapter two the teacher council warned about the sector being continuously shaped by casualisation and unsecure work (teacher council,2011). However, this was directed at traditional teachers at that time, indicating that precarious work condition was being experienced across all educational sectors. The grass is not greener on the other side.

Professional Identity

From the findings in chapter two all the respondents identified the tutoring /teaching as a profession. One respondent stated: “you’re a teacher a qualified teacher and you are registered with the teaching council of Ireland as a teacher”. Another respondent felt that legislation on the minimum requirement to teach in further education should be a degree and higher diploma it was stated this would help newly qualified get their foot in the door. I found also in the findings that many respondents identified the qualification alone would not gain them access to a job in FET sector.

Requiring experience is often quoted in the findings. I found in the literature chapter two that the teaching council as from 2013 made state funded positions where to be registered. It had also been stated in the literature chapter two that the teaching council vision neglected the needs of adult education, it was suggested that little recognition and or representation on the council committee creates an identity of low status and marginality (Jeffers, 2012).

Status

In chapter two a number of the participants expressed how difficult it was at gaining a secure job in the FET sector. Many of them expressed their anger at monopoly of the ETBs since the amalgamation of VEC. That their professional qualification in further education was not good enough on entry to employment in the further education sector. In a sector that the participants were all professionally trained to teach in. One respondent in chapter four stated they received only two replies from sixteen applications in the FET sector. Many of the respondents also presumed it was a lack of experience acting as a barrier to secure employment in FET sector.

According to the literature on work experience in chapter 2 it did not indicate that lack of experience was the sole reason why newly qualified further education teachers were not being recruited into the sector. I found in the literature in chapter two that private colleges were producing too many graduates, and this led to an oversupply of teachers, it stated that this had an effect of not enough hours available for teachers in employment (UCL study, 2015).

It stated in the findings in chapter four one respondent stated that the status of the qualification was a barrier to secure employment. The respondent stated; *“I think the problem is the H-Dip in further education, does not hold as much weight as secondary school teaching”*. It is not too difficult drawing from this perception I found that Hoyles (2001) and Jeffers (2012) the public perception of adult educators was invisible to that of traditional teachers. The Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS) adult education as a profession was absent as a category. Adult education can get over shadowed to the needs of dominate profession. The neglect of adult educators as a distinct profession was clearly evident. The low status and marginalisation of adult educators as a distinct group was also enforced by the lack of voice; recognition and representation to the

membership on the teaching council committee at the time of launch and noted by Jeffers in 2012 study and reviewed by this author in 2016. Reinforcing low status of first time further education teachers and can be a barrier to secure employments.

I found in the literature in chapter two, the economic crisis 2009 had a significant effect on workers in the public service and educational sector. The government through their state agents are committed to reducing employment numbers in the education sector. Fitzsimons (2017) in chapter two, the study noted that tutors were receiving dismissal letter regardless of experience. Some being recorded working in the sector for years.

Summary/conclusion

I explored the literature in chapter four on the experience of first time further education teachers in the FET sector. I also examined the literature in chapter two with a critical voice and found that under neoliberal policies the future of learners and practitioners is full of uncertainty, insecurity, and unjust economy.

The dominate discourse in FET sector is neoliberalism. This economic ideal is being vicariously push onto learner and practitioners to be in their best interests. It promotes that individuals take more responsibility for the own employment will a little nudge from the state and their agents. According to Harvey theory (2005) this can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms.

A characteristic of neoliberalism reflected by the ethos of business that operate public services, deregulation of flexible labour markets, and by marginalising and decreasing the trade union powers¹⁹.

The claim under neo liberalism is that everyone is free to get rich. That wealth is trickledown to the poor in society. However, the facts are that the horse share of the oaths passes through and drops down onto the road for the sparrows to feed²⁰.

The flexible market is what is been push through the FET strategy, the learners and practitioner are encouraged to leave behind job security for working from job to job for life. This has been shown in the findings and experienced by a number of

¹⁹ Chapter two under the heading neo liberalism

²⁰ Chapter two

respondents. The concept of precarious work is dominated now in the lives of first time further education teachers.

What started has an economic theory pushed on us all in response to rapid changing markets and companies globally adapting to flexible work force to control the input and output of the workforce. This is the ugliest side of globalisation according to standings (2011). It's an ugly side that does not reflect the social lives of its workforce. Precarious is characterised with uncertainty, insecurity, and is dominantly gendered affected many females in dominate female occupations²¹.

In the absence of a theory to counter neoliberal hegemony, the implications for adult education and first time FE teachers are quite serious. It would mean continuing to accept precarious working conditions, consenting to teach adult learners how to become docile good workers for the benefit of the elite. In addition, by accepting gender inequality in the workplace, low status of the profession, turning a blind eye to the tensions around identity and philosophies in the FET sector. However, Fitzsimons (2017) had offered critical feminist theory as a possibility to counter domination and oppression. Fitzsimons was quite insightful of critical feminist pedagogy, as possible way forward for males and females in adult and community and further education by naming the oppression and domination in their lives.

Fitzsimons had argued that we should not be blind to the possibilities of “uniting counter hegemonic actions” throughout educational society ²²(Fitzsimons, 2017). This research study I took a critical position, All the respondent in this study were given a safe space to share their experience and a platform to air their critical voice in chapter four.

²¹ Chapter two see Fitzsimons

²² Fitzsimons chapter two

Recommendations

I hope that this research study has shed some light on the issues facing first time tutors/teachers in FET. The state needs to recognise that professionalising a sector without providing the means to hire first time tutors/teacher is nothing short of abysmal. Secondly the state needs to recognise FET as a profession. It needs to show its support by giving the practitioners a voice on the teaching council.

I would like to recommend that research be carried out into the real supports on offer for first time teacher/tutors in the FET sector.

That men and women are afforded equal opportunities in the teaching profession. Men teacher/tutors are not equally represented in the FET sector.

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APPENDIX

Consent Form

Qualitative research study

Exploring employment issues in the further education sector: Drawing on the experience of H- Diploma Graduates in further education.

Researcher: Patrick Alan Nally Maynooth University Contact Nr:
0862331823

I..... agree to participate in this research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am taken part in this research study voluntarily.

I understand if I choose to engage in a face to face conversation, I give permission for my interview with Alan Nally to be digitally recorded or alternatively, I will engage in the interview by email or by phone. I do understand that the interviews do not constitute any kind of counselling.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from participating in this research study, without any repercussions and I am free to withdraw my data up until the work is published.

I am also aware that I feel that the information and guidelines that I have been given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if I am unhappy with the process, I can contact the Course Directors at the Department of Adult and Community Education Maynooth University.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I agree to give permission by signing this form below.

I understand that all data collected will be stored in a secured space. All computers used in this research are password protected.

Copy of transcripts and recordings will be made available at my discretion and can be accessed at any time.

I understand that the results of this research study may be published for use in the public domain.

Signed.....

Date.....