

**Towards an understanding of the factors
that influence teacher engagement in
continuing professional development.**

**A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the
degree of Doctor in Education in the Faculty of Humanities**

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Abstract

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Doctor in Education

Towards an understanding of the factors that influence teacher engagement in continuing professional development

2010

The aim of the research reported in this thesis is to examine the factors that Irish post-primary teachers report as influencing their decision making regarding engagement in continuing professional development (CPD) and to present a conceptualisation of what I call *engagement*. The study examines the current research and theorising about CPD and from this develops an analysis and argument about how there is a need, within the context of CPD, to examine the relationship between the agency of the professional and the structuring context in which they are located.

The study offers, through case study work with teachers in six post-primary schools in Ireland, new understandings of teachers' personal views, opinions and reflections with regard to the factors that influence their decision making regarding engagement in CPD. The analysis of the data leads to a number of outcomes, firstly, it offers a conceptualisation of these factors as a contribution towards a refinement of understanding of a model of *engagement* in CPD, secondly, consideration is given to what *engagement* means for professionalism and professionality and the implications that arise for both the policy makers and for post-primary teachers in Ireland. In pursuit of these aims the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD?
2. What does this mean for CPD and professional practice?

The findings presented in this study are twofold. Firstly, in general, Irish post-primary teachers recognise the need for, and appreciate the potential value and benefit of professional learning in developing their understanding of the learning processes and its potential to improve the student experience and learning outcomes. Secondly, within the current Irish context individual teachers' decision making with regard to engagement in CPD is influenced by a variety of factors but none more so than that of the impact of their decision to engage on their own personal lives. Consequently, it shows that there are emerging tensions between teachers and the Government in light of recent Government policy to locate more and more CPD events in an after school-time elective context. These issues combine to an examination of how teachers are being positioned and are positioning themselves for the reform process and what this means for the professionalism and professionality of Irish post-primary teachers.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

Introduction

The aim of the research reported in this thesis is to examine the factors that Irish post-primary teachers¹ report as influencing their decision making regarding engagement in continuing professional development (CPD) and to present a conceptualisation of what I call *engagement*. The study is based on a conceptualisation of CPD being situative, where professional learning has both individual and socio-cultural features, with learning characterised as a process of construction and enculturation. This situative conceptualisation is appropriate in that it allows for teacher engagement in CPD to be viewed as participation in socially organised activities and teachers use of knowledge as an aspect of their participation in these social practices.

The study examines the current research and theorising about CPD and from this develops an analysis and argument about how there is a need, within the context of CPD, to examine the relationship between the agency of the professional, in this case the teacher, and the structuring context in which they are located. Such structuring includes personal circumstances combined with social, political, economic and cultural factors that enable, shape or limit teacher engagement in CPD.

The study offers, through case study work with teachers in six post-primary schools in Ireland, new understandings of teachers' personal views, opinions and reflections with regard to the factors that influence their decision making regarding engagement in CPD. The analysis of the data leads to a number of outcomes, firstly, it offers a conceptualisation of these factors as a contribution towards a refinement of understanding of a model of *engagement* in CPD, secondly, consideration is given to what *engagement* means for professionalism and professionality and the implications that arise for both the policy makers and for post-primary teachers in Ireland.

¹ Post-primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland teach pupils who range in age from 12 to 19 years

Distinction is drawn between engagement in mandatory CPD, where teachers are facilitated by the Department of Education and Science (DES) to attend whole-school CPD or subject based CPD events during school time, and elective CPD which teachers attend in their own free time.

In pursuit of these aims the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD?
2. What does this mean for CPD and professional practice?

The argument that I intend to present in this study, through research and literature review, is twofold. Firstly, in general, Irish post-primary teachers recognise the need for, and appreciate the potential value and benefit of professional learning in developing their understanding of the learning processes and its potential to improve the student experience and learning outcomes. However, this commitment to professional learning is located in a strongly held and established belief by Irish post-primary teachers that CPD ought to be available to them within the confines of their working day and that this principle is directly linked to their sense of professional identity. Secondly, I will argue that in the current Irish context individual teachers' decision making with regard to engagement in CPD is influenced by a variety of factors but none more so than that of the impact of their decision to engage on their own personal lives. Consequently, I will show that there are emerging tensions between teachers and the Government in light of recent Government policy to locate more and more CPD events in an after school-time elective context and potential future tensions as a result of the Government's legislative framework which allows for teacher engagement in elective CPD to be mandated by regulatory requirement. These issues combine to show how teachers are being positioned and are positioning themselves for the reform process and what this means for the professionalism and professionality of Irish post-primary teachers.

The rationale for this research

The rationale for this research has evolved from my own professional life. I began my career in education in 1981 as a teacher of Gaeilge (Irish language) and mathematics. In 1989 I was appointed the first lay principal of a co-educational Catholic Voluntary School and in 1998 I was seconded from this position by the Department of Education and Science (DES) to the position of Director of Limerick Education Centre where as Education Centre Director I am charged with the responsibility for the CPD of the school communities in the catchment area. In March 2007 I was seconded to the offices of the Catholic Bishops of Limerick, Kerry and Killaloe to establish and develop an education secretariat in support of the Boards of Management of 460 primary and post-primary schools across the Catholic Dioceses of Limerick, Kerry and Killaloe, returning to my post as Director of Limerick Education Centre in November 2009.

My professional experience of CPD has three distinct timeframes and three very varied experiences. The first of these is as a newly qualified teacher, anxious to be inducted into and learn about my profession but employed within a system that did not recognise the need for, nor provide, any CPD opportunity. Secondly, as a principal teacher in an era when CPD began to emerge as a valid activity in receipt of financial support and explicit backing in terms of policy from the DES, but with an exclusive focus on curriculum change. Thirdly, as an Education Centre Director, charged with implementing national policy at local level and challenged to design, deliver and coordinate CPD opportunities. Throughout these phases in my career I always believed in the concept of CPD but never really contemplated the conceptual and research underpinnings of it.

It is, in my role as an Education Centre Director that the rationale for this research has come into focus. My role, it is fair to say, to the point when I commenced my doctoral studies, was characterised by an immersion in the immediacy of a multitude of tasks with limited, if any, opportunity to engage in any meaningful reflection on, or questioning of, what CPD was being offered to teachers and why they should engage in CPD. My energies were focussed on endeavouring to increase participation rates in CPD by means of continuing promotion of

CPD and personal persuasion of teachers of the need to engage. I had a limited understanding of what really influenced teachers in their decision making regarding engagement and believed that if the "product" was good or if it was recommended by those in more senior positions and with greater experience than I, then, all it required was good marketing and that it would be successful in its own right.

In 2005 I was afforded the opportunity; through participation in doctoral studies, to reflect on my own capacity for critical thinking and analysis. Throughout this journey I have found myself re-evaluating my understanding of my own role as an Education Centre Director and, in particular, reviewing and reflecting on CPD from the perspective of the teacher and in the context of a theoretical basis.

Previous papers (O'Connell, 2006, 2007, 2008) submitted as part of the Ed.D programme have informed the rationale for the research reported in this thesis. In my first research paper in the form of a literature search I uncovered that the impact of formal training; as evidenced in the deficit model approach to CPD, on practice can be quite marginal. I argued for consideration of new approaches to, and the development of new models of CPD. Primarily I focussed on the potential where informal interaction with peers could lead to greater participant learning (O'Connell, 2006). Central to this argument was Community of Practice (CoP) Theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998a, 1998b, Wenger and Snyder, 2000, Wenger et al, 2002). CoP theory lays emphasis on social capital, the social resources, including common identity, familiarity, trust, shared language and context that individuals within a community draw upon and provide value to themselves and their organisations. I argued that a school, functioning as a CoP, is an interdependent system in terms of the collaborative efforts of its members, as well as the greater societal systems in which it is nested. However, in recognising within CoP theory the potential for a new approach to CPD I concluded that it focuses on as Gunter (2005) argued "improving organisational performance rather than how to understand and explain social practice" (p.81), and in particular the social practice of engagement. It became clear to me that CoP assumed engagement happens through mutual identity with issues, and that the issue of engagement in the activity was

underdeveloped and almost over reliant on the presumed active interest by the potential participant.

In my investigation into the planning of research for the second research paper I undertook some empirical work with members of a steering group that I had established to oversee a schools based project utilising CoP theory called *The Learning School Project* (O'Connell, 2007). The membership of the steering group was drawn from amongst the national support service personnel that were working in support of post-primary teachers and from members of An Chigireacht (The Schools Inspectorate). The *Learning School Project* aimed to promote a cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to CPD in the context of support personnel and teachers working as a community of practice. The aim of the research paper was to document and examine the steering group members' views regarding the establishment, operation and functioning of the steering group. I argued that if the aim of any action is to address a "problem" then prior understanding of the "problem", how it functions, and how the key parts of the "problem" interrelate are essential. This assisted in focussing my research towards an investigation of the factors that influence teachers in their decision making regarding engagement in CPD.

In the third research paper I interviewed six post-primary teachers; participants in the *Learning School Project*, regarding the factors that influence decision making regarding engagement in CPD (O'Connell, 2008). I examined the detailed and individual way in which teachers talk about whom they are, their work, their goals and how they see the purposes of CPD. Notably, I saw the interplay between themselves as agent and the structures in which they were located play out in real time, real life settings. This piece of empirical work facilitated me in establishing my conceptual framework of *engagement* as a legitimate research tool.

This study draws, therefore, on what is already known from research evidence about the factors that interplay and impact on teacher agency when considering engagement in CPD and what conceptual frameworks exist to describe, understand and explain teacher

involvement in CPD. It aims to address the gap in understanding within the research regarding the pre-engagement phase when teachers, as individuals, contemplate engagement. Arising from what I argue to be a limited conceptualisation within the current body of research is the development of a conceptual model of engagement which may support policy developers in Ireland and in other jurisdictions in their understanding of what influences teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD.

This research is timely because of the dearth of studies which are located within Irish policy and school circumstances. In a period of educational policy change in Ireland, not just from a curricular perspective but also from an increasing demand from Government, media and parents for schools and teachers to be more accountable for their work and proficiency and for the evaluation of schools performance to be published, this research offers an intimate and closely observed appraisal of the complexities surrounding teacher decision making with regard to engagement in CPD. It also challenges an underlying assumption by policy developers that the provision of CPD equates to engagement in CPD. It seeks to clarify if the idea that the promotion of professional collaboration among teachers within and across schools through initiatives such as *School Development Planning* automatically leads to a positive disposition to elective CPD or if engagement in elective CPD is governed by other factors.

This study is of value to the Irish education system in that it uncovers data and presents a contribution to understanding engagement in CPD heretofore unidentified in the Irish post-primary sector, regarding teachers perspectives and beliefs on the factors that influence their own decision making regarding engagement in their own professional learning. What is evidenced in this research is the complexity and dynamism of the interplay between individual agency and the situative structure, and I argue that it is the key to understanding why teachers engage in CPD.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis has seven chapters, and following this introduction Chapter 2 offers both a review of the literature regarding CPD; exploring the nature of CPD, why it is claimed it is required and how it is accessed, and also focuses on how the conceptualisations and the research evidence can be developed into an explanatory model of teacher engagement in CPD.

Chapter 2 contextualises this research by considering the conceptual frameworks that exist to describe, understand and explain teacher involvement in CPD and highlights what current research evidence says regarding the existence, impact and interplay of micro, meso and macro factors with regard to engagement in CPD and will be used to support and analyse the data gathered from the fieldwork.

This is followed by an account in Chapter 3 of the development of CPD in the Irish Education System from the publication, in 1991, of the OECD report on teacher professional learning in Ireland to the current policy context. It details the structures that have been put in place to support CPD in Ireland. These accounts serve as a means of contextualising the research and aiding the understanding of the particularities of the Irish education system at post-primary level. Chapter 3 also introduces the research sites where the field work was conducted and provides a background to my work with the six post-primary schools as they travel the journey of the process of amalgamation thus giving consideration also to my role as insider researcher.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research design, the methodological options considered and the rationale for the methodology selected for the fieldwork. It provides detail of the study's timescale and the design and testing of the research instruments.

Details of the findings of each of the stages of the data gathering process are presented in Chapter 5 and a preliminary analysis of the primary data is presented. In Chapter 6 I offer an analysis and discussion of the findings and their significance. This analysis and discussion is structured using the literatures presented in Chapter 2 as the interpretive lens. The chapter

concludes with an account of how the conceptualisation of engagement has evolved through the research process.

In the final chapter, Chapter 7, I discuss the research findings and the conclusions that can be drawn from the data. This chapter considers the achievements of the research, the problems that were encountered and the issues that have arisen which require further research. It concludes with recommendations for policy developers as supported by the evidence from the research.

Chapter 2 - Continuing Professional Development

Introduction

The focus of this research is the development of an understanding of the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD. It explores teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding CPD and examines their social practice in relation to professional learning and their views as adult learners. Consequently, it is necessary to inquire into the current evidence base regarding CPD itself before consideration is given to the factors that influence teacher engagement with it. This chapter contextualises the research through an examination of the literatures on the *what*, the *why* and the *how* of CPD, exploring the arguments in support of CPD as a valid activity, outlining the claims made regarding the benefits of participation in CPD and the varying structures advocated as the most effective model of CPD. It draws primarily on American and United Kingdom based literatures regarding teacher professional learning owing to the substantial body of research conducted since the 1970s in both countries. Consideration is also given to literature on the management of change and teacher professionalism in order to investigate if the arguments within these fields support the provision of, and engagement in, CPD.

Finally, this chapter focuses on the development of a model of *engagement* that will be used to structure the empirical work conducted in this research. The developmental process draws on Scribner's (1999) argument that *existing research does little to clarify why professionals engage in learning activities* (p 246).

What is CPD?

CPD and teacher CPD in particular is a complex phenomenon which Guskey (2004) says *mirrors the complexity of the purposes and practices of teaching* (p x111). Bolam (2000) offers the following working definition in which he defines CPD as a range of post-certification teacher activities that ultimately lead to an improvement in student learning outcomes:

CPD embraces those education, training and job-embedded support activities engaged in by teachers, following their initial certification. Such activities are aimed primarily at adding to their professional knowledge, improving their professional skills

and helping them to clarify their professional values so that they can educate their students more effectively. (p 267)

Day (1997) offers a similar -yet less focussed on student outcomes- definition of CPD when he states that:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. (p 4)

Primarily, both of these definitions describe CPD as an opportunity for teachers to build on their understanding, their knowledge and their approaches to teaching and learning. The activity of CPD is defined as purposeful in that it supports teachers in the art of teaching with the anticipated outcome being an improvement in the quality of teaching and student learning. Day (1999) lays emphasis on the ongoing, career-long nature of CPD when, within his definition, he states that CPD is "a process" by which teachers "acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice...through each phase of their teaching lives". (p 4)

Similarly, Earley and Bubb (2004) define CPD as a process to "encourage and develop learning teachers and to facilitate planned learning and development opportunities recognising a variety of learning styles and approaches to learning". (p 21)

Notably, Earley (2004) contends that professional development is an aspect of personal development and wherever possible the two should interact and complement each other. The former is about occupational role development whereas personal development is about the development of the person as a "whole" person, and it almost always involves changes in self awareness. As Waters (1998) explains:

It is the development that can occur when teachers are constructed first and foremost as people, and is predicated on the premise that people are always much more than roles they play. (p 30)

Helpful as these working definitions are they are far from unproblematic in that they move almost immediately from what CPD is, to the anticipated outcomes of engagement in CPD.

This underlines the complexity of untangling teacher learning in its own right from the policy, practice, professional culture and expectation in which CPD happens. Little (1993) definition encapsulates the contextual issues when she argues that professional development is where:

The tension between the institutional imperatives and individual prerogative exist, between the conditions necessary to attempt systemic change and the conditions that engage individual teachers in their work. (p 141)

She highlights that CPD is informed and influenced by both systemic and personal drivers. The systemic drivers see CPD as a vehicle for an externally mandated and driven change, whereas, the personal drivers recognise life histories and personal circumstances. CPD is positioned therefore, on the shifting sands between control and compliance on the one side, and autonomous professional activism on the other.

Little (1993) does, however, move to clarification on what CPD is when she nominates the following features of effective CPD: (a) It ensures collaboration adequate to produce shared understanding, shared investment, thoughtful development, and a fair, rigorous test of selected ideas; (b) it requires collective participation in training and implementation; (c) it is focused on crucial problems of curriculum and instruction; (d) it is conducted often enough and long enough to ensure progressive gains in knowledge, skill, and confidence; and (e) it is congruent with and contributes to professional habits and norms of collegiality and experimentation. Abdal-Haqq (1995) nominates a similar set of characteristics, claiming that effective professional development is:

1. Ongoing.
2. Includes training, practice, and feedback; opportunities for individual reflection and group inquiry into practice; and coaching or other follow-up procedures.
3. Is school based and embedded in teacher work.
4. Is collaborative, providing opportunities for teachers to interact with peers.
5. Focuses on student learning, which should, in part, guide assessment of its effectiveness.
6. Encourages and supports school-based and teacher initiatives.
7. Is rooted in the knowledge base for teaching.
8. Incorporates constructivist approaches to teaching and learning.
9. Recognizes teachers as professionals and adult learners.
10. Provides adequate time and follow-up support.
11. Is accessible and inclusive. (p 3)

Noting the consistency across such lists, Putnam and Borko (1997) reduce the features of CPD to four essential "mantras" or "truisms":

1. Teachers should be treated as active learners who construct their own understanding.

2. Teachers should be empowered and treated as professionals.
3. Teacher education must be situated in classroom practice.
4. Teacher educators should treat teachers as they expect teachers to treat students.

CPD is conceptualised, therefore, as a set of activities that collectively form an ongoing process which ranges from the formal to the informal, from teacher or school generated activities to system mandated activities, which are either school based or externally provided. However, it is true to say that CPD is also conceptualised as a commodity that is exchangeable thus, it is essentially political. In being political CPD can, on the one hand, be used as a means to influence the curriculum in pursuit of a political agenda but equally can provide the opportunity to address teachers' individual learning needs, however its orientation is very much dependent on its governing political purpose.

What is evident in the literature is that there is extensive, informed and purposeful inquiry as to what constitutes professional development with it viewed primarily as beneficial in addressing some of the variety of needs that a teacher encounters in the different phases of their teaching careers. There is general agreement that CPD is context sensitive hence the large variety of CPD ranging from episodic training sessions to sustained teacher led and owned inquiry. However, the concept of teacher engagement in CPD is underdeveloped in the literature, with less focus on teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding engagement in professional development and greater focus on its features and aspects.

Why have CPD?

Knight (2002) ponders as to why we ought to have CPD and in doing so he argues that on a fundamental level:

Continuing professional development is needed because initial teacher education cannot contain all of the propositional knowledge that is needed and certainly not that procedural, know to+knowledge which grows in practice. Normal changes, as when the syllabus is altered or when a child presents a fresh problem, perhaps in the form of a disability that the teacher has not met before, demand development, so too with a change of school, positioning oneself for promotion or taking on new responsibilities. (p 230)

Knight's argument for CPD is pragmatic in nature; it has at its core an acceptance that no initial training can match the demands of an ever-changing classroom environment. Dadds (1997) strengthens the argument for CPD in presenting it as a fundamental principle of a teacher's work when she claims that teachers require a planned, flexible and adaptive form of professional development which caters for the complexity of their responses:

A good national plan that recognises the continuing needs of teachers as learners in a changing society is welcomed. Multiple and complex social change places multiple demands on teachers. A well-educated, highly flexible competent teaching force is required to handle these changes and to foster practices which are responsive to the educational needs of all children. (p 31)

Both of these arguments focus on the agency of the teacher and suggest that it is only through CPD that the performance of teachers will improve, thus resulting in improved learning outcomes for pupils. CPD is, therefore, a transformative tool that improves responsiveness and change in practice.

Whilst Knight and Dadds locate their arguments for CPD from the position of the teacher, Fullan (1993) connects the value of CPD to the change and reform agendas that are externally driven. He argues for the need for innovative and creative means for addressing issues claiming that 'the key to success lies in the creative activity of making new maps' (p 25). He develops this further when he suggests that professional development must serve as a vehicle for reform. This connection between CPD and educational change is also highlighted by Scribner (1999), citing McLaughlin and Oberman (1996), who describe a symbiotic relationship between teacher learning and education reform; a relationship where successful reform relies on 'continuous teacher learning and effective teacher learning relies on new approaches to teacher professional development' (p 239). The change and reform agenda are extended by Bezina (2002), who argues that the political and societal focus on quality in education is generally defined by a call for associated professional development. Walter et al (1996) exemplify this when they suggest that 'the quality of teaching depends on the quality of the teachers which, in turn, depends to some extent on the quality of their professional development' (p 41). Here, the issue of quality is linked primarily to that of standards and when the call for increased standards in pupil attainment is issued, so too is

the call for an increase in the standards of teaching and the revitalisation of teaching through CPD.

Therefore, within the literatures, CPD is conceptualised from varying perspectives with, on the one level, CPD being required to support teachers as they strive to address the situations they encounter, and on another level, CPD being presented as an essential component in addressing educational reform and change. Day and Sachs (2004) highlight this dilemma for CPD when they argue that %because CPD can have many different meanings, its purposes, processes and impact are often undifferentiated and diffuse+(p.23).

The purpose of CPD is laden with varying agendas, none more so than the tension between individual and organisational development. Kelchtermans (2004) argues that %both the financial and social . organisational facets of work act as filters which privilege some learning activities while limiting others+(p 23), thus pointing to the agenda that shapes the purpose of CPD and to what is driving the agenda. There is agreement within the literatures that whilst CPD has the capacity to address both individual and system needs it is important as Day and Sachs (2004) argue that %width is needed if one-sidedness is to be avoided+(p 23).

How is CPD provided?

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1999) identified three conceptions of knowledge associated with teachers' learning and development and central to the design and provision of CPD. Firstly, they identified *knowledge-for-practice*: formal knowledge generated by researchers outside the school, secondly *knowledge-of-practice*: generated by teachers critically examining their own classrooms and schools and thirdly, *knowledge-in-practice*: teachers' practical knowledge generated through their own systematic inquiry, stimulated by questions raised concerning their own classroom effectiveness.

This classification of CPD activity; whilst focusing predominantly on the transfer of knowledge and lacking any focus on the emotional being of the teacher, offers a framework that guides the planning and provision of CPD. It does not, however, reflect Day and Sachs (2004) argument that the %kinds of CPD which predominate at any given time reflect views of teachers' needs by those outside the classroom+(p 6). Thus, the *knowledge-for-practice* and

the *knowledge-in-practice* are very much open to being colonised by particular agendas. Day and Sachs (2004) note that Jackson (1968) identified in CPD a *deficit model* in which it was assumed that teachers needed to be provided with something that they did not already have. The teacher as technician, operating in deficit, has been in the ascendancy for the most part primarily because its focus is on addressing systemic needs. In this delivery approach to CPD Dadds (1997) argues that the teacher is positioned as the uncritical implementer of outside policies+(p 32). The *deficit model* fails therefore, in her opinion, to conceptualise teachers as other than conduits of knowledge. In arguing against the delivery/deficit model she states that:

professional development based upon the cultivation of informed understanding, judgement and voice can help to counteract the more obvious failings of the worst delivery models – here, the inner knowledge, judgement and wisdom of the professional teacher is seen as one of the greatest resources available to children. (p 32)

Dadds (1997) develops her argument regarding teacher voice when she claims that belief in and responsibility for the professional self [needs to be seen as] crucial and indispensable+(p 33). This recognises the importance of teachers becoming, as Eraut (1972) argues, active agents in their own development positioning themselves with a problem-centred approach+(p.1). This approach places the emphasis of CPD on diagnosing and studying problems and the solution has to be found by the teacher himself+(p.1). What is to the fore in this approach to CPD is a two-way flow where teachers have as much to give as they have to receive. It suggests that if teacher contributions to CPD remain underutilized then the effectiveness of the CPD opportunity is very much diminished.

What is apparent, therefore, is that there is a divergence of purpose between these two approaches. The teacher focused approach, as espoused by Dadds and Eraut, does not offer enough to those in policy-making and managerial roles; normally the drivers of the external agenda, as they tend to view teacher capacity to address systemic needs with scepticism.

Day and Sachs (2004) pinpoint this dilemma when they argue that:

The challenge is how to sustain change at the system and individual level while at the same time ensuring that educational bureaucracies have the capacity (resources and intellectual) to support the rhetoric and intent expressed in education reform agendas and ensuing policies (p 21).

Similarly, Gunter (2001) addresses this dilemma when she bridges the school based model of professional development with the need also to focus on the connectedness that is necessary if systemic change is to be achieved. She argues that:

we need the means by which everyday educational practice can be understood and developed differently, and it needs to be able to connect to and problematise macro and micro policy-making (p 132).

Her argument highlights the need to develop a conceptual basis for a change in approach to teacher professional development based on the understanding of practice and for this understanding to penetrate the corridors of policy developers.

What emerges from these literatures, therefore, is that the importance attached to teacher learning remains problematic and is not just dependent on the perspective of the purpose but also on the manner of provision, the underlying pedagogy of development experiences. The literature is replete with arguments for locating professional development opportunities within the context of the environment of teachers (i.e. the schools themselves), and for respecting the need for local connectivity with programmes of professional development based on the premise that it increases inquiry into new practices and the implementation of school improvement initiatives – staff development structured as an inquiry both fuels energy and results in initiatives that have greater effects+ (Joyce et al., 1999, p 13). Sachs (2003) supports this argument, adding:

school-based teacher enquiry creates opportunities for teachers – to develop new skills and in doing so it acts as a strong form of professional development – creating a culture of enquiry, whereby professional learning and dissemination are expected (p 80).

However, it is the case that the argument regarding the location of CPD is itself not dissimilar from the argument regarding the models of CPD, whether teachers' deficiencies are remediated or whether teacher led inquiry unfolds new practices and better outcomes, and thus the dilemma continues. In what can be seen as an acceptance of the unresolved dilemma of achieving balance between individual and systemic needs, Lieberman (1996), focuses more on the strategies for CPD and suggests that what is essential in bridging the gap between models is a variety of learning experiences. She argues for *direct learning* to be facilitated through conferences and workshops for *learning in school* to be promoted through

peer coaching, mentoring, critical friendships, active research, team planning and assessment and for *learning out of school* through reform networks, school-university partnerships and professional development centres.

Against this background of difference in perspective regarding definition, purpose and approach, debates regarding CPD abound. The main dilemma appears to centre on the crux that when CPD endeavours to address individual needs then it fails to meet the need for institutional change and visa versa. It can be argued that the conceptual map is too narrow to accommodate the multi-dimensional nature of CPD requiring it to be considered in a broader context such as its connection with change and teacher professionalism.

CPD and change

The clarion call for change and for change is a feature of our modern world. Earlier, I argued that those who seek change in the education system and structures invariably link their demands with the need for teachers to change and be changed through professional development. Stoll et al. (2003), assert that to succeed it is vital that schools grow, develop, adapt creatively to and take charge of change so that they can create their own preferable future. The complexity of change has received significant attention in the research literature, with many contributions to what is widely referred to as *change knowledge* (Fullan, 1991, 2005, Hargreaves, 1995b, Black and Gregersen, 2002, Heifetz and Linsky, 2003). Change knowledge is viewed as instrumental in teachers directing their own development to meet the challenges they encounter. It is supportive of teacher led inquiry and school-based inquiry recognising teachers' prior knowledge and competence in addressing issues and leading change.

Hargreaves (1995b) contends that the three vital domains through which change exerts its impact in education are work, time and culture. He stresses the need for all reforms to be grounded in the day-to-day realities of the workplace, for any initiative to be given time to embed into the system and for shared goals and partnerships to be the vehicle for change as

opposed to any form of coercion. He argues that knowledge sharing and collective identity are powerful forces for positive change, and identifies collaboration as a productive response to a world in which problems are unpredictable, solutions are unclear, and demands and expectations are intensifying. He argues that when teacher self-development is linked to actions which address the contextual realities of teachers' work and actively seek to change them, this process can be an immensely empowering one.

Change knowledge has a bias for action and good policies need collaborative learning cultures in which to thrive (Heifetz and Linsky, 2003). This emphasis on collaborative learning suggests the importance of the social process in turning information into actionable knowledge. It confirms Fullan's (1993) suggestion that connection with the wider environment, as opposed to working in isolation is critical for success.

Brighthouse (2004) underlines the need to be aware of 'organisational arthritis' (p 4), the occasion when the time-honoured way we do things around here (p 4), gets in the way of new directions. Recognising that resistance is to be expected and that it is not rejection, and further understanding the need for pressure and support is classical change knowledge. Heifetz and Linsky (2003) explore the challenge of change by providing a distinction between technical problems and adaptive challenges. Technical challenges, they argue, are those for which current knowledge is sufficient to address and which are solvable without undue difficulty. However, adaptive knowledge changes are more complex, involve attitudes and beliefs and may require new learning and the need to go beyond what is currently known. This moving outside the 'comfort zone' creates avoidance and disequilibrium and takes time. Teachers facing new situations may feel deskilled and see all the specific ways in which they will feel incompetent and look stupid. Therefore many may prefer to be 'incompetent at the (old) wrong thing than incompetent at the (new) right thing' (Black and Gregersen, 2002, p 70).

For those working in teacher development, if change is to work, it has to be altered by and tailored to practitioners' needs and values (Fullan, 1991). It has to be supported and allowed time to embed and it should strive to enhance the capacity of the teaching workforce and the

system. However, this approach to change does not exist in exclusion of the earlier issue of the commodification of CPD and its essential political nature. If CPD is a vehicle to meet the demands of change then there is also the need for teachers to adopt a more inquisitive approach as to who is promoting the change and whose interests the change best serves. Teachers both individually and collectively are encouraged to question as Smyth (1989) suggests %who has the legitimate right to define what counts as knowledge about teaching+ (p 6), before the processes are altered or changed.

Teacher professional identity: changing concepts

Bolam and McMahon (2004) state that %any discussion of continuing professional development must consider what it means to be a professional+(p.37). The discourse and practice of professionalism in education is inextricably bound to the changes in the social, political and cultural system of the wider society. Pressure on schools by social, economic and educational interest groups to conform, reform and perform has heightened awareness on a global scale of the need for a radical shift in thinking on what constitutes professionalism in education (Hoyle and John 1995, Grace 1995, Bottery 1996, Whitty, 2000). Today, the traditional notion of professionalism is under scrutiny and there is much debate, as evidenced in the literature (e.g. Bottery 1996, Barnett, 1997, Whitty, 2000), about what constitutes professionalism in education.

Hoyle and John (1995), whilst acknowledging that the issue of status is central in the debate regarding professionalism, argue for a focus on the issue of professional practice and state that the %criterion approach+(p 15) is helpful when defining what it means to be a professional in that it allows for the questioning of the three main criteria associated with professionalism, autonomy, knowledge and responsibility.

Professional autonomy is a phenomenon which is, according to Hoyle and John (1995), %both recognised and valued by teachers+(p 78), and it is, an %important factor in their sense of job satisfaction+(p 79). They qualify the level of real autonomy by stating that it is %always constrained+(p 78) and %contextual+(p 78) with the principal contexts in teaching being the

classroom and the school which as overlapping entities equates to scope for autonomy in the way in which tasks are carried out but not in the matter of whether they are carried out or not+ (p 84). The imperatives of the organisational need for coordination serve, they argue, to limit individual autonomy in the interests of the collective purpose of the organisation. Thus, the belief that a teacher as a professional enjoys unrestrained autonomy as per the traditional model no longer holds.

The criterion of knowledge in professionalism is the practical level of professionalism, it entails the body of skills and knowledge that teachers must have if they are to be effective classroom practitioners. However, it is the call for greater accountability with regard to effective classroom practice and the introduction of a variety of accountability tools that has had a destabilising effect on teachers'sense of professionalism with teachers concerned regarding the increase in onsite performance management. However, Hoyle and John (1995) state that %o accept the need for, and respond to, the processes of accountability is to be responsible+ (pp.103-104); a key criterion in the definition of professionalism, and that %systems of accountability are vital to the attainment of quality education but are not in themselves sufficient. They must be balanced by responsibility+(p 110) and argue that %responsibility is prior to accountability in many aspects of teachers'work+(p 110), with accountability being %a component of professional responsibilityō responsibility encompasses but transcends accountability because choice and judgement are necessary+(p 112).

The capacity to exercise sound judgement and make the correct choices is presented in the literature as the %second level of professionalism+(Hoyle and John, 1995, p 122), with the third level of professionalism defined as the efforts made by teachers to %equip themselves with the competencies required to make effective judgements+(Hoyle and John, p 122). This echoes Hoyle's (1974) distinction between the 'restricted' and the 'extended' professional. He describes the restricted professional as one who has a high level of skill and specialist expertise and who embraces technical rationality with reduced discretion. In contrast, the extended professional has a broader range of knowledge which Eraut (1994) refers to as 'process knowledge' This involves making discretionary judgements within conditions of

unavoidable and perpetual uncertainty, which as Hargreaves (1994) contends, is the hallmark of the modern day professional. He also heralds the emergence of a new professionalism associated with greater pride and self confidence involving the movement away from the traditional professional authority towards new forms of relationships with colleagues, students and parents. This idea of the modern professional as a stakeholder in a societal exercise rather than being an instrument of managerial strategy (p 190) is also advanced by Bottery (1996), who suggests a change in the conception of professionals and their conception of their function. Like Barnett (1997), he asserts the need for professionalism to be reinterpreted in modern life (p 143) and for professionals to project the value of their profession in a shared context with the wider community. This is in the keeping with the call for a democratic professionalism in education, which seeks to demystify professional work and build alliances between the relevant stakeholders and hitherto excluded constituencies of students, parents and members of the community (Sachs, 2001).

However, what is most challenging for teachers and their sense of their own professionalism is that they operate under conditions of significant change in Government policy and educational restructuring (Sachs, 2001). Burke (1996) contends that some teachers suffer from a serious occupational identity crisis, which is debilitating for them, damaging to their occupation and a source of confusion in the public's perception of the nature of teaching (p 129). Hanlon (1998) asserts that professionalism today is a shifting rather than a concrete phenomenon and that as professionals live in a changing world, the nature of their work is changing too.

This landscape presents enormous challenges for teachers in the act of extending their professionalism when all facets of their role are subject to diverse expectations from several competing forces such as parents, the state and interest groups. Barnett (1997), highlights the extent to which the sands are shifting by expressing his concerns that professionalism is being reduced to professional work, its critical edge being reduced to problem solving in bounded professional situations (p 135). He urges the need to extend the notion of the professional beyond an unduly restricted set of ideas based on competence and expertise-

the one who gets on with the work in hand+(p 132) and cautions that the forces currently at work that would confine professionalism to efficient and effective actions for clients should be resisted (p 137).

It is a truism that the foundations of professionalism are provided by knowledge, (Barnett, 1997). However, whilst knowledge is a necessary ingredient of practice, Eraut (1994) asserts that simply mastering a syllabus of received knowledge makes a surprisingly low contribution to increased professional effectiveness. For professionals today, the knowledge base has become less stable and the ways in which it is acquired have become more diverse. Professionals are expected to be life-long learners who are proactive, engaging in learning activities and entrepreneurial in organising their own development (Harrison, 2003).

Essentially, it is argued that effective professional practitioners need to be able to construct and reconstruct the knowledge and skills they need and continually evolve their practice, an approach based on critical reflection and enquiry, linking professional development and school development. It is argued that the challenge today is to see knowledge and learning as a social process. Hyland (1996) emphasises the importance of professional practice as a social activity with issues which require collective rather than merely individual action (p 177).

The concept of professionalism is no longer strictly bounded or restricted. For example, Sachs (2001) describes the future professional as knowing, acting and communicating, realising a fragile professionalism day in-day out (p 193). This broadening of the perspective of the professional as a capable, learning individual with a commitment towards self-improvement and development, and an evolving professional knowledge base provides a fundamental challenge to the teaching profession and to the provision of CPD.

What is apparent in the literature is that CPD is, on one level, a valid activity in its own right, where teachers with different and varying needs can add to their understanding of the learning processes. However, it is also cited as appropriate for whole school as opposed to individual responses to addressing the change agenda with the 'deprofessionalised'+(Gunter,

2001, p 143) teacher working as part of a team and engaging in whole school activities.

Consequently, CPD is commodified and therefore is political in that it can be used as a process to redefine teacher agency and/or promote externally mandated changes.

Central to the debate on professionalism within the literature is the ability of teachers to take responsibility, with accountability being a component of this professional responsibility. Thus teachers, as professionals, are required to have the capacity to make sound judgements and by extension are required to make the effort to equip themselves with the necessary competencies to do so. This links directly to the role of professional learning and teacher engagement in it.

If CPD is conceptualised therefore as an aspect of the professional in action, reflecting on practice either as an individual or as part of a team or community, then, the first and initial base for *the examination with a view to change* of any practice is to determine how and why the practitioner will even engage with such activity in the first instance. Lyth (1988) highlights that those who introduce change or seek to promote change in organisations must be sensitive to how dependent individuals are on social defences, she reminds us that recognising the active function that many dysfunctional processes fulfil in the psychological lives of work colleagues is crucial if change agents are to keep grounded in the reality of how difficult change is to achieve. This sociological perspective illuminates the need for a conceptualisation of engagement that establishes the key influencing factors leading to a commitment to engage in CPD.

What is evident in the literature is that CPD offers teachers opportunity to build on their understanding and knowledge of approaches to teaching and learning. It is argued that CPD should be career-long and should cater for the complexity of the range of teachers' responses and that it is an essential component in addressing reform and change. However, it is also recognised that CPD is essentially a political activity with a governing political purpose therefore there are many calls within the literature for teachers to be active in their own development processes and for teachers' voices to be central in all CPD activities in order to avoid professional life being reduced to professional work. What remains underdeveloped in

the literature is an understanding of what influences teachers to engage in CPD in the first instance.

Towards a model of engagement

The availability of CPD and encouragement of teachers to participate in it does not secure teacher engagement. Teacher engagement in CPD is a motivated activity, as opposed to a situated response therefore, what constitutes the motivation needs to be understood. In pursuit of this consideration was given to Action Learning Cycles, Community of Practice Theory, Activity Theory and Scribner's (1999) professional development schema.

Implicit in Action Learning Cycles is the assumption that the learners are open to trying out new approaches, that they are willing to reflect on the results of such activity and that they are agreeable to sharing experiences with others. The development of action learning sets is presented in a *de facto* manner as an organisational task; the bringing of teachers together, which assumes readymade activists willing to engage in learning by the very fact that they are teachers.

Professional development aligned to community of practice theory focuses on the community as the locus of the engagement which offers participants new meanings, understandings, practices and potential new identities derived from the negotiation that ensues from engagement in the common practice. The greater emphasis is on the membership of the community of practice as opposed to the decision to become a member; on the social activity as opposed to the decision making process that governs engagement in the first instance.

Within both conceptualisations the focus is on the outcome of participation as opposed to the initial steps that secure engagement and hence they offer little in the way of deepening our understanding of the factors that influence engagement.

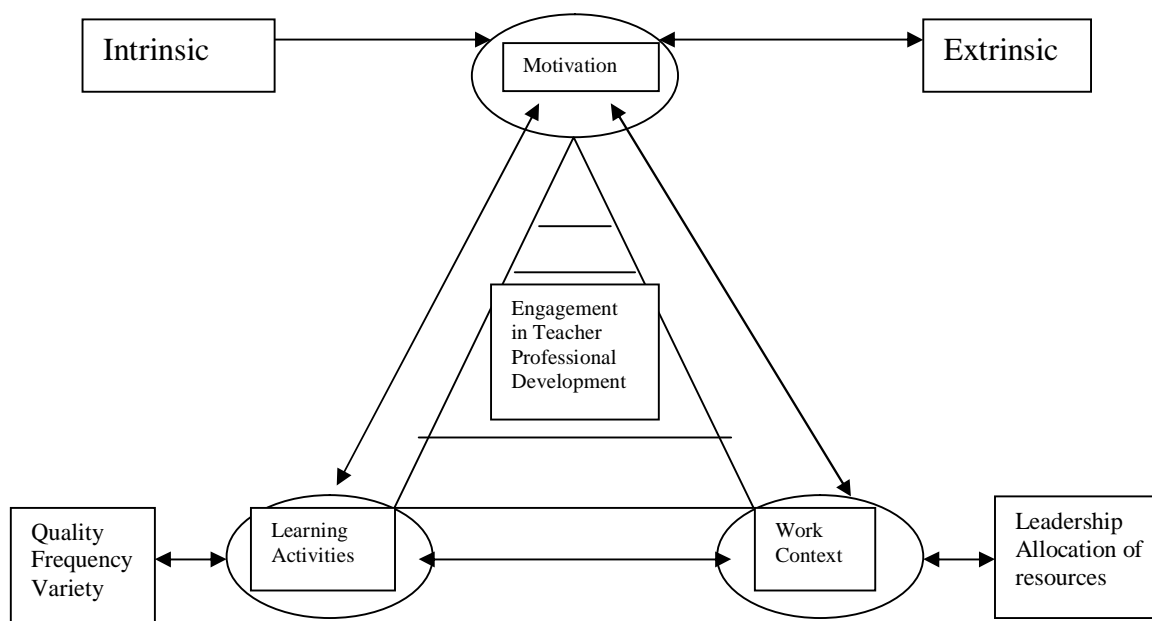
What Activity Theory offers in terms of understanding engagement in CPD is that the *subject* (individual or group of teachers) is motivated by an object(s) to achieve a particular *outcome*, thus highlighting that engagement is influenced and controlled and uncertain as opposed to the assumption of engagement that is found in the situated theories of learning.

Scribner's (1999) schema focuses on the pre-engagement phase of CPD and offers the strongest basis for the focus of this research albeit devised in a different context where contractual obligation and remuneration are linked to engagement in CPD.

The unit of analysis within Scribner's model (Figure 2.1) is the individual teacher and the factors that influence his/her engagement. The model has three main aspects that Scribner (1999) argues impact on teachers' decision making regarding engagement in professional development. Firstly, he states that motivators, both intrinsic and extrinsic are of major importance. He identifies four intrinsic motivating factors, (1) content knowledge needs, (2) pedagogical skills deficits, (3) challenges to classroom management and (4) gaps in student centred knowledge. He also identifies two primary extrinsic factors that impact on teacher engagement in CPD activities, remuneration and licensure requirements. However, he states that in relation to the extrinsic factors that neither ensures teacher engagement in relevant learning activities as their 'persuasive power' (p 248) reduces as teachers move through their career stages.

In his model significance is also ascribed to work context and in particular to the disposition of the school authorities towards professional development. He argues that the varying level of support within the school for engagement in professional development plays an important role in individual teachers' decision making. Similar significance is ascribed in Scribner's (1999) model to the quality, frequency and variety of learning activities offered to teachers and these, he states, play a significant part in the decision making process. Scribner (1999) also argues that the stage of career or career profile of a teacher has a significant impact on the decision making process with regard to engagement. He claims that the teachers' world outside of school, the level of personal commitment to family and other aspects of the teachers' life all contribute and influence the decision making process.

Figure 2.1 Engagement in CPD adapted from Scribner's professional development schematic (1999 p.259)

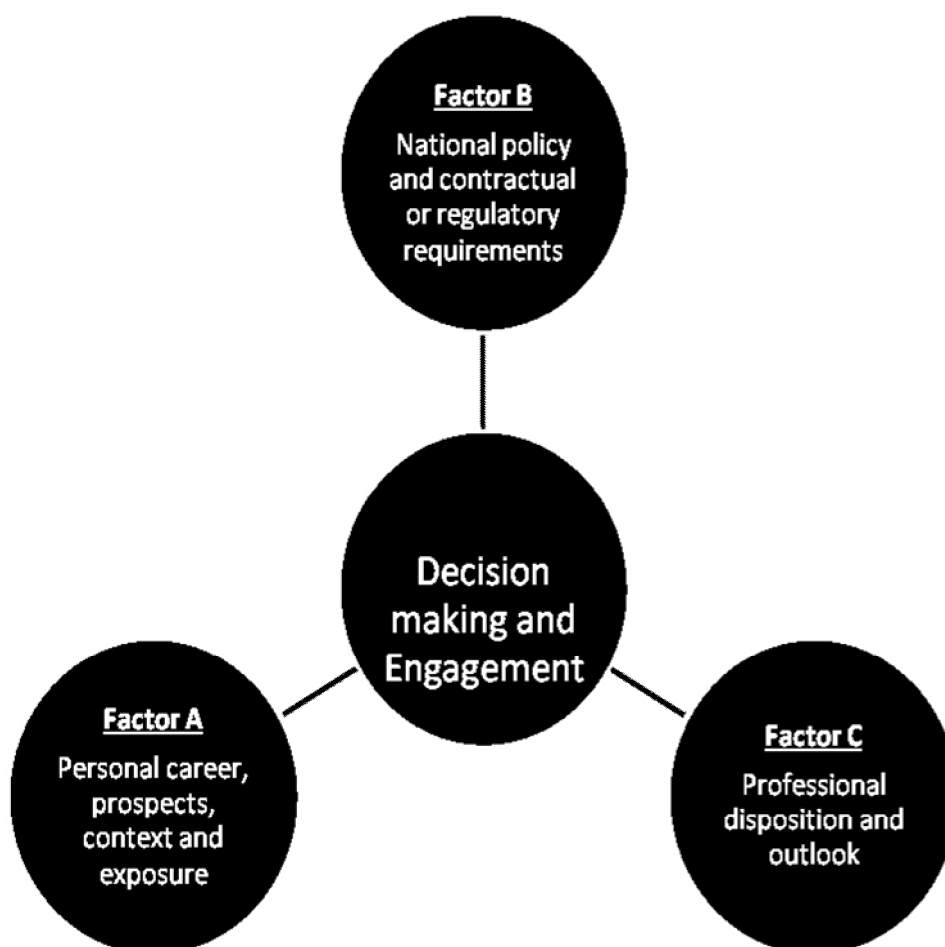


Scribner's schema offers insights into the pre-activity phase or decision to engage aspect of professional development. Therefore, it is clearly most pertinent to the focus of this study.

Figure 2.2 represents an adaptation of Scribner's schema which groups varying intrinsic and extrinsic motivators into three factors. At the heart of the model is decision making and engagement and by this I mean the interplay between agency and structure; the capacity and capability of the individual teacher to be in control and to respond to and impact on the factors.

Each factor is in its own right a complex patchwork. Factor A encompasses current teacher employment status, future promotional prospects, school context and exposure to professional development. This embodies the many facets of career per se, the length of service, the individual teacher's school context and setting, the possibility for advancement within the school's management structure, the influence and style of management experienced by the individual teacher and its impact on the organizational and cultural disposition to professional development, and the exposure the individual teacher has had to quality professional development opportunities.

Figure 2.2 The factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD



Factor A also includes the teacher's personal and social commitments and the impact this may have on their capacity to be able to engage with professional development particularly outside of school time. This factor is laden with extrinsic features which may influence an individual teacher's decision making in a positive or negative way.

Factor B considers the influence national policy or contractual regulations have on a teacher's engagement with professional development. In Ireland the advent of many curricular changes, new approaches to assessment, new national emphasis on school development and planning, the introduction of new assistive technologies and the demand for greater transparency and accountability have changed the professional development landscape with an exponential growth in teacher activity and engagement with professional development.

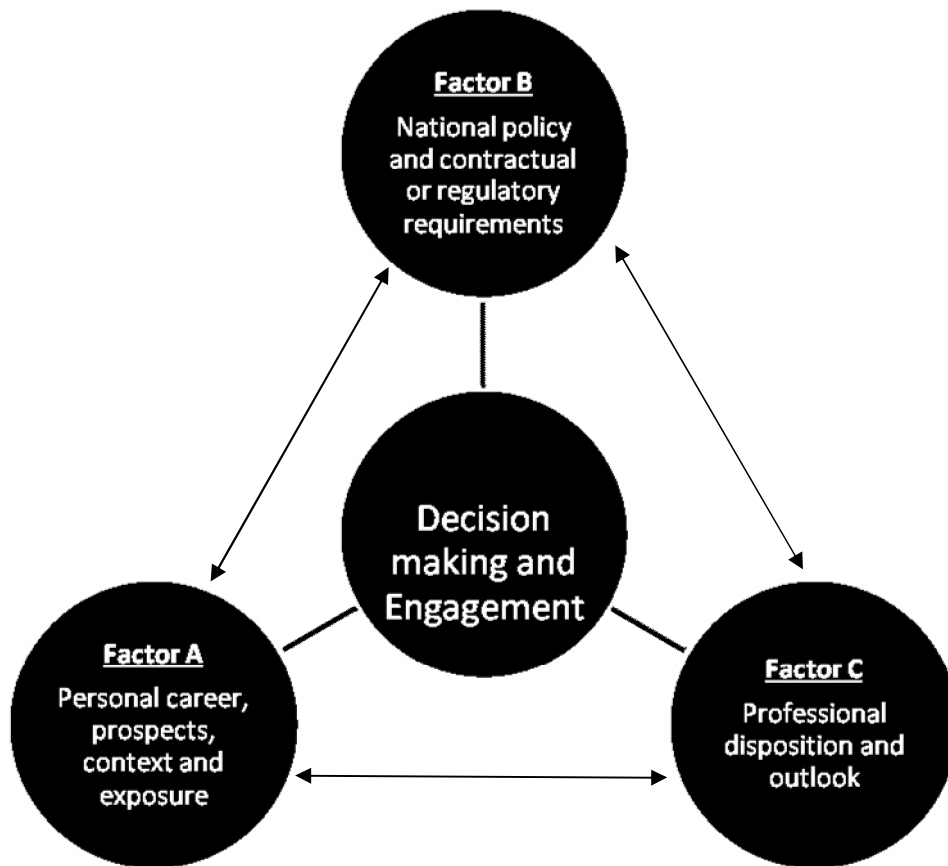
Factor C considers a teacher's personal disposition and outlook on CPD. It encapsulates a teacher's understanding of their role as a teacher, their sense of professionalism and personal responsibility to their students, their attitude to personal reflection and inquiry, their interest in their own learning, and their willingness to engage in innovative and developmental practices. This factor is replete with intrinsic features which are heightened or lessened by personal choice.

The combination of the factors is, therefore, a landscape of micro, meso and macro aspects that frame a teacher's agency with the structure within which they operate and function on a daily basis and which influence teacher engagement in CPD.

A further refinement

Analysis of pilot fieldwork (O'Connell, 2007) contributed to a refinement of the original model. This refinement reflects the greater complexity and dynamism in the decision making process as evidenced in the data from the pilot fieldwork. Teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD is complex and non-linear and is best represented by the interplay of the factors as depicted in Figure 2.3. This refinement was validated by a peer review of the working model which I conducted at the School Development Planning Summer School in University College Dublin on August 18th 2008. The participants; comprising of 60 teachers from various parts of Ireland who either held the position of principal in their school or were a member of the senior management teams, considered the original model and highlighted the lack of connectivity between the factors in the manner in which the model was presented. The isolation of factors, as presented in Figure 2.2, did not, in their opinion, reflect the reality of teachers' lives, as it conveyed decision making as a non-dynamic activity influenced by three independent factors each of equal weighting.

Figure 2.3 The factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD- a further refinement



This led to a significant development of the model of engagement which recognises the possible interplay between the factors at any given time in a teacher's professional life and illustrates that the agency of a teacher is not static but as Gunter (2001) states "a shift within time and space" (p 5) and similarly is representative of the fluidity that can come about in the structures that can impact on a teacher's agency and hence their decision making regarding engagement in CPD. This developed model will be used to structure and analyse the data gathering aspect of this research.

Summary

This chapter contextualised the research through an examination of the literatures on the *what*, the *why* and the *how* of CPD. It explored the arguments which support CPD as a

valid activity, outlining the claims made regarding the benefits of participation in CPD and the varying structures advocated as the most effective model of CPD. It then moved on to a review of the literature on the management of change and teacher professionalism where CPD is conceptualised as a potential means to implement change and to extend teacher professionalism.

In conclusion this chapter focused on addressing the fundamental question of decision making and its relationship with engagement in CPD. It outlined the development of a model of *engagement*; that will be used to structure the empirical work conducted in this research, and it highlighted the complexity of the decision making process which is inextricably linked to teacher agency and the external controls that can either promote or negate engagement in CPD.

In chapter 3 I move to further contextualise the empirical work conducted in this research by describing the particularities of CPD in Ireland through an examination of policy and structural developments from 1991 to the present day. Furthermore, I describe the setting within which the fieldwork was conducted, and explain my dual role both as a professional advisor to the schools in the context of their proposed amalgamation and as a researcher pursuing my own professional learning.

Chapter 3- National CPD Policy and Structures in Ireland

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined from the current evidence base that there are crucial issues regarding the purposes and practices of CPD for teachers in public education systems. This chapter enables the connection with a particular empirical context by outlining the underlying purposes of CPD in the Irish context. Specifically, the chapter addresses three issues: firstly, through documentary analysis, it outlines the origins and development of Department of Education and Science (DES) sponsored teacher professional development in the Irish education system and the infrastructural scaffolding developed to support it. Secondly, through documentary analysis and research diary data, it offers a description of the context of each of the six schools involved in this research project, it details some particularities relevant to each of the schools and outlines the seminal decision taken by the schools' Trustees that led in 2007 to the announcement of an amalgamation of the three post-primary schools in each of two small rural towns. Finally, consideration is given in this chapter to my role as professional advisor to the amalgamation process and to my role as researcher in this context.

These focal points support the understanding of how professional development is located within the Irish system and how teacher engagement has been influenced by both policy and structure and they offer a description of the context within which the empirical work was conducted.

The 1990's, a decade of awakening and action

In Chapter 2 I outlined the arguments from the literatures which claimed teacher professional development as a recognised, valid, yet contested activity in both the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. CPD, as a key element in educational reform and change in the Irish system, is however, a relatively recent development as my own professional experience illustrates. I qualified as a post-primary teacher in June 1981 and gained employment at the beginning of the school year 1981/1982. From that date through to my appointment as principal of a secondary school in April 1989 and up until February 1994 I

never received, nor was I ever offered, any form of in-service training or CPD from the DES. There was no state recognition of the need for teachers to be given opportunities to build on their understanding, knowledge and approaches to teaching and learning as existed in the UK and USA. Neither were there any state supported activities to form an ongoing process of development to support teacher responsiveness and change in practice; the key underpinning values of CPD as presented in Chapter 2. National policy regarding CPD during my formative years as a teacher and school principal was, as far as I knew, nonexistent. The system accepted teaching as a profession where competence was achieved upon the award of university qualifications and capacity for leadership was equated to classroom proficiency.

All of the CPD that I engaged in was of my own volition, at my own expense and provided by forward thinking colleagues who established and ran, with minimal support from the DES, the fledgling teacher centres or by educationalists in third level colleges and universities. There was, during this period, a total absence of systemic drivers and a total reliance on personal drivers. Whilst no policy existed to support the need for teachers to develop as they engaged in the complex responsive process of relating with their pupils, their colleagues, and the education community at large, there was, however, an emerging debate.

Table 3.1 outlines the key dates and publications which illustrate the emergence and subsequent developments linked to this debate. Callan (2006) identifies the principal features of this debate to be the O.E.C.D. *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland*, (1991), the *National Education Convention* (1994), and *Charting our Education Future, Education White Paper* (1995)+(p.6). Coincidentally the early 1990s saw the emergence in Ireland of the neo-liberal view that economic development depended more than ever on a well educated workforce (Cannon 2005). This emerging link between economic prosperity and the standard of education of the workforce allied to the publication of the O.E.C.D. (1991) report ensured that curriculum change and CPD for teachers moved up the list of government priorities.

Table 3.1 Key events in CPD in Ireland 1990-2010

| Date | Key Event | Key Feature(s) |
|----------------|--|--|
| 1991 | Publication by OECD of <i>Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland</i> | Identified the grossly inadequate nature of in-service education and training in the Irish Education system |
| 1992 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of Education Green Paper: <i>Education for A Changing World</i> | Proposed qualitative reforms in professional development through a consultative process |
| 1993 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of <i>The National Development Plan 1994-1999</i> | Proposed the development of the physical infra-structure to support teacher professional development |
| 1994 | Publication of the <i>Report of the National Education Convention</i> | Proposed the development of policy regarding professional development and the establishment of a Teaching Council |
| 1994 | Establishment by the DES of the ICPU | A specific unit within the DES to develop, manage and evaluate professional development |
| 1995 | Government of Ireland publication of Education White Paper: <i>Charting our Education Future</i> | Affirmed intention to progress a policy of professional development |
| 1998 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of <i>The Education Act</i> | Gave a legislative base for and definition of an Education Centre |
| 1999 | Introduction by the Department of Education and Science of <i>The Revised Primary Curriculum</i> | First major revision of the Primary School National Curriculum since 1971 |
| 2000 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of <i>The Cromien Report</i> | Critical of the DES and its management of professional development |
| 2001 | Publication by the Department of Education and Science of <i>Policy and Practice of Professional Development for Teachers: A Critical Analysis</i> | Calls for the strategic planning for quality professional learning through a partnership approach |
| 2003 | Publication by the Department of Education and Science of <i>The CMOD Report</i> | Criticises the lack of strategic planning and policy development within the DES for the network of Education Centres |
| 2004 | Formation by the Department of Education and Science of The Teacher Education Section | Formation within the DES of a dedicated section with a strategic focus on the education and development of teachers |
| 2004 | Publication by the DES of <i>Statement of Strategy 2005-2007</i> | Restatement of commitment to the training, support and development of teachers |
| 2006 | The establishment by an Act of the Oireachtas of The Teaching Council of Ireland | Professional body for registration and regulation |
| 2006 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of <i>Towards 2016</i> | Restatement of the importance of CPD for teachers |
| 2007 | Publication by the Government of Ireland of <i>The National Development Plan 2007-2013: Transforming Ireland</i> | Provides for investment in curriculum reform and CPD for teachers |
| Late 2008-2010 | The financial crisis | The collapse of both the public and private finances leading to severe cutbacks in public expenditure. |

The OECD's *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland* (1991) made particular reference to the teaching career. The report commented on the grossly inadequate nature of in-service education and training in the Irish education system. The OECD visiting team recommended the need for a structured and farsighted framework of provision at

national level+(p 129). The OECD experts were critical also of the Department's weakness in generating good data, which were *a sine qua non* of policy development and planning+

(p 131). The report stated that:

ō we believe that the best returns from further investment in teacher education will come from the careful planning and construction of a nationwide induction and in-service system using the concept of the teaching career as the foundation (OECD, 1991, p 98).

Coolahan (2004) refers to this recommendation as the 30s+perspective . good quality initial teacher education, followed by a structured form of induction and greatly expanded in-service teacher education+(p 9). This new invigorated approach to professional development as espoused by the OECD proved to be central to policy development in Ireland. Subsequent major policy papers, though few in number, contained reference to the development of a coordinated policy of in-career professional development.

Significant amongst these publications during this period was the *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994) which incorporated views from a unique, deliberative forum, enriched by analysis and interpretation by a panel of experts. It was the bedrock from which national policy crystallised during that period. Coincidentally, within the DES structures supporting teachers'CPD emerged with the founding in 1994 of the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) as a distinct section of the DES with a brief to develop, manage and evaluate the national programme of in-career development. The main policy objectives centred around supporting curriculum reform, enhancing principals'skills as leaders and managers of school-based change, developing teachers'skills in providing for pupils with special education needs, and facilitating the effective management of schools and the fuller involvement of parents in the education of their children. The rationale for the range of activities was the statement of entitlement of all Irish children to education of the highest quality. What emerged, therefore, was a policy underpinned by the belief that CPD is a transformative tool that has the capacity to improve teacher responsiveness and change teacher practice.

In tandem with the policy drive, a significant parallel infra-structural project was initiated:

IR£10m (" 12.7m) was secured for the development of a network of Education Centres from

the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This resulted in purpose built or refurbished premises for the majority of the full-time Education Centres, and during this period the network grew from 6 to 21 full-time Centres. These Centres were, and continue to be, used to support the provision of the enhanced in-career development programme.

The 1990s therefore, in terms of CPD in Ireland, can be characterised as a decade of appraisal and analysis, prompted by severe international criticism, which led to the formulation of a legislative agenda and a developmental framework for CPD. Essentially, the political purpose of CPD emerged whereby the underlying purpose of CPD was closely linked to the potential economic development of the nation.

A new millennium, a move towards a continuum

In October 2000, The Cromien Report, a highly significant review of the Department of Education and Science was published. It was highly critical of the operations of the DES and in particular it highlighted its antiquated structure (ii). It describes a Department overwhelmed with detailed day-to-day work which has to be given priority over long-term strategic thinking (p 1) and described policy development as evolving haphazardly (p 2) with vagueness, caused by the absence of clear structures, about where in the Department policy is formulated and whose responsibility it is to formulate it (p 3). With regard to teacher CPD, the Cromien Report was not reserved in its commentary and it queried:

why the Department needs to be so closely involved with in-career teacher education since it does not play a direct role in the delivery of the related area of initial teacher education (this is undertaken by the Universities and Colleges of Education). It is worth considering whether it might be more efficient to devolve responsibility for in-career education programmes concerning curriculum change externally, while retaining overall responsibility for policy. (p 26)

The impact of the Cromien Report proved to be seminal in the reform of the DES and the education system at large. It promoted the following actions with regard to CPD: first, an internal review of the operation of the ICDU and other associated sections of the DES, second, the commissioning of a report entitled *Policy and Practice of Professional Development for Teachers: A Critical Analysis*, (Sugrue et al 2001), third, a review of the

Education Centre Network (CMOD, 2002) and the establishment of a representative advisory group on CPD post-primary. Each action resulted in an articulation of similar concerns and desires. Sugrue et al (2001) recommended the need for:

“ strategic thinking and implementation strategies (for the professional learning of teachers) need to foster partnerships rather than competition to provide more comprehensive, sustainable and continuous professional learning opportunities in ways that build on all available infrastructure and human resources
“ strategic thinking needs to look beyond delivery to issues of building capacity and maximizing existing capacities and structures so that planning for quality professional learning reflects a partnership approach (p 121).

The DES response to these reviews, reports and consultations was the formation in April 2004 of the Teacher Education Section (TES). This new section incorporated the original brief of the ICDU but also encompassed other areas within the DES that had a remit for teacher education via the Colleges of Education and the education departments in the Universities and Colleges.

The formation of the TES served to give a more strategic focus to the education and development of teachers across an interrelated continuum of initial pre-service, induction and in-service training and professional development. The emergence of this career-long approach to CPD gave recognition to the international belief that teachers, as professionals, should be life-long learners engaged and pro-active in their own learning. This development provided for the first time coherence with regard to policy development and a philosophical perspective; important as the bedrock for policy development, that teaching and being a teacher is a continuum with ongoing professional needs.

The maintenance of policy focus

Subsequent DES Annual Reports (2004, 2005, 2006) and the *Statement of Strategy 2005-2007* (Department of Education and Science, 2005) have restated the Government's, and in particular, the DES's commitment to actions in support of this philosophical stance. In the DES *Statement of Strategy 2005-2007* the DES outlines its key five high level goals (see Appendix 1 for more detail) and contextualises the system with a series of acknowledgements of the

changing face of delivery of education, including changes in the practice and profession of teaching+(p 14) and the need %to reflect today's information age+(p 14). The *Statement of Strategy* elaborates by stating that %the role of the teacher is less focused on the provision of knowledge and more concerned with the teaching of learning skills+(p 14), and in endeavouring to achieve this the *Statement of Strategy* acknowledges that %the changing environment requires ongoing training, support and development+(p 14).

Government policy was aligned to the call from the world of business and industry for teachers to change and be changed through CPD. Several new syllabi were introduced in post-primary schools across a range of subjects and a revised primary curriculum was introduced with an associated extensive mandatory CPD programme. All schools were requested to engage in school development and planning and were, by law, required for the first time to publish a school plan and make public a range of policies. Therefore, the governance of the schools was being influenced by a new and expansive set of legislative requirements which in turn increased the provision of DES sponsored CPD and saw a dramatic increase in teacher engagement in CPD. Thus, the systemic drivers located CPD as a central aspect of the day-to-day life of each school.

A further significant development came about in response to the teacher unions' call for teacher involvement in their own regulation and development and thus the Teaching Council of Ireland was enacted as a statutory body in 2006. The establishment of the Teaching Council created the professional representative statutory body which when fully operational and functional will contribute greatly to the development of education policy in areas such as CPD for teachers.

Overall, policy development and the associated legislative framework during the 2000s offered the semblance of a coherence hitherto not seen. Undoubtedly, there is a traceable vein of commitment to a strategic development of curriculum review and reform underpinned by support and professional development for teachers. Most significantly, the new entrant into the teaching profession in Ireland, in accordance with policy objectives, has now got the

opportunity to avail of induction, mentoring and a loosely co-ordinated programme of continuing professional development throughout the different stages of their career.

Model(s) of CPD

The underlying pedagogy of development experiences in Ireland has evolved in the past twenty years from the stance where the system that viewed teachers as operating in deficit, requiring new methodological skills and approaches underpinned by structural and organisational change, to a more inclusive model that recognises the principles of adult learning and teacher contribution to their own learning.

The first major national development offered by the ICDC in 1994 was to support the revised mathematics curriculum at junior cycle post-primary level. The delivery model applied was elementary in that it ignored any theoretical basis on how adults learn and concentrated totally on dissemination of information to vast audiences of teachers as it was deemed the most cost effective method of providing in-service. Fundamentally these mass gatherings were based on a technicist approach to CPD where the teacher was viewed as being in deficit and the programme simply sought to distribute the new knowledge. This was the overriding model from 1994 to 1999 despite many criticisms and concerns expressed by teachers.

In 1999 a number of major support services were established; the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), the Physical Sciences Initiative for Post-Primary Schools (PSI) and the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). An analysis of the documentation published in association with the new programmes indicates the arrival of a new era where adults as learners and adults as knowers were respected and valued. The model changed dramatically to include school based workshops, school visits to particular teachers, drop in clinics, direct connections with education departments in third level colleges and universities and a number of other approaches which recognised the value of the teacher as an active participant in their own learning. The new approach allowed for the systemic needs, i.e. curriculum change to be addressed whilst also encouraging schools to identify their own needs and request specific on-site support both in whole-school and subject based issues.

The model has, therefore, evolved into a multi pronged approach where the teacher is not always viewed as a professional worker requiring re-casting but as a professional who can contribute and be active in their own professional learning and development. However, there is no doubting but that the state has, as a central tenet of its CPD policy, linked educational attainment to economic development and prosperity and has identified the education system as critical to attaining its economic targets and in so doing has developed a view of teacher professional development intrinsically linked to curriculum change and curricular innovation.

Whilst policy now appreciates teaching as an experiential continuum and recognises the need to support teachers in each stage of their career, it limits its scope to efficient organisation at school level and widespread provision of teacher CPD in subject based curricular reform. The policy fails to address the teacher as a person first and foremost and limited consideration is given to the teacher as a person whose fundamental activity is primarily relational.

Furthermore, national policy fails to address the area of teacher engagement with professional development with the concentration placed on provision of CPD without an examination of the factors that influence teacher engagement with it.

It is also the case that the extensive provision of CPD came about in an era of national wealth which allowed for the professional development activities to be conducted during school time with all the associated costs being met by the State. Extensive teams of seconded teachers were allocated to support this work across all parts of the nation and during school time. The rapid collapse of the financial health of the nation since late 2008 has necessitated a total review of this practice and it is anticipated that large scale reductions will be made during 2010 which will see a withdrawal of such support and hence the financial and infra-structural support allocated to CPD over the past decade will be but a mere shadow of itself in the very immediate future. This new landscape will be both challenging but at the same time revealing in that it will unveil if the intensive phase of systemic drivers will result in the re-emergence of the personal drivers as was the case pre the 1990s. Therefore, it is timely to conduct

empirical work to illuminate teacher beliefs and attitudes to their own professional learning and in doing so to outline the sites involved in this empirical work.

Locating the empirical work

Whilst the first part of this chapter has concentrated on presenting the context of CPD in Ireland this section aims to connect to the location for the empirical work conducted in this research. In doing so it provides an explanation of how I became involved with the teachers that participated in this research and how I utilised a professional opportunity to gain support from the teachers for this research. It provides a description of the context of each of the six schools involved and details some particularities relevant to each of the schools. This section draws primarily on my research diary and also from documentation made available by the schools' principals. As data collection processes the use of the research diary and the analysis of school publications and documents are based on Mason's (1996) argument that such documentation has the capacity to inform about the phenomenon under consideration. The justification and validity for the use of a research diary and for the analyses of school produced documentation will be addressed in Chapter 4; however, they serve a particular purpose at this juncture in that they allow for the locus of the field work to be explained.

County Corway, the locus for change

This research was conducted in six schools located in two different rural towns in a part of the Republic of Ireland which, for the purpose of anonymity, I will call County Corway. In both towns, which for the purposes of this research I will call Abbeytown and Churchtown, a decision, following on from private inter-Trustee discussions, had been taken by the Trustees of the existing three post-primary schools to amalgamate the schools into two schools, one per town. The Trustees' decision was ratified by the DES and thus, in the autumn of 2007, the decision to amalgamate and the associated process of amalgamation was announced to the teachers, pupils, ancillary staff, parents and the wider community in both towns.

Creating anew

As part of the model for managing the process of amalgamation the Trustees and the DES agreed that, in both sites, a Steering Group would be established to oversee the educational enterprise aspect of the amalgamation. Each Steering Group has 15 members with each school nominating five members, the current Principal, one representative of the school's current Trustees, one member of the Board of Management, a teacher and a parent representative. Both Steering Groups have an independent chairperson.

The terms of reference for each Steering Group are exactly the same and refer to the development; through a collaborative process involving all of the partners, of core policies and statements of practice and organisation for the new school. Key amongst the named tasks are the development of a name for the new school, a mission statement, a motto and crest, an appropriate admissions policy and a code of behaviour that would reflect the mission and aims of the new school. Other organisational policies such as curriculum, text books, uniform and staff development programme are also listed as being required to be addressed with the view that this body of work would be completed in tandem with the building programme and presented to the Board of Management of each new school for ratification.

I was approached by a representative of the current Trustees to act as the independent chairperson of both Steering Groups. I viewed this invitation as an honour and as an enormous challenge however, I also considered it to be an opportunity to work with a cohort of post-primary teachers that may agree to participate in my research. Therefore, in accepting this invitation I sought, with the Trustees and school principals' agreement, the opportunity to also present my research interests to the teachers in both towns and to seek their agreement to participate in it.

In the final agreement I secured access to the combined staffs in each site, to individual teachers from each of the six schools and to members of the senior management teams in each school all of whom agreed to be interviewed. The schedule spanned four interactions during the spring and summer terms of the school year 2007/2008 and a further four interactions during the school year 2008/2009. The level of access was subsequently reduced to seven visits owing to time and organisational constraints that emerged as a result of the

changing financial climate and the challenges faced by school principals in accommodating whole staff meetings which required school closure. Consideration of my simultaneous role as a professional advisor and as that of a researcher is addressed later in this chapter.

Introducing Abbeytown and Churchtown

Table 3.2 gives an overview of the pre-amalgamation provision for post-primary education in each of the two towns and outlines the change that will take place with regard to the Trusteeship in the newly amalgamated schools.

Table 3.2 Post-Primary Provision in Abbeytown and Churchtown (Pre-amalgamation)

| Town | School Names (anonymised) | Sex and Age Group | Current Trusteeship | Tradition | No. of Teachers | Principalship | New Trusteeship |
|------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Abbeytown | St. Catherine's | Single Sex Girls, 12-19 | CEIST | Academic | 30 | Lay Male | CEIST |
| Abbeytown | St. Patrick's | Single Sex Boys 12-19 | ERST | Academic | 22 | Lay Male | CEIST |
| Abbeytown | St. Malachy's | Co-ed, 12 upwards | VEC | Vocational | 13 | Lay Female | CEIST |
| Churchtown | St. Ita's | Single Sex Girls, 12-19 | CEIST | Academic | 26 | Lay Male | VEC |
| Churchtown | St. Senan's | Single Sex Boys 12-19 | Lay owned | Academic | 15 | Lay Male | VEC |
| Churchtown | St. Ailbe's | Co-ed 12-19 plus p/t adult education classes | VEC | Vocational | 22 | Lay Male | VEC |

As is evident from Table 3.2 each of the two sites has three post-primary schools, Site A, Abbeytown, has two single sex schools under religious trusteeship, St Catherine's and St. Patrick's and one small co-educational school, St. Malachy's, under the trusteeship of the County Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The newly amalgamated school will be under the trusteeship of the Catholic Education Irish Schools Trust (CEIST), a newly formed schools trust established by a number of religious orders who had, prior to this, acted as individual trustees to their own schools.

St. Catherine's, St. Patrick's and St. Malachy's have a current combined staffing of 65 teachers and the newly amalgamated school will have a projected enrolment of 850 pupils

and a staffing of approximately 68 teachers. Abbeytown has a long established link with two of the main Irish religious orders who, since their foundation, had been involved in educational provision in Abbeytown. St. Catherine's girls school was until the late 1980s one of the main boarding schools in the region and also was the location of one of the main novitiates for the religious order of nuns. Abbeytown's girls school transferred to lay principalship in 1995 and has had two lay principals since that time.

St. Patrick's has always been a day school for boys with a very strong sporting tradition particularly with regard to the traditional Gaelic games of hurling and Gaelic football. The founding religious order no longer had by 2007 any direct representative on the teaching staff of the school and in September 2008 the Trustees transferred trusteeship to a new lay trust known as ERST (Edmund Rice Schools Trust). Both of these schools have focused on delivering an academic curriculum supplemented with limited vocational education particularly in the boys school.

St. Malachy's is the co-educational vocational school in Abbeytown, it has a small enrolment with a limited, yet targeted, curriculum on offer. It traditionally caters for those students more interested in a less academic curriculum and in more recent years has catered very well for those adults interested in returning to second chance education and part-time adult education programmes. St. Malachy's is located five miles from the main town thus transport to and from the school has always posed a problem.

The school buildings in Abbeytown are well below standard in two of the three sites. The buildings are relics of a past era and are devoid of many of the modern facilities necessary for the implementation of the modern curriculum. Staff in all the three schools recognise this and have acknowledged the benefits to pupils, staff and the greater community in having a modern purpose built school building; the dividend of the amalgamation process.

Abbeytown has a predominantly rural hinterland with a large dependence on agriculture allied to a number of small indigenous agriculture related industries with other employment primarily focused on the construction industry.

Site B, Churchtown, has two single sex schools, St. Ita's girls school (religious trusteeship) and St. Senan's boys school (family owned). The third school, St. Ailbe's is a co-educational school under the trusteeship of the County VEC. The newly amalgamated school will be under the trusteeship of the County VEC. The schools in Churchtown have a current combined staffing of 63 teachers and the newly amalgamated school will have a projected enrolment of 800 pupils and a staffing of approximately 65 teachers. The socio-economic structure of Churchtown is similar to Abbeytown in that is primarily rural with a large dependence on agriculture and a similar dependence on the one time booming construction industry.

St. Ita's school was, until 2007, under the trusteeship of a religious order of nuns but since 2007 it does not have a member from the order either on the teaching staff or as trustee, it has however a member of the order who serves as chairperson of the Board of Management. The trusteeship of the school was transferred to CEIST in 2008 as an interim measure until the amalgamation process is completed. St. Ita's school has a very strong, and widely respected, tradition of academic excellence with a longstanding emphasis on social education and education in music and the arts.

Churchtown is also served by a lay privately owned boys school, St. Senan's, traditionally referred to as 'the Masters'. This is the smallest of the three schools and is accommodated in very restrictive school buildings with extremely limited facilities. This type of school represents an aspect of the development of second level education in Ireland where private individuals established their own schools for either girls or boys where no provision was made by a religious order for one of the sexes. These schools were Catholic lay schools and privately owned. The Masters' school has a very strong academic tradition; it offers a limited curriculum focusing primarily on those who wish to qualify for university education in the traditional disciplines.

St. Ailbe's school is under the trusteeship of the state with the management devolved to the county VEC. This body will act as trustee of the newly amalgamated school. This is a vibrant

co-educational school in its own right which operates successfully albeit in out dated buildings.

School culture and ethos

The profile given above is, in essence, a short outline of the structure of each of the six schools. Observations and casual conversations both noted in my research diary allied to analysis of school produced documents and website statements highlight that within each structure teacher agency has, in the teachers own opinion, operated successfully throughout their histories and the teachers are proud of their respective traditions. This can be understood in the way in which each of the schools have organised their activities, with some focussing more on the academic curriculum and others targeting the vocational, some focussing on excellence in music whilst others adhering to their tradition in the promotion of Gaelic games. What is evident is that the teachers, in the respective schools, guard their traditions and values and some resent the impending change to their communities.

Teacher agency in each of the schools has been shaped by the schools culture and ethos and this, it seems, is the case whether it is with regard to engagement in CPD or with regard to the promotion of faith values or sporting excellence. The inheritance of and adherence to particular cultures in each of the schools manifests as the binding force that has created such strong and stable communities. To define culture is difficult as a profusion of meanings exist, (Nias et al, 1989, Reynolds and Packer, 1992, Hargreaves, 1995b and Prosser, 1999). Hargreaves (1995b) argues that the roots of the concept in the field of education lie in Waller's (1932) *The Sociology of Teaching* who refers to the 'separate culture of school' (Furlong, 2000, p 60) while discussing the sociology of education. From this discussion the various definitions have all evolved. Those that have defined culture all agree that it is elusive and difficult to capture, primarily because it is largely implicit and it is only the surface aspects of culture which are discernible (Furlong, 2000). The essence of the culture of any organisation according to Schein (1985) is:

The deeper level of the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of any organisation, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic taken for granted fashion an organisations view of itself and its environment (p 6).

Furlong (2000) argues that many share this view emphasising the existence of common behavioural norms and shared assumptions, in a particular school (p 61). In its essence, culture indicates those factors which tend to maintain the *status quo*, that is, it illustrates the underlying beliefs of the organisation.

The difference between ethos and culture in a school is not very significant, however the former is usually something more self conscious and identifiable. Skeat (1993) states that the term ethos has its genesis in the Greek word for 'character' or 'disposition' and every school has its own ethos in the sense that it has its own pervading spirit or character. Although impalpable, ethos is nonetheless something real and has a profound effect on both the teachers and the student population. The ethos of the school touches the quality of the lives of those who work in and attend the school and it constitutes an abiding element of the fabric of a school's identity, because it is the 'value system' that both teachers and pupils internalise.

The particularities in each of the six schools are specifically linked to each school's characteristic culture and ethos. The staffs in each of the schools have been very committed to their respective ethos and traditions. This enculturation has taken place over many years and whilst admirable it presented as a barrier to the initiation of the amalgamation process. In my professional role as advisor to the amalgamation process I became acutely aware of the underlying issues. The initial meetings of the steering groups highlighted the tensions, anxieties and concerns that exist. The issues that were raised stem from each staff's desire to protect their respective traditions and their concerns regarding the yet unknown and untried future.

A sample of the concerns

Analysis of the concerns raised in informal conversations and noted in my research diary highlighted that similar issues were raised in both sites, teachers in St. Catherine's and St. Ita's expressed concerns regarding the maintenance of academic standards and the potential

dilution of the academic curriculum whilst the teachers in St. Malachy's and St. Ailbe's were fearful of the imposition of a rigid academic curriculum on students whose abilities lay in a more balanced academic and vocational curriculum. Equally the teachers in St. Patrick's and St. Senan's were concerned regarding the transmission of the cultural identity of the locality expressed through participation in traditional Gaelic games and the potential dilution of this.

The issue of behaviour management was also a particular concern in all schools, moreover, the concern expressed was with regard to the differing approaches to behaviour management in the different schools and the potential difficulties in addressing this in the amalgamated schools. An underlying, although rarely articulated issue, was that of staff seniority and in particular the uncertain future with regard to senior management roles and positions of responsibility within the new schools. Such major change in the professional lives of the teachers provides a backdrop for the work of the steering groups.

It is within this milieu that I have based the empirical work of this research because it provides an opportunity for the aims of this research to be considered by teachers who have a heightened awareness of impending structural change and the impact that such change may have on them. In the context of this research the sites present an opportunity to gain insight into teachers' opinions and beliefs with regard to CPD and to see if these are shaped and developed by particular school culture or ethos or if teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards CPD are shaped by national teacher identity or by personal beliefs and attitudes.

Managing my professional role and developing my research position

The final section of this chapter focuses on my management of my dual role. As chairperson of both steering groups I am charged with supporting the amalgamation process by means of facilitating dialogue and establishing timelines for specific actions in both Abbeystown and Churchtown. My role as chairperson has given me access to data, discussions and decision making that was insightful yet privileged and thus presented an enormous challenge for me in maintaining two distinct roles as a professional guide to the amalgamation process and as a

researcher focused on developing new understandings with regards to teacher decision making in relation to engagement in CPD. In an effort to address this I adopted the role of interpreter, that of agent, described by Stake (1995) as the gatherer of new interpretation, new knowledge+(p 99). However, it is the case that I, as researcher, found myself challenged on a number of occasions to balance the roles of researcher and advisor, interpreter and advocate, neutral observer and critical analyst. This, I addressed through robust research planning and methodological rigour, the detail of which is outlined in Chapter 4. However, it is not possible to claim that aspects and in particular knowledge gained through my role as researcher and that gained through my position as chairperson did not cross fertilise. The management of dual or multiple roles within or between groups does not have this clinical division. Thomson and Gunter (2010) argue that at various key times in the research process different permutations of relationships are in play and that there is a fluidity in the relationships that exist between researchers and the various organisational members.

Fundamentally, throughout the data gathering stages I adhered to a fundamental personal belief in life; that the only behaviour that I can control is my own. Therefore, throughout the process I remained honest to myself and others, true to my beliefs and values and respectful of others in all my interactions and decisions. During the field work I adhered to an imperative that my role as researcher, my expectations as researcher and the expectations of others would be outlined and negotiated from the outset and that on no occasion would I use the leverage of my role as chairperson of the steering groups to compel participation or to seek to influence the data being generated. Whilst, undoubtedly, the role of chairperson of the steering groups is a position of power over the amalgamation process I created through research design and methods a mechanism for teachers' voices being to be to the fore throughout the data gathering stages.

In this way I have worn different hats on different days without noticeable observable difficulty but with tremendous work involved in maintaining clarity regarding role and in particular maintaining the confidence of all involved by maintaining confidentiality around the differing aspects of my dual role. The challenge presented was to create discrete spaces for the different aspects of my dual role. I worked tirelessly at adopting differing approaches to my

different work with my researcher style being more relaxed and invitational as opposed to my more directive and target driven professional role. I believe that the creation of the dual persona assisted in the success of the research project.

This approach was developed in line with BERA (2004) guidelines in conducting research by adopting the principle of informed consent. As researcher I ensured that all participants understood and agreed, prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, how the data would be generated and to whom it would be disseminated. I informed all participants of their right to withdraw from the process and in terms of privacy I accorded them the right to confidentiality and anonymity.

Summary

This chapter has focussed on presenting the background and rationale for both the national location and local sites for this research. Firstly, this chapter examined the context of CPD within the Irish education system and how it has, over time, emerged as a result of systemic drivers which evolved from external evaluation of the country's education system and the teaching career in particular. The analysis demonstrates that CPD is now positioned in accordance with identified and preferred good practice which supports active teacher agency in teacher professional learning. The second aspect of the context presented in this chapter has focussed on the two sites within which the empirical work was conducted where school amalgamation provides an opportunity to examine the factors that affect teacher engagement in CPD. The final contextual issue is that of my role as both professional advisor to the schools and that of a researcher, and while I recognise the problematic nature of this situation, I have put in place a process for enabling a robust project.

The next chapter details the issues considered in the generation of the research design and methods. It outlines the rationale for the selection of the particular method used, it also details the research timescale and the various research instruments deployed.

Chapter 4- Research Design and Methods

Introduction

This chapter is presented in two parts, Part A reviews the issues considered in developing the interrelationship between the epistemology, the theoretical perspective and the methodology most appropriate for the research questions. Part B provides detail on the subsequent research methods deployed for the data collection process, it considers the issues of reliability and validity in relation to the data and examines the approach taken to the analysis of the data.

Part A- From ontology to methods, searching for the interrelationship

In attempting to answer the research questions at the core of this thesis I considered many issues to assist in the process of choosing a suitable research methodology. Amongst them were the critical questions of what was the status of what I believed I knew? How did I ascertain if what I believed I knew was true or false and how would I justify my beliefs to others? Such questioning of the nature of my perceived reality led me to consider the two main Western ontological positions, Heraclitean and Parmenidean ontology.

The Parmenidean ontology of *being* represents reality as being composed of clearly formed entities with identifiable properties which can be represented by symbols, words and concepts, (Gray, 2004). This ontological perspective places emphasis on a permanent and unchanging reality and stands in contrast to the Heraclitean emphasis on formlessness, chaos, interpenetration and absence.

Parmenidean ontology has the faculty of seeing the truth behind the appearances and establishes that intuition has a fundamental place in peoples construction of reality. In terms of understanding *what is*, that is the nature of existence, Parmenidean ontology is concerned with the way to finding the truth. As the research questions under consideration in this study seek to find *the truth* through the study of the practitioners perspectives, through the analysis of the reality as presented by the teachers it is best located in Parmenidean ontology.

Linking ontology and epistemology

Gray (2004) argues that having an epistemological perspective helps to clarify issues of design. He argues that this means more than just the design of research tools. It means an overarching structure of the research including the kind of evidence that is being gathered, from where and how it is going to be interpreted+(p 17).

Epistemological positions that have emerged from a *being* ontology include constructivism, objectivism and subjectivism. Gray (2004) defines the epistemological stance of constructivism to represent truth and meaning to be created by the subject's interactions with the world. Meaning, he argues, is constructed not discovered, so subjects construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon+(p 17).

Given that the objective of this research is the examination of the factors that impact on teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD and the interpretation of the findings, the primary knowledge claims are based on the truths as presented by the subjects (teachers) and their interactions with their professional world, it is to uncover as Merriam and Simpson (1995) put it the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved+(p 97).

From the theoretical perspectives associated with constructivism, phenomenology encapsulates the essence of the research questions. Phenomenology has, as a tenet, that any effort to appreciate and search for meaning and understanding of any social reality has to be grounded in people's experiences of that social reality. Gray (2004) argues that phenomenology insists that we must lay aside our prevailing understanding of phenomena and revisit our immediate experience of them in order that new meanings may emerge+(p 21). Phenomenology underpins exploration via personal experience and a phenomenological approach is inductive in nature and facilitates the development of new meanings recognising that there are many realities rather than the one, observable, measurable reality which is fundamental in the positivist paradigm.

Phenomenology highlights the prevailing cultural understandings and seeks to find the internal logic of the subject; it deals with the subject's values, opinions and importantly in the

case of this research the subjects' actions. The phenomenon therefore speaks for itself; it reveals its truths on human experience of the lived world.

Therefore, this research is located in Parmenidean ontology with the perspective of a constructivist epistemology and adopting a phenomenological research methodology. The model of *engagement* (see Figure 2.3) used to shape the data collection is entirely consistent with this approach in that the model has as its central focus a decision making process; representative of the interplay between teacher agency and structures, professional and personal, which can be influenced, to a greater or lesser extent by a variety of different factors. The model facilitates data collection processes that contain responses, meanings and truths which can be chronicled as representative of the individuals' interactions with an aspect of their professional world.

From methodology to methods

Cohen et al. (2000) define methods to mean 'that range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis of inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction' (p.38). It is true to say that in the educational context beliefs and perceptions are not only acted out in the context of a plethora of environmental forces but are also subject to the personality and real life of the individual. Burns (2000) argues that the human element has become increasingly recognised 'as a critical and determining factor in the definition of truth and knowledge' (p 10).

The qualitative approach is based on recognition of the importance of the subjective 'real life' world of human beings which can lead to an understanding of deeper levels of meaning.

Burns (2000) argues that the qualitative approach takes account of people's unique ability to 'interpret their experiences, construct their own meanings and act on these' (p 10). Byrk et al (1993) argue that 'statistical analyses can help us to see some things but they can also blind us to the influence of factors that are beyond their current horizons' (pp. 303-304).

Qualitative research places stress on the validity of multiple meaning structures and holistic analysis. The task of the qualitative researcher is to capture what people do and say in the context of the participants' view of reality and to interpret events from the viewpoint of these participants. It is about finding a truth within a context, and hence giving a deeper meaning to the unfolding items of data. Eisner (1979) recognises the strengths of the qualitative approach when he argues that there can be little meaning, impact or quality in an event isolated from the context in which it is found (pp. 5-6).

Therefore, the open and responsive methodology in the qualitative approach suits the overall purpose of this research, in that, this research seeks to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives and an aspect of their professional lives in particular through an examination of what influences their decision making regarding engagement in CPD.

In reviewing the varying approaches available in the qualitative range of approaches the guiding force was Gorard's and Taylor's (2004) argument for a design choice that is driven largely by the situation and the research questions (p 2). The situation was that I had secured access to a sample of Irish post-primary teachers through the coincidence of a professional role with these teachers and the research questions did not require control over the participants' behavioural events but focused on developing meanings and insights into contemporary events.

The method chosen in this research is a case study as a case study method is ideal when a what or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has no control (Gray, 2004, p 124). Golby (1994) strengthens the argument for this selection when he argues that case study's promise is that practical problems can be investigated in ways which might allow us to reconceptualise the problem, understand more fully its wider significance and act more intelligently in resolving it (p 16).

This research was conducted therefore using a collective instrumental case study approach (Stake, 1995, p.3) using qualitative methods. Stake (1995) outlines collective case study as a case study located in more than one site and instrumental in that it allows the case study to

be used to understand a different phenomenon than the main focus of the work with the group. Therefore, the actual case in this research is the teachers' perceptions of the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD; it is collective in that the research is conducted in more than one site and instrumental in that my primary role with the teachers was to guide the amalgamation process. This approach matched the conditions of my work with the teachers in the six schools and was therefore most appropriate.

Part B-Data collection and management

The Case Study design

The first area considered in the design process was the nature of the interaction with the teachers. As researcher I wished to secure the broadest range of perspectives possible, however, it was impossible within the timeframe to even consider working with each teacher on an individual basis or with multiple groupings of teachers. Therefore, I identified three main groupings required in each site: individual teachers (three per school), teachers with senior leadership positions (two per school) and entire staffs. Table 4.1 details the particulars for both sites.

Table 4.1 Number of participants per grouping per research site

| Grouping | Number of Teachers: | | Total |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| | Site A Abbeytown | Site B Churchtown | |
| Grouping 1: Teachers in one . to- one capacity | 9 | 9 | 18 |
| Grouping 2: Senior Leaders in Group situation | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Grouping 3: All teachers as a collective | 65 | 67 | 132 |

Having determined that there were three main groupings within the sample and that qualitative methods served the purpose of this research I moved to consider the development of the data collection instruments. LeCompte and Preissle (1994) argue that qualitative research is a loosely defined collection of approaches to enquiry, all of which rely on verbal, visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory and gustatory data. These data are preserved in descriptive narratives like field notes, recordings or other transcriptions from audio to videotape, other written records and pictures and films+(p 141).

I concluded that interviews, as a well defined research tool for sampling views and opinion, enabled the research questions to be investigated. Interviews can range from the very formal (where pre-arranged questions are asked and answers are noted), to the informal (where the interviewer broaches a number of central issues in a conversational non-directive style, and plays a subsidiary role). In between these two ends of the spectrum lies the semi-structured interview. Merriam (1988) argues that semi-structured interviews are most used to collect data in qualitative research and Bell (1999) highlights that the advantage of the semi-structured interview is the face-to-face engagement necessary which can facilitate the skilful interviewer to follow up answers, to inquire into motives and feelings, and elicit useful information from tone of voice, facial expression or from hesitation in response.

A semi-structured interview therefore, has the structure like a formal interview, but can be open-ended when an unexpected answer requires further clarification. It has the advantage that the interviewer still manages to obtain answers to a prepared schedule of questions, so that the information gathered has a structure, but has the flexibility to further investigate unexpected insights that may arise during the interview and hence achieve a greater depth of understanding of the items being considered. Therefore, this research adopted the semi-structured interview as the primary method for data gathering believing it to be the most suitable research tool.

One-to-one interviews

One-to-one interviews were conducted with 18 class teachers (nine in each of the two sites) in order to gather data from a range of full-time practitioners whose core responsibility in their respective schools was classroom teaching. In order to gain the required sample I extended an open invitation to all classroom teachers in Abbeytown and Churchtown to volunteer for interview. The teachers were advised to either inform me immediately of their interest or to contact me by email. Furthermore, they were advised that, owing to time constraints, the first three teachers in each school to contact would be selected. Table 4.2 provides an outline profile of the teachers involved in the one-to-one interviews. Aliases have been assigned to each teacher.

Table 4.2 Profile of the Teachers involved in the one-to-one interviews

| Abbeytown | Churchtown |
|--|--|
| Teacher Alias, Subject(s) area, Years Teaching Experience | Teacher Alias, Subject(s) area, Years Teaching Experience |
| Aileen, Business Studies, 28 | Bill, Maths and Junior Science, 12 |
| Caithlín, French and English, 18 | Marie, Geography and Irish, 16 |
| John, Maths and I.T., 8 | Patricia, French and German, 5 |
| Eddie, Irish and Geography, 11 | Cathal, Technical Graphics and Technology, 4 |
| Liam, Materials Technology Wood, 10 | Seán, Transition Year Co-ordinator and History, 9 |
| Orlaith, English and History, 9 | Emmet, English and History, 8 |
| Jennifer, Physics and Maths, 13 | Caitríona, Special Needs Co-ordinator and English, 11 |
| Fionn, Business Studies, 14 | Eileen, English and Social Personal and Health Education, 10 |
| Oisín, Engineering and Construction, 17 | Dan, Geography and Irish, 23 |

The group interview

A group interview method was adopted with regard to those teachers in management positions in the schools. Kumar (1987) argues that the group interview is one of the rapid, cost effective methods of data collection involving the use of direct probing techniques to gather information from several individuals in a group situation (p 3). The group interview method was appropriate in this research because it was an efficient use of limited time

allowing data to be collected rapidly from two groups of six people. Moreover, however, group interviews with a homogenous membership offer an atmosphere in which members can share feelings, emotions or concerns that they may be reluctant to express in the context of a wider non homogenous group. As this research sought to capture the perspective of those teachers in management positions it was essential that a structure be created to enable them the opportunity to express their views in a safe and protected manner- the group interview process provided this.

Each school principal was invited to notify me of two teachers from amongst the senior management team of their school who were willing to participate in the group interview process. Three of the six principals wished to be involved in the interview themselves with five of the six deputy principals participating. The larger number of deputies may be explained by the standard practice in post-primary schools in Ireland where the deputy principal oversees organisational issues such as timetabling and substitution for absent colleagues. In the case of one school a member of the middle management team was nominated, this was due to unforeseen illness and other logistical problems which militated against the attendance of the original nominee.

The sample for this section of the data gathering process is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Details of the Senior Management Interviewees

| Role | Abbeytown Teacher Alias, Years in Management Position | Churchtown Teacher Alias, Years in Management Position |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Principal | Paul, 4yrs. | Daithí, 13 yrs. Gearóid, 3 yrs. |
| Deputy Principal | Deirdre, 5 yrs., Pádraig, 19yrs. Caoimhín, 11 yrs. | Clare, 11 yrs. Donncha, 9yrs. |
| Assistant Principal | Niamh, 7yrs. Clíodhna, 14 yrs. | Mairéad, 10 yrs. |
| Special Duties Teacher | | Emer, 2 yrs. |

Presentation/workshop

A third feature of the data gathering method was the use of the presentation/workshop approach. This approach was used on three occasions as a specific strategy to address the large gathering of 65 teachers in Abbeytown and 67 teachers in Churchtown. Access was secured by prior negotiation with all teachers consenting to attend the conjoint presentation/workshops. Table 4.4 provides detail of the structure.

Table 4.4 Details of the Presentation/Workshops

| | Abbeytown | Churchtown |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Presentation/Workshop1 | 10 groups, A1-A10, (5 of the groups with 7 members, 5 with 6 members) | 10 groups, B1-B10 (7 of the groups with 7 members, 3 with 6 members) |
| Presentation/Workshop2 | 10 groups, A1-A10, (5 of the groups with 7 members, 5 with 6 members) | 10 groups, B1-B10 (7 of the groups with 7 members, 3 with 6 members) |
| Presentation/Workshop 3 | 10 groups, A1-A10, (3 of the groups with 7 members, 7 with 6 members) | 10 groups, B1-B10 (5 of the groups with 7 members, 5 with 6 members) |

The presentation/workshop approach operated on three levels; firstly it provided a vehicle to inform the teachers of the focus and objectives of this research project. Secondly, it facilitated the collection of data directly related to the focus of this research and thirdly, it facilitated what Burgess (1982) notes as valuable in that the researchers' observations and interviews can be discussed and evaluated by informants. In these circumstances the informants may suggest ways in which the data has been collected can be augmented, modified and extended+(p 78).

This validation is achieved through another key feature of a presentation/workshop approach, namely the participation of the attendees (Loucks-Horsley et al, 1990). On each occasion that a presentation/workshop was used participation was encouraged through the use of personal reflection followed by paired discussion and group discussion prior to informing the entire grouping.

Research Diary

The majority of data collected in this research was generated through a combination of individual and group interviews and workshop/presentations. This data was also supplemented through the use of my own research notes. Burgess (1982) advocates the maintenance of a detailed chronological record of the events observed and the informants that have been interviewed and engaged in conversation+(p 76). He states that these substantive+(p 76) notes can be supplemented with systematic notes including charts and diagrams+(p 77).

Throughout the stages of the data collection process I adhered to the view as presented by Guba and Lincoln (1981) when they point out that the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative research for data collection and analysis. Understanding, they argue, is a key role of qualitative research and the human is able to be responsive and adaptive. Furthermore, they state that the researcher as primary instrument is able to consider the total context of the phenomenon, rather than a particular segment; immediately process data as it is being collected, leading, if necessary, to refining data collection procedures; clarify and summarise material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation; explore atypical and idiosyncratic responses. To assist in adopting this approach I engaged in a reflective process after each phase of the data gathering process. I addressed each of the following questions in relation to each experience:

1. Had I any uncomfortable feelings regarding the way in which the phase was conducted?
2. Could I identify these feelings and clarify exactly what issue(s) they related to?
3. Could I review and recollect the specific aspects and the emotions that they caused?

Therefore, it is fair to conclude that the design element of this research was planned and deliberate; as was the sample of teachers selected, mindful of the purposes of the research, the time frame and the resource constraints. Furthermore, data interpretation and

perspectives were tested with colleague doctoral students in the EdD sessions as well as in the sessions with my supervisor.

Adopting and maintaining a research position

An area of concern regarding the data collection process previously mentioned in Chapter 3 was that which Platt (1981) refers to as the 'assumptions made between interviewer and respondents' (p 75). She highlights that the main assumption regarding the interviewing process is that for all practical purposes the interviewer and the respondent are anonymous to each other so that their relationship has 'no past and no future' (p 75). Clearly, this was not my situation due to my role in the amalgamation process underway within the two sites. Thus the segregation of my roles was essential and was totally reliant on the manner in which I presented my research interests to the general body of teachers and how I protected the privileged information that I had access to as chairperson of the steering groups overseeing the amalgamation process.

Gunter (2001) argues that 'power relations are structured, and privilege can be formalised through *authority* or the legitimacy that comes with appointment and a defined role within the division of labour' (p 66). Whilst I held a defined professional relationship with the schools and exercised a certain authority with regards to the direction that the amalgamation process was taking there was no instance, from my perspective, when my relationship with the teachers as researcher was based on power. To embed this 'conscious role-playing' (Platt, 1981, p 78) was required.

Reliability and Validity

According to Bell (1999) 'reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions' (pp.50-51). Sapsford and Evans (1984) suggest that reliability applies to people involved in the research as much as to the instruments of data collection. These views of reliability sit more comfortably with quantitative

methods whereas from a qualitative perspective reliability involves, as Mason (1996) notes, *the accuracy of your research methods and techniques*+(p 24) where data generation has been *not only appropriate to the research questions, but also thorough, careful, honest and accurate*+(P 146).

Reliability has been achieved in this research through accuracy in the methods used to generate the data and systematic analysis of it. Reliability was assessed by posing a number of key questions which according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) focus on the probability of similar results being generated at different times or by different observers and consideration of the transparency around the procedures employed in making sense from the raw data. In each of these areas I consider this research to be able to withstand scrutiny.

Mason (1996) states that *judgements of validity are, in effect, judgements about whether you are measuring or explaining, what you claim to be measuring or explaining*+(p 146). This requires an examination of how well matched the logic of the methods is to the types of research questions being asked and the kind of social explanation intended to be developed (Mason 1996). In this regard the validity of the interpretation of the data generated with the different sample groups was brought back to the groups for the purposes of validation.

On the issue of external validity, which is concerned about the degree to which findings can be generalised to other settings, I availed of the opportunity, throughout the stages of my fieldwork to consult with and update my colleagues in the Ed.D group. In particular I continually sought advice in relation to the data gathering process and updated colleagues on the emerging findings. Further external validation of the emerging model of engagement was acquired by means of an invitation extended to me to address the School Development Planning Initiative Summer School in Dublin City University on August 19th 2008. 60 prominent post-primary school leaders attended the summer school and I was afforded the opportunity to present my emerging factors and conduct a workshop with them on what I interpreted as factors that influenced teacher decision making regarding engagement with

CPD and in particular I was afforded the opportunity to present my emerging model of teacher engagement in CPD. Having engaged in this process of validation I came to the conclusion that the methods selected were valid and reliable.

Triangulation

Triangulation is essential to ensure that the results are both reliable and valid. Mason (1996) argues that the concept of triangulation encourages the researcher to approach their research questions from different angles and to explore their intellectual puzzles in a rounded and multi-faceted way+(p 149). In this research triangulation was achieved, not in the use of multiple methods, but in the process where data that emerged and was interpreted in one stage of the data collection process was used in the next stage. Therefore, the data was checked with the teachers and in doing so they commented on its credibility and highlighted whatever gaps they perceived existed.

Data collection process

The data collection process (detailed in Table 4.5) was designed to be replicated in Abbeytown and Churchtown. I negotiated with my employers to take holidays on specific days in order to develop an agreed timetable with the school authorities. The distance between Abbeytown and Churchtown was such that it was commutable between them on the same day. In order to optimise the data collection within the negotiated time frame stages were developed to support both the maximum generation of data and the validation of the interpretation of the data.

Stage 1: Address the collective staffs of each of the three schools in Abbeytown and Churchtown at a conjoint meeting, present my research interests at these meetings and conduct a workshop to elicit their opinions in relation to CPD.

Stage 2: Reflect on the data gathered in Stage 1 and present feedback to the participants at a second conjoint meeting. Seek validation of the points raised and seek volunteers to meet for one-to-one interviews.

Stage 3: Conduct collective group interviews with senior management from each of the three schools in Abbeytown and Churchtown to seek their perspectives on CPD.

Stage 4: Conduct one-to-one interviews with three volunteer teachers from each of the six schools.

Stage 5: Reflect on the data generated in Stage 3 and provide feedback to the senior management teams in Abbeytown and Churchtown.

Stage 6: Reflect on the data gathered in Stage 4 and provide collective feedback to the volunteer staff interviewees in each site.

Stage 7: Reflect and provide feedback to the collective staffs in each of the sites at conjoint meetings.

Table 4.5 The data collection and validation timetable

| Stage | Focus | Method | Abbeytown | Churchtown |
|---------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | Conjoint Staff Meeting | Presentation/Workshop | January 25 th 2008 | January 25 th 2008 |
| Stage 2 | Validation with conjoint staff | Presentation/Workshop | February 29 th 2008 | February 29 th 2008 |
| Stage 3 | Members of Senior Management Teams | Group interviews | April 9 th 2008 | April 9 th 2008 |
| Stage 4 | Class Teachers | One-to-one interviews | May 2 nd 2008 | October 13 th 2008 |
| Stage 5 | Validation with members of Senior Management Teams | Group meeting | November 17 th 2008 | November 17 th 2008 |
| Stage 6 | Validation with class teachers | Group meeting | January 14 th 2009 | February 12 th 2009 |
| Stage 7 | Validation with conjoint staff | Presentation/Workshop | May 12 th 2009 | May 12 th 2009 |

Stage 1 involved a meeting of all of the staffs of the schools in Abbeytown and Churchtown.

The meetings were held in hotels close to Abbeytown and Churchtown. The principals had

agreed to forward lists of each school's staff and prior to the meetings I randomly selected the groups which involved teachers from the different schools sitting together. The first 15 minutes of the session was spent on introduction, firstly of myself and then requesting each member of each group to give a brief introduction of themselves to the other members of the group. I then addressed the participants for approximately eight minutes and outlined the purpose of my research and sought their cooperation in working with me.

The main task that I set for each group was the consideration of the following questions:

1. What was working well, in their opinion, with regard to CPD in Ireland?
2. What was not yet working well with regard to CPD in Ireland?
3. What, in their opinion, of what was not yet working well was open to change and what was not open to change?

The participants were asked to adopt the following methodology:

1. Solo reflection
2. Paired discussion
3. Group discussion

To assist in the running of the discussions I distributed an A4 sheet (Appendix 2) which allowed participants to note their ideas. Prior to the commencement of the group work each group was asked to appoint a chairperson and a rapporteur. I informed the groups that in order to allow for the sharing of their respective opinions that this work would be timed, ten minutes was allocated to solo reflection, 15 minutes was allocated to the paired discussion and 20 minutes was allocated to the individual group discussion. When the discussion progressed I acted as timekeeper and gave advance notice of the impending change in format. When the group discussion commenced I distributed a single A4 sheet (different colour) exactly the same as that that had been distributed to each individual and requested the rapporteur to collate the group's opinions as presented. I informed the groups that I would be seeking these sheets to be returned to me in order to assist my reflection on the points raised.

Following the individual group discussion a coffee break of 20 minutes was taken and the remaining hour was used for presentations from each of the rapporteurs of the groups. As the presentations were being made I recorded the salient points on a flip chart and sought clarification where required. To conclude this session I informed the groups that I would reflect on the data and that the next phase would involve a presentation on the collated views and a question and answer session.

Having collected the collated data and the flip chart material I spent the next month reading and re-reading the documentation in search of the emergent themes. I sought to identify and clarify the issues raised and condense that which was similar in a thematic way. I then completed a single collated sheet (See Table 5.2) similar to that which had been distributed at the session and used this as the basis for the validation in Stage 2.

Stage 2 was conducted one month following Stage 1, it involved the combined staffs in both Abbeytown and Churchtown, each participant was asked to place themselves in their respective groupings as existed in Stage 1; the attendance corresponded to that of phase 1. Outside venues were again used to accommodate the large numbers. Each of the two sessions in Stage 2 was allocated a two hour time slot.

The collated sheet was distributed to each attendee and I addressed the gathering asking that each group to follow the same methodology as in phase 1 to consider the following:

1. Do you consider that the data as presented reflect the ideas articulated at the earlier session?
2. Has anything been omitted that ought to be included?
3. Is there any additional comment that you would wish to make?

I conducted the feedback by accepting comments from the participants. I noted all comments and additions as they were presented. I concluded this session by extending an invitation to all those present to consider volunteering for the one-to-one interviews. I explained that I would welcome participation from three teachers from each school and that an appropriate

time would be scheduled to conduct the interview and that this would be arranged in advance and in consultation with the school authorities. Participants were asked to identify themselves to me either at the end of the session or by contacting me by email, telephone or through their respective principal.

Stage 3 focussed on meeting collectively with two members of the senior management team from each of the three schools in Abbeytown and Churchtown. The Principal teachers were consulted regarding the date and time and each principal was asked to nominate his/her representatives to this phase. Table 4.3 details the participants in Stage 3 and their respective roles in their schools.

Two hours was allocated to each group interview. In Abbeytown, St. Catherine's school was the venue for the meeting and in Churchtown, St. Ailbe's hosted the meeting. Permission was sought at the commencement of the interviews to record the proceedings. The following topics were the lead issues in these meetings:

1. As a member of the Senior Management Team in your school how do you view CPD as currently constructed?
2. How does the current structure of CPD fit with your role as a member of the Senior Management Team?

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. I reflected on the data that were generated to identify the emerging issues raised. At the conclusion of these sessions the issue of anonymity was raised in both sites. Participants voiced their concerns regarding the taping of the interviews and the method in which the findings from the management perspective would be disseminated. I was asked to consider their dilemma and to proffer a solution at the next session.

Stage 4 of the data gathering involved the interviewing of the volunteer interviewees, three from each school. In order to facilitate effective time management I asked one school in each

site to host the meetings. I had received 18 volunteers (See Table 4.2) and the sample was as was planned, three members from each school.

In consultation with the respective school principals a schedule for the interviews was identified. A full school day was allocated to each site with each participant receiving notice in advance regarding the schedule. I sought permission from each participant to record the interview and to take notes as required. As in Stage 3 concern was expressed regarding the possible identification of individuals and further concern regarding the dissemination of the content of the interviews. Again it was agreed that a method would be arrived at that would protect the teachers' anonymity.

The focus of the interviews was to identify the participants' views with regard to the factors that influence their decision making regarding engagement in CPD. The model that had emerged (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.3) from consideration of the literatures was used to guide the questions used in the semi-structured interviews. Questions were developed (see Appendix 3) to represent each factor in the model and these were used as the prompt questions in guiding each interview.

I transcribed the recordings of the interviews and considered the issues raised by the interviewees' responses leading to the development of a narrative (see Appendix 4) to represent the themes and issues that had emerged.

Stage 5 involved the validation of the data with the senior management in each site. A two hour meeting was arranged; in conjunction with the principals, in each site with the same schools acting as hosts for the meetings. The attendance was the same as the first session with this group. I thanked them for their participation and for raising the issue of anonymity and their concern regarding the dissemination of the issues raised. I informed them that the same issue had been raised with me in each site and also with those who had participated in the one-to-one interviews. I outlined the method with which I proposed to address the issue

and gave a brief description of the use of fictionalised narrative as a means of representing data.

The description focussed on the acceptance in the literature that the possibility of identification of individuals and their associated comments held the potential to be destructive both on a personal and interpersonal level to the participants in their own school context. I advised that I had given the issue due consideration and had sought advice regarding this dilemma and on this basis that I had concluded that I would address this dilemma through the use of fictionalised narrative.

As an action this is valid as the use of the narrative opens the possibility of making the familiar strange and the strange familiar+(Clough, 2002 p 8). It provides a means by which those truths, which cannot be otherwise told, are uncovered+(Clough, 2002 p 8). The use of the narrative therefore provides the protection of anonymity to the research participants without stripping away the rawness of real happenings+(Clough, 2002 p 8).

Clough (2002) argues that the use of narrative is difficult work, he emphasises that in adopting this approach to representing the data that the freedom from imposed structural frameworks of academic tradition does not mean freedom from every dilemma+(p 10). Fundamentally the central dilemma is that of representation, achieving the fictional representation of what was real and lived by the participants. I relied on my observations and intuitions to interpret the participants' depth of emotion and commitment to their own observations and to represent this depth in an appropriate manner in the fictitious setting. I was conscious, therefore at all times of not engaging in addition to what was represented at interview whilst at the same time avoiding subtraction from the essence of participants' views. Having explained the approach I then presented each of two fictionalised narratives in turn (see Appendix 4a and 4B) allowing each participant to read and consider the content. I then facilitated a discussion on each narrative based on the following questions:

1. Does this narrative represent the issues as presented in our earlier session?
2. Are there any omissions that you would like to raise?

3. Are there any further comments that you would like to raise?

I noted their comments as presented and processed these comments by engaging in reflection on these comments to determine what if any key issues were being raised that needed to be incorporated in the analysis of my findings.

Stage 6 involved the validation of the data gathered in Stage 4. To achieve this aspect of the data gathering plan within the allocated time I had arranged with the school principals for all of the participants from each site to meet collectively in one of the schools in each respective site. In Abbeystown, St Malachy's hosted this meeting and in Churchtown St. Ita's hosted the meeting. The session was allocated a two hour time frame and I repeated the structure as designed for Stage 5 (see Appendix 5 Fictionalised Narrative representing the individual interviewees' perceptions). I noted the responses to the same set of questions and again searched for patterns and any emergent themes by reading and re-reading the notes that I had taken.

Stage 7 was the final presentation/workshop with the entire staffs of the three schools in each site (see Appendix 6). Owing to time constraints and a reduction in available resources to all schools during this period, the time allowed for this session was reduced to two hours per site. A period of three months had elapsed since Stage 6 had taken place and, for the majority of the participants, they had not had a direct meeting with me regarding the research since Stage 2 had concluded. Outside venues were again used to facilitate the large numbers in attendance. There was a slight decrease in attendance due to the fact that some teachers were involved in the examination of pupils' coursework in other schools, but this was unavoidable.

I structured the session by restating my research questions and recapping on the research stages that I had conducted. I outlined the approach I had undertaken to analyse the data gathered and the factors that I had identified that influence teacher decision making regarding

engagement in CPD. I sought any comments or views on my representation of the issues. I concluded the session by expressing my heartfelt thanks to all of them for assisting me in the research.

Data analysis

Skrtic (1985) argues that the process of data analysis occurs more than once in qualitative research (p 193). He claims that it is an ongoing process that happens at several levels and for different purposes (p 193). During the different stages of the fieldwork the data were considered and reflected upon in a series of interrelated stages of data analysis. This approach was influenced by Hammersley's (1992) use of the image of a journey when commenting on data analysis when he states that what is involved here is not a cross-roads where we go left or right. A better analogy is a complex maze where we are repeatedly faced with decisions, and where paths wind back on one another (p 172). Consequently, the purpose of the continuing analysis was to guide subsequent stages in the data collection process with a view to securing relevance and validity.

Therefore, I reflected upon the data by adopting a variation of an approach advocated by Skrtic (1985) in which he stages the data analysis into *unitising* and *categorising*. Skrtic (1985) defines *unitising* as the identification and recording of essential information units; those single pieces of information able to stand by themselves (p 194). He defines *categorising* as the process of bringing the units with the same content together as a loose taxonomy where there is reasonableness to their categorisation (p 195). This process allowed for the data to be collated into emerging themes and also served as a very useful approach to organising the data and offered a rationale for the use of particular quotations relating to specific units of data.

Subsequent to each stage I read and reread the notes and or the transcripts of the interviews associated with each stage and guided my analysis by posing the following questions:

1. What knowledge is emerging from this data?
2. What validation do I have to claim this as emerging knowledge?
3. How open am I to differing or new insights from my own personal beliefs?
4. How do I represent this emerging knowledge without bias?
5. Is there anything within the data that I am overlooking?

The adoption of this inductive, staged data analysis approach was beneficial in a number of ways, firstly it allowed for all the data collection stages to be reviewed as they unfolded and to cross reference as required and thus generated ample items to reference in the presentation of the findings. Secondly, it provided a mechanism to maintain the validity of the research by allowing for each stage to be guided as a result of the analysis of the previous stage. It can also be stated that as an approach it assisted me in addressing the dynamic that unfolded in Stage 6; a time period which coincided with the dramatic change in the economic fortunes in Ireland, and one which is returned to in more detail in Chapter 5 during the presentation of the findings.

The final aspect of the data analysis process involved reflecting upon the themes that had been generated in relation to the model of engagement that steered the data collection process and resulted in the development of the model of engagement in order to differentiate between the factors that influence teacher engagement in elective CPD and mandatory CPD, an area that I return to in Chapter 6.

Ethical Issues

This research focused on recognising and substantiating new meanings in relation to engagement with CPD. As researcher my focus was to search for new connections, new meanings. Therefore I adopted the role of interpreter, an agent, described by Stake (1995) as the gatherer of new interpretation, new knowledge+ (p 99). However, it is the case that I, as researcher, was also functioning as adviser to the schools as they proceeded to manage the educational enterprise through the process of amalgamation. I was challenged to balance the roles of researcher and advisor, interpreter and advocate, neutral observer and critical analyst. Fundamentally, I remained honest to myself and others, true to my beliefs and

values, respectful of others in all my interactions and decisions. During the field work I adhered to the imperative that my role, my expectations and the expectations of others were outlined and negotiated from the outset.

The ethic of respect and its associated responsibilities has informed the entire research process. BERA (2004) guidelines identify the principle of informed consent as a primary responsibility. As researcher I undertook to ensure that all participants understood and agreed to participate prior to the commencement of the research process. I committed to explaining to all participants why their participation was necessary, how the data would be managed and to whom it would be disseminated. As researcher I informed all participants of their right to withdraw from the research process for any or no reason and at any time. In terms of privacy, as researcher I recognised all participants' entitlement to privacy and I accorded them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. As researcher I have disseminated the research findings in an appropriate and agreed manner.

Summary

This research seeks to uncover a meaning that an aspect of the professional lives of teachers has for them hence a qualitative design using a collective instrumental case study approach was most appropriate. The model of *engagement* (see Figure 2.3) used to guide the empirical work has as its central focus a decision making process; representative of the interplay between teacher agency and structures, professional and personal, which can be influenced, to a greater or lesser extent by a variety of different factors. The model linked directly to the design of the research instruments in that the mixture of semi-structured interviews, workshops and presentations facilitated the uncovering of responses, meanings and truths representative of the individuals' interactions with an aspect of their professional world.

The information rich sample that I had access to afforded me the opportunity to harvest a large range of data and through the simultaneous collection and analysis approach I have a range of findings which will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5- Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the seven stages of the fieldwork. As indicated previously, data were collected from three groupings by means of semi-structured individual interviews, semi-structured group interviews and presentations/workshops. Data were validated by returning to each of the three groupings and presenting the findings from the initial data gathering stage. This process is detailed in Table 5.1. The initial analysis of the data generated in each stage involved the review and collation of the data into single stand alone units. This was followed by several reviews of these units and groups of data were formed by linking units with common features. Reviews of these groups of data resulted in the emergence of thematic groupings which facilitated the categorising of the data. This approach followed the unitising and categorising processes detailed in Chapter 4.

Table 5.1 Data gathering and validation process

| Data Sources | Link to Stages |
|---|-----------------------|
| Whole staffs in Abbeytown and Churchtown | Stages 1 & 2 |
| Teachers in Senior Management roles in Abbeytown and Churchtown | Stages 3 & 5 |
| Individual classroom teachers in Abbeytown and Churchtown | Stages 4 & 6 |
| Whole staffs in Abbeytown and Churchtown | Stage 7 |

Broad attitudes of teachers to CPD from Stages One and Two

Stage 1 was conducted on January 25th 2008; it involved two two-and-a-half hour meetings of the teaching staffs of the three schools in both Abbeytown and Churchtown. It was the first occasion in which teachers from all three schools in both towns met collectively.

All participants had the prior knowledge that the schools in each town were due to be amalgamated and that I held the position of chairperson of the steering groups overseeing the amalgamation process. The structure of the meetings is detailed in Chapter 4.

The questions posed to the teachers were:

1. What was working well, in their opinion, with regard to CPD in Ireland?
2. What was not yet working well with regard to CPD in Ireland?
3. What, in their opinion, of what was not yet working well was open to change and what was not open to change?

Each group's response was presented by the group's appointed rapporteur. Each rapporteur was asked to report on all three questions simultaneously and all rapporteurs were asked not to repeat in detail points previously made but to advise if there was agreement or disagreement on issues previously raised. The groups were numbered one to ten and the responses were invited sequentially. For the purposes of reporting the findings the following mechanism has been devised: A1, A2, A3, etc represent groups one, two and three etc in Abbeystown and B1, B2, B3, etc represent groups one, two and three etc in Churchtown.

Findings:

Question one asked what was working well, in their (participants') opinion, with regard to CPD in Ireland? Three general themes emerged from the responses to question one in both Abbeystown and Churchtown:

Theme 1: Participants' satisfaction with the development of provision of CPD in certain curricular areas, if not with the range of curricular areas supported

Theme 2: Participant satisfaction with the evolving CPD provision framework

Theme 3: Participant awareness of the need for teachers to consider their own professional needs and articulate them to the providers

Theme 1: All 20 groups highlighted the advances that had been made in the provision of CPD in curricular areas. Group A1 listed the range of subject teachers in the group (English,

Business Studies, History, Biology, Junior Science and Physics) the rapporteur stated that all members of the group had had a positive interaction with CPD in their respective subject areas in recent years. The rapporteur commented on the professionalism of those in the support services and the excellence of their subject knowledge, preparation, delivery and resources presented. Groups A3, A6, B2, B4 and B8 also highlighted the excellent standard of support available and extended the subject areas to include the extensive support for the curricular programmes such as Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and other subject areas including Social Personal and Health Education, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education, Technology, History, Civic Social and Political Education and Geography.

Groups A2, A5, A6, B1, B2, and B3 highlighted the very positive interaction that they had experienced in their respective schools with members of the School Development Planning (SDPI) dedicated support service.

One member of group A7 asked his rapporteur to use his story as an example of how CPD had developed in the Irish system. He stated that he had commenced teaching Physics in 1974 and that his first interaction with national CPD in his subject area was in 1999, the rapporteur quoted him as follows:

I had been left to my own devices, good or bad, for a quarter of a century, I survived, according to myself, in splendid isolation, but that has changed and its been for the better. I had equipment in boxes, unopened because I did not know how to use them, thankfully, that's all over now (Member of Group A7).

Whilst the majority of members of groups A2, A4, A5, B7, B9 and B10 concurred with the positive interaction with CPD in certain curricular areas and with those programmes that offered whole school support, particularly in the area of whole school planning and subject planning, they highlighted that teachers of particular subject specialism did not have access to a dedicated support service, these included teachers of Gaeilge (Irish Language), Mathematics, Music, Art, Craft and Design.

Theme 2: Evidence highlighted the improvements in the CPD framework in Ireland. One aspect of the evolving framework identified was the increasing use of information technology (IT). Group A3 specifically highlighted the increased use of IT as a means of provision of CPD particularly the excellent use of web technology by the National Biology Support Service. This group advocated for further developments in the use of IT across subject areas. They also complimented the umbrella organization The Second Level Support Service (SLSS) for the advances it had made in communicating with teachers using IT. Groups, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10 and groups B3-B10 acknowledged the Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI) operated by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) which allowed teachers to avail of ongoing training in the use of IT from basic to advanced skill level.

A second aspect of the evolving CPD framework commented upon was the use of school visits to support onsite CPD with groups A1, A4, A8, B3, B4, B6 and B9 making specific reference to this very positive development. It was clear from the rapporteurs reports that teachers found school based visits affirming and very worthwhile, facilitating one-on-one discussion tailored specifically to the individual teachers' needs.

Group B6 stated that the development of local clusters of teachers was an aspect of the CPD structure that was working very well. They made specific reference to the recent development by the SLSS of Teacher Professional Networks (TPN). They lauded the TPN principle, advocated by SLSS, of teachers working together in support of fellow teachers, claiming it as one of the best ways of eliminating teacher isolation within their own school setting. They also considered the TPN structure as a means of support following the intensive phase of CPD in any particular subject area.

Groups A4, A6, B2, and B5 referenced the specific support available for the in-school leadership teams. The support service known as Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) was commended for being focussed and practical in the programmes that it undertakes, it was viewed as a mechanism for the effective dissemination of good practice and an effective networking tool for teachers in senior management positions in schools.

Theme 3: The third theme to emerge was the level of awareness amongst participants of the need to be active in determining their own needs in relation to CPD. Groups A2, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, B2, B3, B7, B9 and B10 referenced the profiling of CPD in the whole area of subject planning and in particular the profile it received through the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) process conducted by An Chigireacht (The Schools Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science). Group A9 offered the following in relation to CPD and WSE:

It is very important to have everything that you do or plan to do on paper, that's what they're looking for and that's what we had in the subject plan and it all went fine, we were asked what we did, why we did it and how we got on and it was great to be able to give an answer (Group A9).

Group B1 referred to the dividends enjoyed by one of the schools in the group through their school's participation in a European funded project that linked their school with schools in seven other European Countries around the theme of *sharing practices-exchanging challenges*. They wished to state that teacher involvement in such projects was demanding but rewarding as it involved teachers reflecting on features and aspects of their own professional experiences and addressing them accordingly.

There was general acknowledgement that the templates provided by the school development planning team assisted teachers in raising their own awareness about the need to consider CPD on an ongoing and systematic basis. (Groups A1-A10 and B1-B10) all referenced SDP as beneficial to them in some form or another albeit from a lesser to a greater extent.

Summary of Findings to Question 1

The responses to Question 1 generated data that recognises the increased availability of formalised national CPD in Ireland from an almost non-existent base in 1993 to widespread but not all-inclusive availability in 2008. The data recognises that those working to provide CPD to teachers are extremely committed and very professional in their approach, the support materials developed and the modes through which they are delivered have evolved and the incorporation of IT as a tool for communication is signalled out for specific praise. The addition of school based visits as part of the CPD framework is seen as working well and

contributing to the impact of the delivery of CPD and likewise the profile that CPD has in whole school and subject planning along with its centrality in the WSE process has assisted greatly in raising awareness amongst teachers of the need to consider their own involvement with CPD.

Question 2: What is not yet working well in relation to CPD in Ireland?

As was the case for question 1, general themes emerged from the data generated in response to question 2. The four themes that emerged were:

Theme 1: Equity of access to CPD across the full range of subjects

Theme 2: The management of CPD as part of school life

Theme 3: Utilisation of teacher experience and knowledge in relation to CPD

Theme 4: The need to expand the concept of professional development to include teacher personal development

Theme 1: 18 of the 20 groups referred to the need for the availability of CPD in all subject areas including CPD for those subjects referred to as the %minority subjects+such as Art Craft and Design, Music, Applied Maths and the Classics.

Groups A4, A7, A8, A10, B3, B4, B8 and B10 stressed that whilst availability of CPD in all subjects was important the issue of access to the range of CPD services was also underdeveloped. Group A8 stressed the need to continue to invest in the development of CPD through web based technology thus assisting in eliminating the barriers experienced by many in accessing CPD opportunities. Reference was made by Groups A10, B4 and B6 to %teacher friendly and family friendly+access with online assistance being suitable for many teachers who cannot commit to travelling to venues a long distance from their own schools and homes. Groups A7, B2, B7 and B9 criticised the location of CPD in large urban areas which required teachers to avail of additional child minding facilities and the incurrence of additional unpaid costs in order to attend such activities.

Eight of the twenty groups highlighted the dilemma in selecting the CPD opportunities to attend when many teachers were involved in the teaching of multiple subjects as opposed to a single subject. Group A8 referred to individual teachers having to make a judgement on their needs in relation to one subject over another and that this situation was inequitable and detrimental to their students.

Group B7 highlighted the need for a calendar outlining the intended roll out of future CPD for subject areas that had not to date received any CPD opportunities. This was presented as essential in minimising the sense of abandonment felt by teachers in certain subject areas.

Group B7 also highlighted the need for consistent accreditation to be awarded to those who participated in CPD activities, they raised the concern that their past participation may not have been recorded systematically and that they may not be a record of their work should it be required as part of the requirements for registration with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

Theme 2: The question of the management of CPD activity as part of school life was evidenced in the feedback to question two from all groups. This manifested with several groups referring to the inadequate time allocation for CPD as part of school life. Group A4 commented that CPD should not be episodic in nature and that teachers required sustained support at regular intervals if change to methodologies and assessment techniques were desired. Group A4 stressed the need for teachers to be supported in their capacity to address the enormous societal change being experienced in Ireland. Group A4 commented that %~~Irish~~ Irish society gets an itch then teachers are expected to scratch but sometimes we don't know how or where to scratch+(Group A4).

A linked weakness in relation to time allocation for CPD was expressed by groups A5, A9, A10, B2, B4, B5, B6, B8 and B10 all of whom commented on the negative attitude of parents to teachers being away from class whilst attending CPD and they referred to the lack of parental support for CPD as an integral part of school life. Reference was made by Groups

A10 and B6 to workers in industry and other parts of the public sector engaging in CPD as part of their normal working day and how this was an accepted feature of those workers' working lives but was not accepted as a feature of a teacher's working life.

Allied to this was the call from Groups A5, A9, A10, B6, B8 and B10 to the provision by the Department of Education and Science of trained personnel to offer substitution cover for teachers attending CPD and not just the financial resources to buy in such cover which in rural areas was extremely limited to nonexistent. This was presented as a weakness in the current structure and a factor that exacerbated parental concerns.

Theme 3: 16 of the 20 groups expressed views regarding the untapped reservoir of talent within schools. Group A5 commented that there were occasions when, as teachers, they were spoken at by those who were charged with supporting them and that there had been occasions when they were made to feel that they were restricted in their own teaching due to their outdated and outmoded methodologies.

Group A9 stated that there was 147 years of teaching experience in their group and that it was quite common in the CPD activities organised by the support services for the presenters to ignore this bank of knowledge and that by in large little time was ever given for group work or discussion or sharing of practice (Group A9). They also stated that the same could be said for their own respective schools in that there was limited if any exchange of knowledge within their own school settings and that CPD was always viewed as the need for the outsider to be invited in to show them the way (Group A9).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Groups A4, A6, A10, B2, B3, B7 and B9. Group B3 expressed their disappointment with the lack of a structure to effect proper dissemination of acquired knowledge by those who are out of school attending CPD activities.

Theme 4: Groups A1, A3, A5, A6, A9, A10, B2, B4, B5, B7 and B9 expressed the view that an inherent weakness in the national programmes of CPD was the lack of emphasis on the

personal development of the teacher. Group A6 stated that their experience of national CPD was exclusively curricular and that there was a total imbalance in the current structure.

Group A9 expressed the view that the national programmes (See Chapter 3) want teachers to build a three storey house when they only have the materials, equipment and energy to build a bungalow+(Group A9), they expressed the view that the programmes did not cater for the middle-aged teacher who is burned out and who needs reinvigoration+(Group A9).

Developing this concept Group B7 recommended that paid sabbatical leave should be available to all teachers for a period of time at ten yearly intervals during a teacher's working life.

Question 3: What, in their opinion, of what was not yet working well was open to change and what was not open to change?

Question three was directly linked to question two in that it sought to identify if the teachers considered that some or all of what they had identified as not yet working well may never work well owing to insurmountable barriers. The question posed was for participants to consider those aspects that they had identified as not yet working well that were open to change and those aspects that they considered were not open to change.

The aspects identified as not yet working well that were considered open to change were: (1) equality of access to CPD (2) proper planning at national level (3) proper utilisation of the enormous in-school knowledge and experience, (4) the development of a proper substitution service on a local or regional basis, (5) the inclusion of personal development as a feature of national CPD.

All 20 groups stressed the need for proper planning across the system to facilitate change in the current structure. Group A4 stated that:

we are always being asked to plan both for our own subject and at whole school level yet there is little evidence that the Department has a national plan for CPD, if they have we don't think that they would be hiding it so we assume that they haven't (Group A4).

Group A6 stated that it was possible to offer support to all teachers across all subject areas at the same time but that it required a move by the Department from being reactive to issues raised in the media to being proactive and establishing appropriate supports for all+(Group A6). Group A7 stated that whatever the budget for CPD is it should be divided in a fair manner, yes you need to apply a pro rata system but a small share of something is better than the lot of nothing+(Group A7). In the same vein Group A9 advocated that the support services should be developed to accommodate all subjects and that the services should be divided on a regional basis with local expertise to be tapped into as required+(Group A9). In arguing for all subjects to receive support Group B2 stated that the number of pupils taking the subject at national level should determine the level of resources allocated and efficient use of technology would assist greatly+(Group B2). Group B5 stated that it should be possible to deliver a range of supports from intensive support on revised methodologies to refresher support after the intensive phase is over, it requires coordination so that subjects and geographical areas don't slip through the cracks+(Group B5).

Group B7 stated that:

the Department could easily include personal development as part of the national programme and that teachers with personal issues could increase their effectiveness with access to an employee assistance scheme, one where teachers with problems could receive professional assistance, counselling and meaningful help, the Department needs to recognise that effective delivery of the curriculum is conditional on an energised and enthusiastic teacher force (Group B7).

The teachers then identified four areas that they considered as not yet working well within the system but also considered to be not open to change, these were: (1) the issue of time for CPD, (2) parental attitudes to CPD, (3) the level of financial investment required and (4) playing catch up with change in society.

In relation to the issue of time groups A3, A5, A7, A10, B1, B2, B3, B5, B7, B9 and B10 all commented on the pressures within the post-primary system particularly in relation to pupil achievement in the State Examinations, (The State Examinations: The Junior Certificate and The Leaving Certificate which take place after years 3 and 5 respectively). Time to cover the

prescribed syllabus for each subject was defined as limiting and the accommodation of whole school CPD and subject CPD within the school year added to this pressure. However, reluctance to yield on teachers' current conditions was expressed and presented as an issue that was not open to change.

Group A5 stated that:

we all support the need for CPD but also we feel that it is time to desist from overloading schools with new curricular programmes and changes to the different syllabi, time is a problem, there is only so much change that anyone can take on board, we are judged on our pupils' performance in the exams, that's the bottom line (Group A5).

Group A7 stated that:

yes there are obvious benefits to CPD, it provides a new energy, a new focus, the problem is that our core job is to help the students achieve the best that they can because the Leaving (State Examination) decides their future prospects and if they don't do well then we're labelled as failures not the system not the pupils, not the parents, it falls back on us (Group A7).

Group B2 stated that:

we have 168 school days and not all of those are teaching days, it is hard to see this being reduced further to accommodate CPD and we are not giving up the three best things about teaching these days, June, July and August (reference to post-primary school closure during the summer months) (Group B2).

Group B9 stated that:

This is a delicate issue, our Union has fought for a long time to achieve good conditions and although we see the need for CPD and see its benefits, we are not going to ditch all we've got to satisfy the Department's and the media's agenda, no we need to hold on to what we've got at all costs, if the system says that CPD is critical then the system has to accommodate it within the school year (Group B9).

These data highlight the tension that exists between the teachers' desire to improve their agency and the controlling impact of the current structures such as the focus on examination outcomes and the school calendar.

The second issue identified as not open to change was the area of parental attitude to CPD. Groups A5, A9, A10, B2, B4, B5, B6, B8 and B10 considered parental attitude to teachers' CPD as being negative and unlikely to change. Some groups expressed this more stridently than others. Group A10 stated that:

many parents don't want the babysitting service to be interrupted, hence they do not want us attending CPD or closing the school for essential work such as review and planning (Group A10).

Groups A5, A9, B4, B5 and B10 all believed that parental attitude to CPD was negative in the context of CPD being held during school time. Group B5 summed up this belief when they stated that:

parents would welcome reform in how CPD is organised, they do not like any reduction in personal contact between their children and their children's teachers. It's not that they don't want teachers to be at the cutting edge in terms of methods and approaches it's that they don't see why teachers cannot up-skill and develop in their own time, a lot of what they believe is linked to the length of the school year. If it is (parental attitude) to change then a lot of work has to happen to explain the benefits and the need for CPD (Group B5).

These data reinforce the divide, as perceived by the teachers, between parents and teachers with regard to the scheduling of CPD.

The third issue identified as not open to change was the level of financial investment. Groups, A1, A2, A4, A5, A8, A10, B1, B3, B5, B6, B9 and B10 all stated that the level of financial investment in education is still inadequate in comparison the nations means. Strong opinions were expressed with regard to the imbalance between the policy statements and the level of investment allocated to fund the espoused policies. Group A4 stated that when it comes to financial investment in CPD we talk the talk a lot of the time but don't walk the walk+(Group A4) with Group A8 stating that teacher CPD is only an aspect of change, there needs to be a huge investment in infrastructure and equipment and we've not seen it, even during the roaring Celtic tiger days+(Group A8).

These data suggest that in spite of significant developments and financial investment in CPD in Ireland many of the teachers considered it to be restricted investment and that the system in general required extensive financial investment if the initiatives and associated practices were to become embedded within the schools.

The final aspect of what is not yet working well in relation to CPD in Ireland and which was considered by the teachers as not open to change can be loosely termed as 'catch-up with

change in society+. Groups A4, A6, A9, B3, B4 and B7 identified this as significant. Group A4 stated that:

society is always looking for its ills to be rectified and schools are always asked to do so, this will not change, schools are seen as possibly the last pillar of society that can effect change so the burden will always be falling on schools and teachers to make good what has gone wrong in society at large (Group A4).

Group B4 stated that:

it is now the case that we have an acquired new function on top of teaching our subjects, we are the new moral guardians, the new social reformers and the champions of citizenship, this is not going to change, as we go on and the society as we have known it changes we (teachers) will be expected to address the problems (Group B4).

As is evidenced from the data there was significant disquiet as to what was perceived by the teachers to be a continuing extension by society to the role and function of schools with an increasing level of responsibility being placed on schools to provide extensive social and civic education.

Summary of Stage 1

The purpose of Stage 1 was to invite teacher observations and opinions with regard to CPD in post-primary schools in Ireland. The meetings were positive and the method applied generated a volume of opinions with regard to what teachers considered to be working well in relation to CPD and what was not yet working well which was open to change and that which was not open to change. The participants were enthusiastic to engage with the topic and welcomed their involvement in the research being conducted.

Stage 2: Validation of data gathered in Stage 1

Stage 2 of the fieldwork was conducted on February 29th 2008, one month following Stage 1. The purpose of Stage 2 was to validate my interpretation of the data generated in Stage 1.

This stage involved two two-hour meetings of the combined teaching staffs in each of the two sites. The structure of the meetings is detailed in Chapter 4; the same structure was applied

to the two meetings. Both meetings commenced with each participant being invited to sit with their respective groupings as per Stage 1, the attendance corresponded to that of Stage 1.

At the beginning of the meetings I distributed an A4 double-sided sheet to each attendee (Table 5.2) which contained a collated account of the issues raised in Stage 1. This account was generated by reviewing, on several occasions, the data gathered during Stage 1 and combining data into general themes and selecting phrases used by the teachers in Stage 1 as well as generating new phrases to encapsulate the data gathered.

Each group was asked to adhere to a similar methodology as that applied in Stage 1, i.e. solo reflection followed by paired reflection followed by group reflection with the omission of group reporting and the introduction of a plenary discussion to which all teachers were invited to contribute.

The teachers were asked to consider the document under the following headings:

1. Do you consider that the data as presented reflect the ideas articulated at the earlier session?
2. Has anything been omitted that ought to be included?
3. Is there any additional comment that you would wish to make?

For the purposes of reporting the findings the only distinction being made on the comments received from teachers at the different meetings is: PA and PB, with PA representing a contribution from a teacher in Abbeytown and PB representing a contribution from a teacher in Churchtown.

Teachers' responses during the plenary session

The teachers in Abbeytown and Churchtown presented a very favourable response to the representation of the data from Stage 1. The following are a selection of the many comments made and represent the high level of favourable response to the document: PA commented that 'this is a very accurate reflection of the thoughts expressed on the day, they have been compressed yes but you've hit the right tone and tenor with the comments given'. Another

observation from Abbeytown stated normally, I don't remember things that were said at meetings like these but yes, this does bring it back to my mind, and yes it is very accurate as a summary+another contributor PB stated you got it right, yes it's a good summary and covers all the issues that were referred to+

The response rate to question two was low in comparison to question 1. The issues highlighted as omissions were represented as follows: PA observed that the word coordination+was lacking in the collated document. PA added that the need for coordination is different to the need for planning for national, regional and local delivery+ PA highlighted the fact that there were personnel from the varying support services cross-country but few were aware what the other was doing. PA suggested that an inherent structural requirement within any national plan for CPD was the need for coordination amongst those who deliver support particularly as the point of interface, PA concluded that each school should have a well coordinated, phased CPD programme for its teachers and that in turn could minimise disruption.

The lack of emphasis in the document on the hassle+teachers experience in getting to and from centres where CPD is located was identified as an omission by a contributor in Churchtown. PB felt that the document should reflect this more strongly as it is an actual reality for teachers in rural areas. PB continued by suggesting that the document does not differentiate enough between national CPD programmes and the CPD provided by the Education Centres and local TPNs, PB said that the issue of mandatory versus elective does not appear anywhere in the document and that this was a significant omission.

The response to the request for any further comments differed greatly in Abbeytown as opposed to Churchtown. In Abbeytown one teacher stated that he found this entire exercise a complete waste of time+ He stated that he would prefer to be in his classroom teaching his pupils as opposed to listening to all this verbal rubbish+ He stated that CPD ranked way down+on his list of priorities, that it did nothing to address the issue of poorly motivated pupils that he was faced with on a daily basis and the huge struggle that existed for him to get his

Table 5.2 A summary of the data generated in Stage 1

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>What is working well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum support (where it exists) is working well • Development of school visits by support service personnel is very affirming • On line support, dedicated websites, blogs, exchange of resources online working well • SLSS is working very well • LDS is working well • IT training is working very well • New induction and mentoring programmes • Support for school based/devised initiatives is working well • TPN working well where they exist • ASTI (Union) lobbying for CPD • Discussion/awareness re CPD through WSE • Awareness of need for teachers to plan their own CPD as per SDPI template • Communication with teachers re opportunities is working very well | <p>What is not yet working well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support not available in all subject areas, no certainty re roll out of support at national level. • Not enough emphasis on personal development as a teacher as opposed to professional development. • Not unlocking the vast reservoir of internal talent, too dependent on the visiting expert • Too little time dedicated to CPD in a context of enormous change both within the education system but more importantly in society at large • Proper substitution cover for teachers attending courses • Timing and location of courses/support • Not enough on the middle aged burned out teacher who needs reinvigoration • Spreading the pastry too thinly re personnel and teacher groups • Teachers face difficulty with parents if they are out of class attending professional development • Need to develop more online courses to facilitate those who do not have the luxury of going to venues • There is no accreditation for attendance and will this be necessary in the future? • Paid sabbatical leave every 10 years |
| <p>Which of these elements which are not yet working well are open to change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every subject area should have a dedicated national support team and this is a question of system planning • There should be a national plan with regional or local support and a local presence of the NCCA • More can be done to tap into the reservoir of talent within the school, supporting staff to present their ideas to their colleagues, this is achievable and can happen given the right conditions, i.e. support from management • Developing a proper substitution service for schools, particularly for those in rural areas • Move to a greater balance and address CPPD is achievable look at the value of the EAS scheme | <p>Which of those elements, which are not yet working well, are not open to change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of time for CPD: there are many pressures on the time in school and also pressure on achievement of success with examination classes. • Parental attitudes to teachers being away from the classroom • Comprehensive support would require extraordinary funding which will not be forthcoming • Societal change, alarming rate of change and always playing catch up |

pupils past the post in the exams, he asked what difference would this research make to his daily life and to the challenges that he faced?

In an effort to respond I stated that what I was endeavouring to do was to effect change in how CPD was provided and that to make recommendations for such change I required an evidential base for the claims I would make. This exchange altered the atmosphere significantly and seemed to cause extreme embarrassment for many of the teachers. In order to minimise the potential for further embarrassment I considered it prudent to conclude the session ahead of the scheduled time by firstly thanking everyone for their contributions and stating that I was particularly interested in getting more in-depth personal opinions at a later stage. I invited anyone present to contact me regarding their willingness to participate in one-to-one interviews which would be conducted at an arranged agreeable time. I then invited all participants to have some coffee before they departed.

The responses to this question in Churchtown included the following observation from a participant who stated that she would like to see more accountability placed on teachers to report on the CPD that they attend. She continued by stressing that it was impractical for everyone to be in a position to avail of the variety of CPD opportunities that were available and that it should become part of the normal practice in schools for those who attend CPD to distil the salient and relevant issues and highlight them to others.

Five teachers in Churchtown responded to question three by stating that there was a need for the Department to consider giving schools their own budget for CPD activities, this was extended by three other teachers who stated that teachers who were interested in researching topics ought to be paid to do so and to disseminate their findings to their own colleagues. This generated further discussion and comments that ranged from the possibility that there would not be sufficient uptake from amongst teachers to engage in such work to the fact that this approach could lead to a very patchy delivery across the country. Two participants added that a blended CPD programme of national delivery with in-school designed and delivered CPD would suit most schools best for whole school activities but that subject specific CPD would be necessary from external sources.

Summary of Stage 2

Stage 2 aimed to validate the data gathered in Stage 1. In this regard Stage 2 yielded that validation as well as contributing additional data. Stage 2 successfully engaged the vast majority of the participants in reflecting on the collated views from Stage 1 and at the same time sparked a wholly unexpected reaction from one participant. Stage 2 underlined the need for me as researcher to remain respectful and open to all views and opinions as presented and not to be dismissive in way or form. The confrontation highlighted the sensitivity that exists within groups and the need, as an outsider, to be respectful of the dynamic that exists in particular staffrooms. It also highlighted the challenge that exists in bringing cohorts of teachers from different schools together and the potential that exists for individuals to vent their own personal frustrations but at the same time cause embarrassment to the other teachers present.

Views of senior leaders from Stages 3 and 5

Stage 3 of the data gathering process was conducted on April 9th 2008. Stage 3 focussed on gathering data from six teachers who held senior leadership roles, two from each of the three schools in each town. Table 4.3 provides details of the attendees at each meeting, their aliases, the position they held in their respective schools and the numbers of years experience each participant had in that particular role. The structure of the meetings is also detailed in Chapter 4. In Abbeystown, St. Catherine's school was the venue for the meeting and in Churchtown, St. Ailbe's school hosted the meeting.

The following two questions were posed in order to begin the discussions at the group interviews:

1. As a member of the Senior Management Team in your school how do you view CPD as it is currently constructed?
2. How does the current structure of CPD fit with your role as a member of the Senior Management Team?

For the purposes of reporting the data the two meetings will be reported as a single unit thus avoiding any repetition of the issues raised. The data from question one is divided into two sections with the first set of data focussing on the comments offered in relation to whole-school CPD activities.

Daithí commented that the whole school approach to CPD had a very positive impact on his school, he said that subject group meetings in particular had forged a more collaborative approach, teachers were developing a professional bond, a type of support network through which they could share experiences, review practices and give each other tips+. Paul and Gearóid concurred with this with Gearóid adding that whole staff sessions in the area of the school's code of behaviour and classroom management had made life easier, people know what we are trying to do and things are clearer, we can review progress now on the basis of what we all agreed and agreements are documented+. Clare agreed that the whole school approach to organisational planning was helpful, that the templates offered by the facilitators kept people on task and focussed with a sense of achievement at the end of day+.

Donncha agreed that the whole school approach is beneficial but added that it can be made or broken by the facilitator, a lot has to do with their power to nudge people along, we've had some great days and some disasters to put it mildly+. Clíodhna highlighted the importance of the pre-visit by the facilitator to the school, she said that it's a problem to free people up for the meeting but it is worthwhile, the facilitator can get a sense of what has been accomplished, where there have been issues and what needs to be done+. Caoimhín commented that the follow up on any decisions was very important, it was always challenging to keep the momentum going, that people tend to revert back into their routine and keeping them on task was difficult, it's the same even for myself as I often have the best of intentions but get caught up in the day-to-day issues that seem to be never ending+.

Niamh stressed that the input of the outside facilitator was excellent, it was important to remember that a prophet is not usually celebrated in their home town+and that in her view it is always important to have the outsider bringing new perspectives and new ideas, they (the

facilitators) are so well trained and skilled and have the added bonus of being able to leave at the end of the day+. Clare praised the model where %the support service team are there, they don't just land in and go but give you support as you need it, if nothing else they'll listen to me whinging and complaining, but truly they are an invaluable resource and have to be maintained, if they are not there then we will slip back and progress will be slower+.

Gearóid stated that the support service personnel have given him %confidence with respect to the work+he and his colleagues are doing, that they (the support service personnel) %have nurtured people within the school and have encouraged them to act as change leaders within the school, for once I have someone else driving the agenda in the school as opposed to just a few of us+. Emer added that it was her belief that %teachers do not feel alienated from the process anymore and that they are less inclined to see change as the sole remit of the management team and the principal in particular, teachers are putting forward ideas for changes that they think should be made, they are less likely to be silent, it (the whole school CPD process) has empowered many who never contributed before.+

When asked if anyone would like to comment as to whether there were any negatives to the whole school CPD approach Mairéad stated that %there are still some teachers who are not approachable when it comes to jobs that have to be done, they have plenty to say at the meetings but when it comes to the actual work they shy away+. Daithí agreed but added that %you will always have the laggards, no matter what system is in place, some people are the doers and others like to criticise, that's the way it has always been and I don't see any change in that+. Clare agreed with this observation but added that %the emphasis on subject planning has brought people along and many have changed somewhat+. Paul stated that %the facilitators alert us to the possible pitfalls, they have the benefit of focussing on these issues all of the time, and its great but also in leads to a dependency culture at times, sometimes I find myself emailing them queries because I am doubting my own judgement and I keep saying that its best to check with them, what would I do if they were not there?+

The evidence suggests that senior leaders were very positively disposed to the whole school CPD activities that they had experienced and in particular they highlighted the benefit to them of the teams of facilitators that support the whole school based activities, in particular the SDP team. Interestingly, the issue of a possible culture of dependency was raised and how it has the potential to impact on leaders' trust in their own judgement. However, overall it was clear that in relation to whole school CPD the senior leaders were positive and supportive of the structure.

The teachers were then asked about the subject specific CPD that was offered to the schools. Gearóid stated that whilst he was confident that the quality was excellent and the need is there I am not so sure if my confidence is justified, I am only going by the teachers themselves+. Deirdre stated that she had attended a number of CPD opportunities in her own subject area and that they were excellent, well designed and delivered, difficult however to take everything on board and unpack in the classroom, time is needed to internalise the changes+. Daithí stated that he had direct experience of tailored support for the school management and that he had found the programmes useful and practical, grounded in real life experiences and energising+he continued by adding that it is essential to get away from the school at times and have the time to reflect on things, the good as well as the bad, these programmes help greatly in this regard+.

The discussion on this aspect of CPD yielded agreement that the teachers' experiences of subject based CPD were good and that in all cases teachers seemed to feel that the CPD offered was beneficial. Paul stated that I am only giving a very scant evaluation of their benefit, I suppose I don't feel that I can say, with any real evidence, if they are having a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, time will tell in this regard+. Deirdre commented that we are generally so busy with regard to day to day issues that we don't have a structure for evaluating impact of CPD, we operate on a trust basis, we really take a leap of faith and hope that any CPD will have an impact and can only but help+. Clíodhna stated that where the CPD focuses on curricular change and exam structure in particular you find that the teachers are really focussed but if it is focussed on methodology

and assessment then you find that they are somewhat reluctant or should I say a little less enthusiastic, they (teachers) keep on asking for time within the school day to discuss what they have been offered, time and more time before they feel comfortable with any change, a luxury we don't have.

The mention of the time required for CPD sparked a high level of interaction with the teachers. Before moving to discussing the organisational management of CPD in the schools I asked if anyone would like to contribute anything further on how CPD is currently structured. Niamh stated that she would like to stress that she and the senior management team in her school feel that CPD is extremely important, is widely available, of a high quality and offered in various formats, our teachers are generally enthusiastic about CPD but if the truth be known the majority of the effective supports necessary for CPD were absent, namely the issue of time to embed.

The discussion then moved to address how the current structure of CPD fits with their roles as members of the Senior Management teams. Paul said that he found this difficult to address, I am concerned as to how my response will be interpreted. Caoimhín, Clíodhna, Daithí, Gearóid and Clare all expressed a similar reluctance to comment until I had discussed the whole area of how their feedback would be presented, who would have access to it and whether it could be the case that their contributions could come back to haunt them. I assured them that I would take advice on the matter and that the opportunity would exist for them to have a direct input on my interpretation of the data when we met next as a grouping. I also assured the teachers of total anonymity and that all were being assigned pseudonyms and that every effort would be made to devise an approach that would protect them against being identified. On this basis the participants agreed to continue the discussion.

Paul stated that my reality is that while in theory I am all for teachers attending CPD it is a nightmare to manage, in a no win situation, the teacher is aware that the in-service is on and expects to be released without any problem, although a sub (substitute teacher) is paid for, it's impossible to get a qualified teacher to cover, then I invariably have some pupils who

try to take advantage of the sub, there's trouble, the year head gets involved, parents are involved and it can spiral out of control very quickly. I don't want you to think that this happens all of the time but what I will tell you is that I get plenty of grief from parents who don't want free classes or sub teachers+

Caoimhín added %yes it is a nightmare for us, we get both barrels at times, irate parents who think that we have control over it or even forcing the teachers to go, and in truth, due to the lack of coordination I often had situations where I had four or five teachers out on the same day, one sick, two gone to a match and one or two called to CPD+. Deirdre added that %this is the reality of the situation, although I was extolling the virtues earlier there are many times that I am cursing the fact that CPD is on, it can be very disruptive, we've tried to get teachers to leave programmes of work, we've tried to get date changes, we've tried several times to see how we can manage it better but no success yet, we find it very disruptive to the flow of things and it brings a lot of headaches.+ Pádraig stated that %teacher absence on CPD definitely has an impact on discipline, I really wonder how sustainable it is to have all the CPD going on during school time, but that is a big issue and I'm not going on a solo run on that+

Donncha added that %our year heads even turn on us for allowing teachers to attend CPD, they don't like the extra workload as they see it of picking up the pieces when the subs are in, you can't blame them they are busy too but yes it does cause a lot of problems.+ Daithí added that %whole school closure is the only way, if there could be a more coordinated structure whereby schools could close in an area and the support service personnel could work with them in clusters, I'm not sure I haven't thought it through but I'm sure that HQ (the DES) must be getting complaints, we are always discussing it and complaining about it at AMCSS (Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools) meetings but it seems to have got worse in recent times+. Mairéad added that %am a firm believer in the subject based CPD but yes from a management perspective it's a problem, it's hard enough to do all that is asked of you without parents and Boards of Management criticising the fact that teachers are attending CPD, it's funny but all want the best for the pupils but don't want disruption, I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that the exam pressure is so intense and if a

parent hears that a teacher was out for the day they get very excited about it, we're so focussed on the exams that it's crazy, but anyway, yes, if the truth be told it does interfere a lot in our school and the flow of the day and the week.+

Donncha added that % really is the lack of coordination, yes the SLSS have made huge efforts to let us know in advance when training is on and which teachers will be invited but the reality is that we are then left making calls on who can go and who can't, a real recipe for making enemies because you are then accused of weighing one subject as more important than the other, it's a real headache, we're fast approaching the time when another model will have to be considered and implemented.+

Summary of Stage 3

Stage 3 proved to be extremely provocative in that it generated data that demonstrated the tensions that exist between the desire to support teacher professional learning and the challenge that exists in endeavouring to accommodate it within the restrictive school calendar.

The teachers in leadership roles supported the need for professional development to be available in a variety of formats and to include whole school and subject based programmes however they also highlighted the intense pressure that members of the senior management teams experience in trying to facilitate the quantity of CPD at school level whilst minimising the impact on the school's organization and operation.

What was most significant in this stage was that the leaders, in both Abbeytown and Churchtown, raised enormous concern regarding the reporting of the findings of this session. It was made clear by them that they were reluctant for their views to be attributable to them and were concerned regarding the potential impact that their views would have should their colleagues become aware of it.

Stage 5 involved the validation of the data generated in Stage 3 with the senior management in both Abbeytown and Churchtown. This stage was conducted on November 17th 2008. The

structure of the meeting is detailed in Chapter 4. The attendance for this stage was the same as for the first session with these groups. The leaders at both meetings asked that the session would not be taped as they felt uncomfortable with the fact that they were being taped, I agreed immediately not to record the proceedings and to rely on my own note taking. For the purposes of reporting the findings no distinction is made between the feedback in Abbeytown or Churchtown.

I commenced the sessions by thanking all present for their participation, for raising the issue of anonymity and for expressing their concerns regarding the dissemination of the issues highlighted. I informed them that the same issue had been raised with me in each of the sites and that it had also been raised by those who had participated in the one-to-one interviews (Stage 4). I informed the teachers that I proposed to address the issue of reporting the findings using fictionalised narrative. I proceeded to give a brief description of the use of fictionalised narrative as a means of representing data.

I then distributed two fictionalised narratives (Appendix 4 (a) and (b)) and asked each participant to consider their contents based on the following three questions:

4. Do the narratives represent the issues as presented in our earlier session?
5. Are there any omissions that you would like to raise?
6. Are there any further comments that you would like to raise?

For the purposes of reporting the findings of this phase I intend to highlight the key issues that were raised in response to the questions. The discussion that ensued did not adhere to addressing the questions in sequence as the participants responded to the questions collectively.

There was agreement from the participants at both meetings that the narratives represented their reality as they, as senior managers, grappled with the challenges of implementing and facilitating CPD at school level. Concern was expressed however that the reader may interpret their concerns regarding the organisational aspect of CPD as translating into a lack of support for and recognition of the value of CPD. Participants stressed that there was a

need to restate at this stage that they viewed ongoing CPD as an essential tool in supporting school development and in providing a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Paul, Daithí and Gearóid all stated that the narrative captured their frustration with the lack of coordinated planning at the interface level, the connection between the providers and the schools. They wished to state again that the weaknesses they identified in session one are systemic organisational and planning weaknesses. Paul stated that this applies even at the level of the invitation to CPD and whether the invitation is as it states an invitation or whether it implies compulsory attendance. Daithí commented that this was an extremely important point as the system had changed in recent years with teachers receiving the invitations as opposed to the principal receiving notification of the intent to invite. This he stated places me immediately on the back foot, I am being told of the CPD event as opposed to being informed about it, the inference is that the teacher is going, it is not about being released to attend and whether or not it suits the school on that particular day.

Deirdre stated that she believed that both narratives captured the essence of the dilemma of the senior management with regard to the effective running of the school, management wishes to support CPD activities but needs to keep the ship afloat on any given day. She added that the narrative regarding the irate parent, although fictional in nature is totally realistic and an aspect of life that the general classroom teacher does not encounter or have to defend. Pádraig and Clare agreed that the narrative regarding the irate parent described the reality extremely well, Clare stated that it highlighted the invidious position that management are placed in by the plethora of different CPD activities that occur in an unplanned and uncoordinated manner.

Donncha stated that the narratives presented their dilemma clearly, he considered the Board of Management narrative illuminated the challenges that management face even within the school's own structure. He felt that it should not be lost that senior management should not have to explain to parents the need for CPD and that CPD and the rationale for it requires a national profile.

Mairéad and Clíodhna expressed the view that the narratives addressed their concerns regarding the challenges with CPD and its implementation but that in session one there had been lengthy discussion regarding the management support for school identified and school planned CPD activities on a whole school level. Clíodhna stated that she would be very strong on the point that whole school CPD added value to the school and the educational enterprise of the school, this cannot be lost, it is really the planning and organization and support for the subject based CPD that is so disruptive, it requires a major overhaul.

Caoimhín commented that the narratives address the key issues raised and yes I am happy that it be reported that such challenges exist, it is our reality and teachers in general need to be reminded of it but that in the feedback that it be located in their support and commitment to CPD because it's not just CPD that causes the problem it's as it says in the story, CPD and matches and sick leave, it's the cumulative.

Pádraig stated that the custom of withdrawal for subject based CPD is now firmly embedded in the system, any move to change this, he suggested, will be challenged and we know that he spoke of the need for senior management to always balance the advantages of letting a teacher attend against the problems it will bring, there are times he said that a manager has to hope for the best, we can't keep promoting change if we don't facilitate it. He continued in saying that throughout his long tenure in a senior management position that it was his experience that if you support you get ten times back, if you refuse someone who works hard, and gives a lot the school, you could pay the price for a long time, we can't have it both ways and at the moment what requires change is the system.

Summary of Stage 5

Stage 5 was productive in that the issues surrounding the organization and facilitation of CPD and subject based CPD in particular, were confirmed by those in senior management roles. The data as presented in the fictionalised narratives was validated with the fictionalised narratives encapsulating the opinions and beliefs of the teachers with regard to their challenges and difficulties, it also provided the participants with the opportunity to restate their

belief in the need for an examination of the model by which subject based CPD was offered and also to restate their belief that whole school CPD added value to the quality of school life and assisted in school development.

Individual classroom teachers' views about CPD drawn from Stages 4 and 6

Stage 4 of the data gathering procedure took place in Abbeytown on May 2nd 2008 and on October 13th 2008 in Churchtown. The time gap between the sessions was due to the closure of all post-primary schools in Ireland during the months of June, July and August for summer holidays and the view expressed by the principals that the latter part of the month of May and the entire month of September would be impractical for them to facilitate release of the teachers. Stage 4 involved one-to-one interviews with nine volunteer teachers, three from each school (See Table 4.2). The details of the structure of the interviews are given in Chapter 4.

A schedule for the interviews was developed in consultation with the school principals with a full school day allocated to each site and with each teacher receiving notice in advance regarding the schedule. I sought permission from each teacher to record the interview and to take notes as required. As was the case in Stage 3 concern was expressed by a number of interviewees regarding the possible identification of individuals through the dissemination process. In response I informed all participants of my intention to develop a fictionalised narrative that would be used to represent the data gathered and that their identity would be safeguarded, I also informed the participants of their opportunity to validate the data at the next stage.

The focus of these interviews was to move from the general attitudes to CPD and the organisation of CPD to the more specific profiling of teachers and the identification of their personal views with regard to the factors that impact on their personal decision making as they consider engagement with CPD.

Four questions were asked at the beginning of each interview to establish the interviewees' professional profile in relation to qualifications, previous teaching experience and management positions, if any, within their own schools.

The questions posed were:

- (1) May I ask you what qualifications you have?
- (2) Have you taught in other schools or was this your first appointment?
- (3) Do you hold a post of responsibility in your school?
- (4) Can you outline briefly the duties attached to the post?

Table 5.3 tabulates the responses to these questions. The abbreviations AP and SD stand for Assistant Principal (most senior promotional position after principal and deputy principal) and Special Duties (middle management position) respectively. (Schools are awarded a number of AP and SD posts depending on the number of full time teaching posts or equivalents in a school).

BA is the abbreviation for a Bachelor of Arts, B.Comm for a Bachelor of Commerce, B.Sc. for a Bachelor of Science, B.Tech for a Bachelor of Technology with a concurrent teaching qualification, BBS for a Bachelor of Business Studies with a concurrent teaching qualification, H.Dip. in Ed. for a Higher Diploma in Education; the recognised teaching qualification in Ireland for a post-primary teacher with a non concurrent education qualification in their primary degree.

Of the 18 interviewees ten held a promotional post in their own school, four of these held the position of assistant principal in their schools with six of the interviewees holding special duties teacher posts of responsibility. Five of the interviewees held additional qualifications to their primary qualifications required for teaching with no interviewee holding a recognised university accreditation in educational leadership or management. Three of the interviewees had taught in two other schools with seven of the teachers having taught in one other school and nine of the interviewees were teaching in the same school since the commencement of their teaching careers.

Table 5.3 Interviewees' qualifications and career profiles

| Teacher (Alias) | Number of teaching positions held | Qualifications | Post Holder Y/N | Duties |
|------------------------|--|--|------------------------|--|
| Aileen | First Position | B.Comm, H.Dip | Y, AP | Year Head |
| Caithlín | First Position | B.A. H.Dip. MA (French) | Y, SD | Exam Sec. |
| John | 1 | BSc. H.Dip. | N | |
| Eddie | 2 | BA H.Dip. | N | |
| Liam | First Position | B.Tech | N | |
| Orlaith | 2 | BA H.Dip. | N | |
| Jennifer | First Position | BSc. H.Dip, MSc. (ICT) | Y, SD | Student Council |
| Fionn | 1 | BBS, H.Dip. | Y, SD | Purchasing |
| Oisín | First Position | BTech | Y, AP | Year Head |
| Bill | 1 | BSc, H.Dip. | Y, SD | Lab Management |
| Marie | First Position | BA H.Dip. | Y, AP | Year Head |
| Patricia | First Position | BA, H.Dip. | N | |
| Cathal | 1 | BTech. | N | |
| Seán | 1 | BA, H.Dip. Dip Professional Studies | N | |
| Emmet | 2 | BA H.Dip. | N | |
| Caitríona | First Position | BA, H.Dip, Dip Special Ed. , M.Ed (Special Ed) | Y, SD | Coordinator Special Ed |
| Eileen | 1 | BA, H.Dip. | Y, SD | Coordinator Social Personal and Health Education |
| Dan | First Position | BA, H.Dip. MA(History) | Y, AP | Year Head |

Two further questions regarding the interviewees' careers were posed in the next section of the interview. The aim of these questions was to establish the interviewees' thoughts and beliefs regarding promotion either within their own schools or the system at large and to establish if there was a correlation between these responses and subsequent responses in relation to engagement in CPD.

The questions posed were:

- (1) Do you feel that you have a clear career pathway open to you in this school?
- (2) Do you have an interest in pursuing promotion within the system?

Table 5.4 tabulates the responses to the questions.

Table 5.4 Interviewees' Career Pathways

| Teacher (Alias) | Current Post Holder Yes or No | Promotional pathway within the school? | Interest in pursuing promotion within the system? |
|------------------------|--|---|--|
| Aileen | Y, AP | Reached level of interest | No interest |
| Caithlín | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | No interest |
| John | N | Yes | Possibly |
| Eddie | N | Yes | Possibly |
| Liam | N | Yes | No interest |
| Orlaith | N | Yes | Never considered it |
| Jennifer | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | Unlikely |
| Fionn | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | Yes |
| Oisín | Y, AP | Reached level of interest | No interest |
| Bill | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | Possibly |
| Marie | Y, AP | Reached level of interest | No interest |
| Patricia | N | Yes | Never considered it |
| Cathal | N | Yes | Never considered it |
| Seán | N | Yes | Yes |
| Emmet | N | Yes | Yes |
| Caitríona | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | No interest |
| Eileen | Y, SD | Yes, AP post | No interest |
| Dan | Y, AP | Reached level of interest | No interest |

Of the four interviewees that already held a senior management role within their own school none indicated that they were interested in further promotion to one of the two most senior positions within their own school (post of principal or deputy principal) and none expressed any interest in seeking promotion within the system.

Of the six interviewees who already held a post within the middle management structure all six respondents indicated an interest in seeking a further promotion within their own schools but only to the level of Assistant Principal, four of this grouping did not demonstrate interest in

acquiring promotion within the wider system with two respondents stating that they were open to considering seeking such a promotion.

Of the eight interviewees who did not hold a promotional post within their own schools all were interested in acquiring a promotional post within their own schools with two of this group definitely interested in the possibility of considering promotion within the wider system, a further two members of this group would consider the possibility of seeking a promotion within the system, one interviewee had no interest in such a promotion and three of the interviewees had never given any consideration to such a possibility.

The final question posed in the profile the interviewees related to the interviewees' personal lives. It focussed on identifying the interviewees' commitments either family or social. The question posed was:

Would you mind outlining your commitments, family or otherwise, outside of school life?

The data generated is presented in Table 5.5.

The responses highlight the significant levels of family and social commitment the interviewees had outside of their working life. The terms *limited*, *very limited* and *extensive* are used to categorise the qualitative statements used in response to these questions. By *limited* I mean that the teacher has either some commitments outside of the home including commitments to sporting organisations or other social and cultural groups or that they expressed the view that they had little time available to them to engage in activities outside of the home. By *very limited* I mean that the teachers had hardly any commitments to social, cultural or sporting activities outside of the home or very little discretionary time available to them outside of their commitments in the home. I use the phrase *extensive* to mean a large number of commitments to social, cultural or sporting activities outside the home.

Nine of the interviewees were not in a relationship but of these six considered their social commitments to sporting clubs, organizations and other out of school activities as extensive with the remaining three of this grouping describing their social commitments as limited.

Table 5.5 Personal circumstances in relation to family and social commitments

| Participant | Family Commitments | Social Commitments | Availability of Free /Personal Time |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Aileen | Relationship, adult children | Limited | Limited |
| Caithlín | Relationship, young and teenage children | Extensive | Very Limited |
| John | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Eddie | Relationship, no children | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Liam | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Orlaith | Single | Limited | Limited |
| Jennifer | Relationship, young children | Very Limited | Very Limited |
| Fionn | Relationship, young children | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Oisín | Relationship, young children | Very Limited | Very Limited |
| Bill | Single | Limited | Limited |
| Marie | Single | Limited | Limited |
| Patricia | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Cathal | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Seán | Relationship, young children | Limited | Very Limited |
| Emmet | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Caitríona | Relationship, young children | Very Limited | Very Limited |
| Eileen | Single | Extensive | Very Limited |
| Dan | Relationship, adult children | Extensive | Very Limited |

Of those in a relationship (nine interviewees) four described their social commitments as extensive, two as limited and three as very limited. Of the 18 interviewees 14 described the availability of free or personal time as very limited with the remaining four describing it as limited. This data generated a snapshot of teachers' lives outside of school which demonstrates low levels of discretionary time available to them to engage in other activities and should CPD be only available outside of the school time that it would clearly be in competition with a range of other activities.

The interviews moved to establish the teachers' personal views on how CPD is considered by colleagues in their respective schools and to identify what their own personal attitudes to CPD were. Two questions were posed to all interviewees:

- (1) How would you describe the general attitude to professional development in your school?
- (2) What are your own personal attitudes to professional development?

All of the interviewees stated that, in general, they felt that the attitude to professional development amongst their colleagues was positive with the caveat expressed by all eighteen interviewees that there were exceptions to this amongst a very small minority (not quantified) of colleagues in each of the schools. The following selection of comments demonstrate how the interviewees classified the attitude to CPD in their own schools.

Seán commented that:

we have a brilliant staff by in large but you'd always have, as in every walk of life, those who are not interested and our school is no exception, it's hard to say why, but they don't have any interest in CPD or in anything else either, could be more about them rather than their jobs, some of them (colleagues) are in a rut, they don't like teaching, some of them don't like young people, but they have no way out.

Dan commented that:

in our school you generally get a very positive response to CPD if it is focussed on something that deals with the everyday situation, you'd always hear the positive comments afterwards if the speaker has focussed on real-life situations, it's what we all can relate to, it usually only goes wrong when the speaker is away in the clouds and you know that they probably wouldn't last a day in the classroom, we've been very selective in picking the speakers and the topics, we put a lot of work into it to make it a success because if it is focussed then it generates enthusiasm for the next session

Jennifer commented that:

I never really hear of people complaining about attending their subject based CPD but some do give out about the whole staff sessions. It took us time to agree our own mission statement not to talk about developing whole school policies. There are those who are still sceptical regarding the whole school, particularly if it has got to do with mission and vision, some people just don't like that kind of stuff and I don't think they ever will, they much prefer talking about the code of behaviour.

Emmet commented that:

we've got a great group in my subject departments and we love going to the sessions on our subjects, you always come back with new ideas and particularly with regard to the use of ICT in the classroom and very importantly anything with regards to the exams gets our full attention. I'd also say that a lot of ours like the whole staff sessions because we have so little opportunity to come together as a staff to discuss

things. I know that many in our school think that the thematic approach to CPD like SDP is a far better use of time than the way they said the staff meetings used to be conducted, usually no progress but increased frustration. SDP has given a structure to the way we need to discuss our issues and yes it has been very beneficial.

Marie commented that:

I'd say that the vast majority are positively disposed to CPD, if for nothing else it gives you a chance to think and listen, things we don't do that often normally, yes, I think that most people are in favour of CPD, particularly in school time, it could be a different story if you asked me about CPD in a person's own time.

It was evident that the teachers considered their colleagues to have, by in large, a very positive disposition to CPD. Sentiments were expressed regarding the challenge that exists to motivate all teachers to participate and to contribute however there was also an air of resignation regarding participation with the prevailing attitude being that with the majority being positively disposed then change could be effected and development achieved.

The second of this set of questions sought to move from the collective attitude and to identify the teachers' own attitudes to CPD. This section of the interviews generated an extensive response from all of the participants. The following selection of comments demonstrate that CPD is deemed as important to the teachers however, it was also evident in their responses that the teachers differentiated between in-school CPD and that which was offered during the teachers' own time.

Aileen commented that:

Yes, I believe in CPD both subject based and whole school, I believe that if we are in the business of promoting learning then we need to be engaged in learning ourselves, nothing stays the same, we have to keep up with the changes, it's only fair on our pupils that they get the best of what is on offer.

John commented that:

One of the great things regarding the IT aspect of my school life is that it is new, it has the attractiveness and I'd say many of the IT teachers are heavily involved in CPD because the pupils are so into it, they're nearly ahead of us on all the new developments but they love it, it's their world. I think that it is a pity that more teachers haven't the confidence to use more IT in the classroom, yes it is improving but I am delighted that it's my subject area, there's some new aspect coming on stream all the time and the grant assistance for IT in schools is great.

The issue of time was raised with the sense that out of school CPD was very much in competition with the teachers' other commitments and the limited availability of CPD activities in close proximity to where the teachers worked had an impact on their level of engagement in CPD.

Eddie commented that:

Yeah, I think CPD is important and I participate when I can, it's a bit unstructured though and I'm so busy in other aspects of my life that I find it hard to take on some courses especially if it means having to do it outside of school time. The Geography support team have great ideas and great enthusiasm but it's not always possible for me to get to the events they organise. The new approach to having sessions immediately after school is fine for those who live and work near the Education Centres but you are really talking about adding four hours to your working day and that is not on a regular basis, there's more to life than work.

Jennifer commented that:

I'm in favour of CPD, I think that it keeps you sharp and energised and I do love to do more and more but my problem is that most of the CPD is now being moved to after school hours and that's not on for me. I have a tight timescale to get home collect the kids and start into my other life, by the time they are in bed I'm not able to wag. I can't rely on my hubby to take on the minding in the evening because he travels in his job and doesn't get home till late so I don't bother booking onto any courses, there's no point. I will get back into it though when things change for me.

Fionn commented that:

Yes, I think that it (CPD) is very important, in my subject area we have a super teachers' association who always keep you updated on changes and new ideas, my problem is that I have young children and my wife is also working so it can be difficult to get to meetings unless I plan it ages in advance. I really like the idea of keeping up to date but it's not always practical for some, like those in my situation. If they (DES) continue to eat into the time allocation for school based CPD and subject meetings then I can see that it might be nigh on impossible for me to get to CPD events, I'm already struggling to keep involved with my hurling commitments and I love hurling.

Comments regarding the organisation of CPD were also interwoven within the responses to this question. It was evident that teachers felt that improvements could be made in order to maximise the limited time that was available for in-school CPD.

Oisín, whilst commenting on the importance that he ascribed to CPD commented that:

Some of the whole school days could be better though, I often think that time is wasted on the urgent as opposed to the important but yeah maybe it would be better if each subject department was allowed to organise its own CPD activities, that would be great, I have to say of course that from my point of view it's not acceptable that we should be requested to give up our weekends to do courses, your children are only young once and family time is precious.

Issues related to Trade Union principles also emerged in the data. Marie represented a view emerging within some of the teacher Unions that teachers should be compensated for engaging in CPD outside of school time, she commented that:

As I said earlier I don't think that our involvement is valued, we don't get the financial recognition for participating, I could be at a different course nearly every night and I get the same thanks as the teacher who doesn't bother, that bugs me, I think that an allowance should be awarded if you complete so many hours, that would motivate a lot of those who will only participate if it is held in school, I know it sounds mercenary but I really do think that it is important, one of my brothers is doing an MBA and his company gives him time off to attend and pays his fees and costs, that a positive message to him and keeps him motivated.

Caitríona comments demonstrate the messy reality that is CPD when she spoke of its importance, its benefits but also highlighted the challenges that exist for teachers when they decide to engage in ongoing CPD, she commented that:

in the past number of years I have given a lot of time to CPD in my area, I've completed a grad dip and a masters in special education, this was hard going as I have a young family, I made the time and had great support from my husband and family. I don't think I could have done it only for the fact that I live next to my own family and there was always someone available to mind the kids. Looking back it was great, not the thought of going to the lectures but when you got in there, it was energising, you were with people who were motivated, that can get me at times in school, some of the crew are not interested to the level that they should be and they waste our precious time arguing and debating the little things. I really think that a half day per month the school should close like they used to do for games years ago and have structured slots for CPD, unless it is continuous and planned it becomes less productive because there isn't enough time for the follow through, like everything else time is the issue.

The next section of the interview sought to identify what recent policy initiative the teachers considered as having impacted most on their professional lives in recent years.

The overwhelming majority of interviewees identified two clear issues in relation to national policy and their impact on teachers' lives. The first of these was the introduction of subject inspections and or whole school evaluation.

Caithlín stated that:

I have no doubt but the idea of an inspection had a huge impact on most people's lives, many of us never had such an experience and the thought of it focussed the mind a lot, I know that there was a huge emphasis on getting things on paper but I also think that it impacted on assessment and ensured that the new ideas were being incorporated into the classroom.

The second most identified aspect of National Policy to impact on teachers' lives was a change in a subject syllabus. Bill commented that:

I've had a change in both senior cycle and junior cycle science in recent years and it has had a huge impact on me as a teacher, I had to learn a lot myself and leave go of aspects that I loved, it disrupts you and your teaching rhythm for a while and has a very unsettling impact initially, we're creatures of habit as you know.

Table 5.6 tabulates the responses received to this question. It shows that in 17 out of the 18 interviews conducted that either the revision of a particular syllabus or the inspection of a subject or a whole school evaluation by the inspectorate were dominant as impacts on the teachers' professional lives. The issue of subject inspection or whole school evaluation has been understood in the context of a Trade Union directive, lasting nearly 20 years, to teachers in post-primary schools not to co-operate with the Department of Education and Science's desire to conduct inspections.

Table 5.6 Aspects of National Policy that have an impact on professional life

| Participant | Recent National Policy with greatest impact on professional life |
|-------------|--|
| Aileen | Whole School Evaluation and ICT |
| Caithlín | Whole School Evaluation and Subject Inspections |
| John | Subject Inspections |
| Eddie | Whole School Evaluation |
| Liam | The revised syllabus in Construction Studies |
| Orlaith | The revised syllabus in History |
| Jennifer | Subject Inspection and the revised syllabus for the sciences |
| Fionn | Whole School Evaluation |
| Oisín | The revised syllabus in Construction Studies |
| Bill | The revised syllabus in Junior Science |
| Marie | Subject Inspections and the revised syllabus in Geography |
| Patricia | No issue |
| Cathal | The revised syllabus in Technology |
| Seán | Subject Inspections |
| Emmet | The revised syllabus in History |
| Caitríona | The policy of mainstream education for all |
| Eileen | The focus on social education and subject inspection |
| Dan | Whole school evaluation and school planning |

Furthermore, it is also evident that the absence of structured CPD in Ireland until the early 1990s also implied little or no change to subject syllabi for long periods of time. Thus, the acceptance by the State of CPD as a meaningful activity was accompanied by an extensive overhaul of syllabi across an extensive range of subjects in the post-primary curriculum.

At this juncture in the interview process I sought to determine the teachers' level of knowledge of the role, function and remit of the Teaching Council of Ireland. The first question was used to establish the participants' prior knowledge of the Teaching Council and the second was used to elicit opinion regarding the proposed regulation of CPD by the Teaching Council of Ireland.

The questions posed were:

(1) Are you familiar with the role and function of the Teaching Council of Ireland and in particular its role in relation to CPD?

(2) Do you think it would be a positive step if all teachers were obliged by the Teaching Council to attend ongoing CPD?

The knowledge of the role and function of the Teaching Council amongst the interviewees was negligible with all of the respondents stating that they had little or no knowledge of what the Teaching Council does except for the fact that all teachers had to pay to be registered. None of the interviewees had any prior knowledge of the role of the Teaching Council with regard to CPD.

Question two highlighted the resistance by 15 of the 18 respondents to obligatory CPD in that 15 of the interviewees were adamant that obligation to attend CPD would not be a positive step with three of the interviewees unsure with regard to whether or not it would be a positive step. The following comment represents the general view as expressed by most interviewees when Emmet stated that:

As soon as you bring in a regulation with regard to attendance or completion of a required amount of CPD you'll get people's back up, if they have to they'll go through the motions, sign in or sign on but it won't be meaningful, it'll be a paper exercise. Do you think it's coming in?

The focus of the final section of each interview was to identify what specific influences impact on the interviewees' decision making with regard to engagement with CPD. A single question was posed to each participant:

What influences your decision regarding engagement with CPD both in school time and outside of school time?

Table 5.7 tabulates the general influences raised by the interviewees.

It was very evident that the interviewees' ability to accommodate CPD within the framework of their normal lives influenced their decision making regarding engagement with CPD in the out of school time context. All interviewees addressed the issue of time when speaking about whether or not they chose to engage in CPD in the out of school context but no interviewee mentioned time as a factor when the CPD activity was within school time.

Table 5.7 Influences on decision making regarding participation in CPD

| In School Time CPD | Out of School-Time CPD |
|---|---|
| Theme or focus of the session | Time commitment necessary |
| Appropriateness of the content to day to day teaching | Access to the course venue |
| Perceived benefit to teachers | Content of the programme on offer |
| Group Activity | The prospect of improving classroom effectiveness in relation to mixed ability teaching |
| Development of a collegial spirit | The coming together of teachers of the same subject area |
| Sharing of experiences | Access to new ideas and resources |
| Improvement in school life | Improvement in classroom management skills |

With out of school time CPD the issue of time was closely linked to the issue of access to the CPD venue and again this was represented as a question of the time that would be required to travel to and from the venue. It was only after the issues of time and access (again, represented in terms of time) were outlined by the interviewees that the factors influencing engagement with in-school CPD coalesced with the out of school time CPD. All of the participants stressed that issue of time and its subsequent impact on their personal lives, above all other issues, influenced their decision making regarding engagement in out of school time CPD.

Stage 6 Validation of data with the interviewees

Stage 6 was divided into two parts; the first took place on January 14th 2009 and the second on February 12th 2009. Owing to time constraints it was agreed that all nine interviewees would come together as a group in order to validate the data. As had been agreed the data was represented by means of a fictionalised narrative. The fictionalised narrative (Appendix 5) was distributed to each teacher and each was asked to consider the narrative under the following headings:

Does this narrative represent the issues you raised with me?

.Are there any omissions that you would like to highlight?

Are there any further comments that you would like to make?

The two sessions proved to be completely different and therefore will be addressed separately.

The overall view represented in session one was that the narrative was restricted in the coverage of the range of ideas expressed. Three areas were identified as not receiving adequate attention in the narrative, firstly the teachers felt that it did not convey the high level of commitment that the majority of teachers had to CPD. Secondly, they considered that the narrative did not express their belief that the regulation of attendance at CPD events would be counter-productive with the potential of yielding compliance but not participation rendering it to the status of a mere paper exercise. Thirdly, the teachers felt that how a teacher decides to engage in CPD was not evident in the narrative. However, they felt that that it served a useful purpose in protecting interviewees' identity and presented the core issue of time in a very realistic manner.

Session 2

By the time this session was scheduled the reality of the economic crisis enveloping the country was becoming more and more apparent. The session was dominated by the teachers expressing their outrage at the Government of Ireland's introduction of a pension levy on all

public servants. The sense of anger and outrage was obvious, participants stated that they would not accept such a change in conditions without some form of resistance and stated that cooperation with Departmental initiatives would be the first to suffer. Participants spoke of the need for teachers to unite against such draconian measures as the reduction of grant aid for curricular programmes, the increase in the pupil teacher ratio and the possibility of changing teachers' contracts with regard to the length of time a teacher is required to have class contact each week. Many of the rumours regarding potential cutbacks were aired and the overriding feeling was one of anger and annoyance with the Government. The teachers expressed the opinion that if the pay cuts that were being rumoured were to be implemented in addition to the income levy and the additional pension contribution already imposed that teachers would be unable to meet their financial commitments and that industrial action would be a reality.

The majority of the participants stated that CPD would be targeted by the Teacher Unions and that they would be in support of this course of action. They stressed that it was imperative that any additional work would be compensated for or otherwise the Government would have to forget teacher support for additional non-teaching duties.

Whilst this session proved to be the most difficult and challenging for me personally I realised that I was witnessing a time of turmoil, anger and disillusionment unfolding in front of my eyes. What was apparent was that the interplay between teacher agency and structure was at its most tense and that engagement in CPD, as an aspect of teacher agency, was being considered entirely through the lens of the changing structure, in particular, in relation to pay and conditions. This highlighted the dynamic nature of the decision making process and the permeability of the decision making process to a wide range of influences.

General teacher attitudes to CPD drawn from Stage 7

In order to confirm access to the teachers for the final stage I considered it prudent to consult with all six principals and to invite them to meet with me. Whilst acknowledging the dramatic

change in the industrial relations environment in the schools I sought their support in bringing my field work to a conclusion and asked for their guidance with regard to the fragility of the situation. The principals agreed to allocate a reduced time for the completion of the field work but highlighted that the morale amongst the teachers was declining whilst at the same time the militant mood was on the increase.

Stage 7 was conducted on May 12th 2009. This stage involved two separate meetings of the teachers from each of the two sites. Owing to a reduction in available resources to all schools during this period the time allocation for this session was reduced to two hours per site.

A period of three months had elapsed since Stage 6 had taken place and I had not had a meeting with the majority of the participants since Stage 2 had concluded. An outside venue was again used to facilitate the large numbers in attendance. There was a slight decrease in attendance due to the fact that some teachers were involved in the examination of pupils' coursework in other schools but this was unavoidable.

I delivered a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix 6) and conducted a general plenary session. In both sites the teachers were welcoming and attentive. The presentation was divided into six areas:

1. A statement of my research questions
2. A recap on the field work process
3. A brief comment on the Irish experience of CPD and an introduction to Action Learning and Community of Practice Theory
4. A focus on how I analysed the data generated using my conceptual framework regarding engagement
5. The significant findings and the emerging issues
6. A call for comments or feedback

The feedback was dominated by comments on slides 22 to 25.

In reference to slide 22 there was agreement that the factors identified as influencing teacher engagement with CPD were realistic and reflective of reality. Contributors concurred with the finding that everyday life impacts hugely on teacher engagement with CPD in the out of school time context and that it is the most significant factor.

In relation to slide 23 some contributors highlighted the absolute need for the policy developers to come %down from their ivory towers+and to accept that meaningful engagement with CPD is contingent on the factors highlighted and is more about teacher and school self-evaluation than the development of programmes and courses from afar.

In relation to slide 24 most contributors felt that in-school strategies identified were highly aspirational and most unlikely in this time of contraction of resources and teacher dismay at the cutbacks in education. With regard to the strategies recommended from a systemic point of view contributors identified them as relevant and necessary but again felt that the current chaotic financial climate would militate against their implementation.

In relation to slide 25 a number of participants expressed the view that the option may not exist in the near future for any funding for CPD and that it would be necessary for teachers to return to learning from each other in the informal context. This view was echoed by a number of teachers and in particular it came from those who had significant service completed.

This stage concluded with my expression of my deep appreciation to all for their generosity of spirit and their willingness to assist me in my journey.

Summary

The model of engagement (Figure 2.2) used to guide this empirical work focussed on unveiling new understandings in relation to the factors that influence teachers' decision making regarding engagement in CPD. What emerged from this study was that the majority of teachers value CPD as a valid activity in their professional lives and that in the majority of

cases the teachers had positive experiences of both whole school and subject based CPD. What emerged as highly significant was the tension surrounding the location of CPD within the overall restricted time scale available in Irish post-primary schools. Teachers hold a strong traditional union stance that CPD ought to be available during school time and that the location of CPD in an out of school context was viewed by most as an intrusion into their own personal discretionary time. The tension between the interplay of teacher agency and structure with regards to CPD emerged as a power play between the desire of the state to host CPD outside of school time and the teachers' view that it was a core aspect of their agency and hence should be located within their working week.

Interestingly, those teachers with leadership roles within the schools find themselves as peacemakers in the middle of a conflict not of their own making. It is evident from this research that the development of the provision of CPD in Ireland as a central policy within the educational framework was not matched with the necessary changes in school calendar or teacher contract that would expedite the provision of CPD. Towards the latter part of this fieldwork the impact of the financial crisis became more apparent and teachers' attitudes towards CPD as a core aspect of their agency hardened in that they stressed with greater force the need to retain their conditions including CPD as part of their pay and conditions.

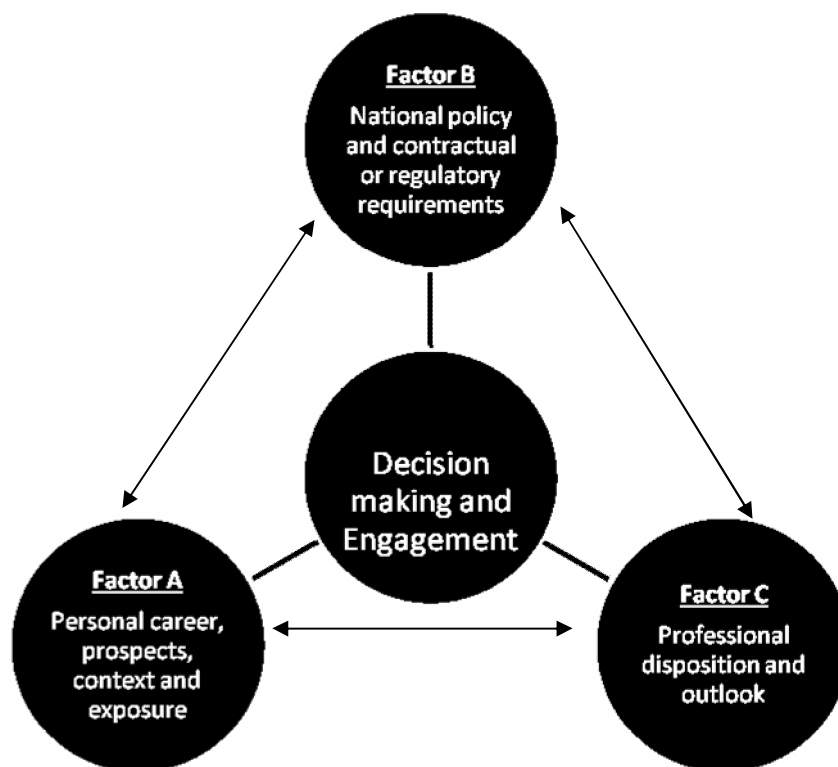
The next chapter focuses on an analysis of these findings supported by the literatures on CPD and practitioner learning. It draws out the learning regarding the factors that impact on teacher engagement with CPD and what this means for the development of the model of engagement in CPD.

Chapter 6- Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This thesis has focused on an exploration of post-primary teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence their decisions to engage in CPD and what this means for CPD and professional practice in Ireland. The data collection process involved listening to, analysing and identifying perspectives in different contextualised settings; i.e. whole staffs, members of the senior management teams and individual teachers. This process was guided by a model of what I term *engagement*, developed from Scribner (1999), see Figure 6.1.

Fig.6.1 The factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD.



The process involved individual interviews, group interviews and presentations/workshops developed to address the factors outlined in the model.

This model problematises decision making regarding engagement with CPD by considering three sets of factors that potentially impact on teachers' decision making regarding engagement; (1) personal career prospects, context and exposure, (2) national policy and contractual or regulatory requirements and (3) professional disposition and outlook.

Questions were developed appropriate to each factor (See Chapter 4) and in Chapter 5 I presented a descriptive account of the data gathered through the seven stages of the process. This chapter aims to move beyond description where we want to interpret, to understand, to explain (Gray, 2004, p 327) through analysing and giving meaning to the data gathered, by teasing out the patterns, themes and groupings in the data so that some generalisations can be drawn.

With this in mind, attention is initially given to the central aspect of the model of engagement; namely the decision making process. This is followed by a typology of engagement which presents engagement as an action which is either elective or mandatory depending on the varying levels of choice that can be exercised by the decision maker. I then proceed to offer a separate examination of the findings in relation to each of the three factors identified in the model of *engagement*, leading to my conclusions and a developed model of engagement which addresses *the* factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD. In carrying out this analysis, I frequently relate my interpretations to those of Sugrue (2004), whose research is the most recent and relevant evidence in relation to the aims of this project.

Decision Making and Engagement

In Figure 6.1 the central tenet of the model is called *Decision Making and Engagement* and by this I mean the interplay between teacher agency and structure in relation to CPD, where teachers exercise control in the decision making process and have the capacity to respond to, and impact on the factors that influence their decision making regarding engagement in CPD.

Decision making is an aspect of everyday human existence, teachers, like other people are required to make many decisions on a continual basis in the course of their working and

personal day. Consequently, the examination of the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD is inextricably linked to an understanding of the decision making process that a teacher adopts.

Decision-making is a process that can be analysed in a number of ways and hence the method of analysis chosen can influence the variables that are considered. The two main approaches to the analysis of decision-making considered were the recognitional and analytical models. Recognitional decision-making is a model of how people make quick, effective decisions when faced with complex situations. In this model, the decision maker is assumed to generate a possible course of action, compare it to the constraints imposed by the situation, and select the first course of action that is not rejected and so relies on the decision maker's experience. Analytical decision-making is a process that allows one to include all the factors and criteria, tangible and intangible that have bearing on making a best decision and hence has a more in-depth deliberation than the recognitional approach. As teacher professional development is located in the naturalistic setting where justification of an action or inaction is not required a recognitional approach to analysing decision-making was adopted.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study decision making is conceptualised as requiring a *situation assessment*, where a person considers the *problem* and the *alternatives* and selects a plausible *course of action* in line with their expectation of the *outcome*. Within the range of plausible *courses of action* rests the possibility of the *status quo* where the person may decide to do nothing or to maintain their current or previous decision. Either way, what is evident is that decision making is not a static act but a process of acting and reacting on the basis of a number of variables including prior experience, values and beliefs, motivation, impact on self and other stakeholders and comparison between competing issues.

Having generated options, including the option of inaction, people modify their potential decisions to meet the needs of their particular situation. Crucially, this conceptualisation of the decision making process evolves around the core principle of the element of choice, hence,

locating decision making as the most deliberate and voluntaristic element of social conduct+ (Etzioni, 1967, p 385). Within this voluntary conduct lies the potential for people to decide without deliberation, that is, a person may engage because it is the socially accepted thing to do. This type of engagement does not infer active participation but addresses the issue of *presence* as opposed to *absence* and may feature, in particular, when the engagement has been called for by a person in authority and where real choice does not exist.

As such this has raised crucial clarifying questions, firstly, where choice regarding engagement in CPD can be exercised, what are the factors that present as having the greatest influence on teachers' decision making and secondly, to what extent are teachers without choice and therefore compelled to follow a course of action set by forces beyond their control as is the case for the teachers involved in the empirical part of this study whose schools' Trustees had decided to amalgamate the schools without consulting the teachers in the schools (see Chapter 3).

Consequently, as seen in Chapter 2 the decision to engage or not to engage is complex and non-linear and the research findings support a further development of the model through the consideration of a typology of engagement (Table 6.1) which claims that engagement in CPD is an action which ranges from mandatory engagement within school time, determined by extrinsic institutional directives, to elective engagement outside of school time, determined by social-psychological factors such as preferences, attitudes and beliefs.

Both types of engagement have the potential to deliver outcomes that range from scepticism, which in turn may lead to disengagement or non-engagement, through to enthusiasm, commitment and full participation, which may lead to repeat engagement.

Table 6.1 A Typology of Engagement

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Engagement an action of: | Elective Engagement (Outside of school time) | Intrinsic Controls Beliefs Attitudes Values | Leading to | Varying levels of: | With the potential outcome of: |
| | Mandatory Engagement (In-school time) | Extrinsic Controls Directives Motivators | | Participation | Further Engagement |
| | | | | Commitment | Dis- engagement |
| | | | | Enthusiasm | |
| | | | | Scepticism | Non- engagement |

The data generated in Stages 1 and 2 are helpful in illustrating this typology of engagement. The vast majority of the teachers adhered to the extrinsic directives of the state by being *present* at the in-school CPD but the outcomes varied with, on the one hand, the majority of teachers stating that they engaged, participated and considered the CPD activities to be beneficial, yet on the other hand there was a minority of teachers who were *present* at in school CPD events but stated that they were sceptical and questioning of the benefits of participation in whole school CPD. Significantly, the data suggest that the level of presence decreases significantly when the focus is on out-of-school CPD with issues such as time and access being raised as the key factors influencing decision making regarding engagement. However, significant emphasis was placed by this minority on what was seen as the right of teachers to have their professional development included as part of their working week. Whilst the data suggest it to be a minority position it also appears to be a very powerful issue in the dynamic that exists between the teachers. The issue of CPD within the working week was linked by its advocates to their notion of teacher professional identity and presented as a battle cry in the retention of societal value of teaching and teachers. This tension was further underlined by the reluctance of those involved in the group interviews and the one-to-one

interviews of having their opinions linked to them as individuals, this micro-political milieu exuded issues of control and power, of traditional stances and how they are used to exercise control over the agency of a substantial number of teachers.

What follows is an analysis of the data collected in relation to the three factors identified as having potential influence on the decision making process and the data are distilled using the conceptualisation of the decision making process and the typology of engagement as offered. In particular the data generated from the one-to-one interviews will be used and supplemented by data from the general sessions and the group interviews with members of the senior management teams to examine teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the factors that influence their personal decision making regarding engagement in CPD.

Factor A- Personal career and prospects, context and exposure

The first of the factors considered to have potential influence on teacher decisions regarding engagement with CPD is entitled Factor A: Personal Career and Prospects, Context and Exposure. This factor contains three aspects which are aimed at profiling teachers and identifying their views regarding CPD. Firstly, Factor A examines the context within which the teachers are working i.e. their subject area and qualifications, their length of service and their exposure to other school environments. Secondly, it considers the issue of promotion within the system and its potential as an influence on engagement in CPD. Furthermore, it offers data on teachers' views regarding the discretionary time available to them for professional development in comparison to their family obligations and or other social commitments. Finally, Factor A seeks to establish the teachers' own views of CPD as they have experienced it and their views as to what they believe their colleagues' attitudes to CPD are.

The analysis of the data generated under this heading shows that half of the 18 teachers interviewed in Phase 4 of the data gathering process were still teaching in the school of their first appointment having, on average, 15.6 years experience in their current posts (See Tables 5.3, 5.4). Of this grouping, the majority had already gained a promotional post within their schools' management structure although, interestingly, less than half of those who had

gained promotion had engaged in additional third level qualifications, with none acquiring specific management related qualifications.

One third of the teachers interviewed had only taught in one other school and had on average 9.5 years teaching experience. Of this grouping, exactly half had already gained a promotional post within their schools management structure and within this grouping just under one fifth had engaged in acquiring an additional third level qualification but, as in the case of the first grouping, none had acquired a specific management related qualification.

Less than one fifth of the teachers interviewed had taught in two other schools and had on average 9.3 years teaching experience. None had already gained a promotional post within their school or had engaged in acquiring an additional third level qualification of any kind.

This data suggest that engagement in CPD to the level of a recognised qualification, or experience in other educational settings, may have little or no impact on teachers chances of acquiring a promotional post in the current promotional system. Rather, length of service in the same school seems to be a more significant factor in gaining promotion within the current promotional structures. However, this has to be viewed within the context of promotion procedures in the Irish system (due to be phased out over a period of the next eight years), where, recognition of service rendered within a school is given a high weighting. Indeed, the selection process is structured so that a candidate's length of service in a particular school outweighs a candidate's acquisition of additional qualifications; the thrust of the selection process is the selection of the most *senior suitable* candidate, with selection boards advised that seniority takes precedence in that all teachers are deemed suitable for the duties. In addition to this is the reality that of all of the middle and senior management roles in Irish post-primary schools only two - that of Principal and Deputy Principal- are advertised outside of a school community, with all other promotional posts being confined to in-school applicants only.

I found little evidence that suggested a direct relationship between teacher engagement in CPD and the participants' expectations with regard to their careers and their promotional prospects into the future. Of the teachers interviewed who did not already hold a promotional post in their schools all of them believed that a promotional pathway already existed for them in their schools and therefore the acquisition of additional qualifications or engagement in CPD did not feature as an issue for them with regard to promotion.

This level of certainty regarding in-school promotion as a feature of a teacher's career pathway - weighted towards service as opposed to suitability - was further underlined by the fact that all of the teachers interviewed who had already gained promotion had set personal limits with regard to the level of seniority they wished to achieve. Only a small minority of this cohort indicated that they had any interest in seeking further promotion.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that this sense of almost certainty amongst teachers of achieving a promotional post at some stage in their careers implies that career prospects has little or no bearing on teachers' decisions to engage in CPD, as the process, as it is currently constructed, does not see this as a requirement. This however will change in the years to come as the recognition of service as a criterion is to be abolished by 2018.

Discretionary time

I went on to address the impact of family and social commitments on the teachers' engagement with CPD, and, related to this was the establishment of the level of *discretionary time* available to teachers. In Chapter 5 Table 5.5 I provided details of the teachers' responses to this agenda. What was striking was that three quarters of those interviewed described the availability of free or personal or discretionary time as very limited with the other quarter describing it as limited. In the main teachers described very busy professional and personal lives, with extensive commitments either to family or social activities. It is reasonable to conclude therefore that the scheduling of CPD is important if the aim is to attract a wide audience. CPD scheduled by providers in the after-work context is clearly competing with an

array of other personal and social issues that render it at an immediate disadvantage, as teachers are already committed to family issues or other allegiances.

The whole issue of time emerged, therefore, as a key theme. As presented in Stage 1 the inadequate time allocation for CPD as part of school life was raised as one of the aspects of the current CPD structure that was not yet working well, however it was also classified as the top ranking of the four areas that teachers felt was not open to change in the future. Similarly, during Stage 3, the issue of time was raised by members of the senior management teams, with the facilitation of whole-staff CPD through school closure and the release of teachers to attend subject specialist training in external venues being identified as hugely problematic on a number of fronts. Senior Managers felt torn between the professional needs of their staffs and the parental pressures exerted for efficient and uninterrupted educational provision for their children.

All of this suggests that the scheduling of CPD requires far greater attention and consideration. With regard to in-school CPD the findings support the recommendation that all parties, DES, Management Bodies and Teacher Unions should review the structure of the school day, the number of days that teachers are contracted to teach, and the number of days that could be allocated under contract to CPD. This restructuring would allow for both teaching days and non-teaching days (CPD and planning) to be agreed and thus individual teacher and whole staff attendance could be arranged during the agreed allocation of days in contrast to the current situation where planning is limited to one school day per year of the 168 school days and all other days are classified as teaching days. In the case of out-of-school CPD, I conclude that greater use of ICT through increased availability of online courses, video conferencing, virtual learning environments and web based portals may improve access for those teachers who have significant other commitments that render their discretionary time to be limited or very limited preventing them from attending sessions at specific locations and at specific times.

Personal attitudes

Finally, in relation to Factor A, I identified the teachers' personal attitudes to CPD and uncovered the general attitude to CPD amongst their colleagues (see Chapter 5, Stage 4). What was initially most striking from the findings was that the teachers referred almost exclusively to their earlier experiences of CPD. Indeed, their views and opinions regarding CPD rarely moved beyond their earlier experiences of CPD or they used general statements of the importance of CPD. There was little or no discussion that relied more on a conceptual or philosophical framework regarding the relevance of CPD or the need for a professional body to engage in CPD. This finding is supported by Knight (2002) who argues that teachers tend to normalise CPD as a means to address the changes that they face and not view CPD as Dadds (1997) argues as a fundamental principle of a teacher's work. This might be better understood in relation to Kelchtermans (2004) argument that 'teacher learning at a certain moment in time can only be properly understood against the background of earlier experiences' (p 224) and that teachers, in the main, comment on CPD on the basis of their own experience of it and how it addresses the challenges they are currently meeting such as syllabus change or change in assessment techniques.

In the main, I found that teachers' evaluations of their experience of CPD were very positive. Many expressed this high level of satisfaction, citing the quality of the experiences that they had across a range of subject-based and whole-school targeted CPD programmes that were available to them (see Chapter 5, Stages 4 and 6). The findings demonstrate that, in the main, teachers, either subject based or in management roles, considered the level and quality of CPD provision to be beneficial to schools. The teachers repeatedly cited the professionalism of the facilitators they had worked with and the very high quality of their delivery as significant aspects of their experiences. Some also commented on the design of a number of the CPD opportunities praising the activity based learning elements of certain programmes which, in their opinion, was respectful of teachers' experience and prior knowledge (See Chapter 5, Stages 3 and 4).

The majority of teachers expressed satisfaction with the range of CPD available to them (See Stages 1 and 2). This finding is in line with Sugrue's (2004) assertion that the 'opportunities for learning -formal and informal-both inside and outside the school have increased exponentially in most jurisdictions+(p 71). Although my findings support Sugrue's (2004) argument regarding an increase in the level of opportunity for CPD, some potentially significant issues regarding equity of access were highlighted by a number of the teachers. For example, concerns were raised regarding the centralisation of many of the CPD opportunities and the increased difficulty this poses for teachers in rural locations and those teachers who had significant commitments outside of school time.

Whilst recognition of, and appreciation for, the quality, quantity, breadth and scope of CPD provision is present in the findings, what is not evidenced, is if this has anything more than just a minimal impact on teachers' decisions regarding engagement with CPD in particular with regard to engagement with out-of-school CPD. In this regard, I concluded that a 'personal interpretative framework+(Kelchtermans, 2004, p 224) guided the discussion regarding engagement, in that, invariably, it emerged that engagement in CPD is more likely to be judged on the potential personal impact as opposed to the professional impact. The data suggest that there was limited, if any, developed reasoning regarding the potential professional benefits to engagement in CPD particularly in the out-of-school context.

The influence of national policy discourse, such as the rhetoric of lifelong learning, or the development of reflective capacities, did not emerge as significant influences in the decision making process. Rather, almost universally, engagement in CPD in an-out-of school context was, by and large, reduced to the realm of possibility as opposed to probability with increased workload and teachers' feelings of being overburdened cited as the main reasons for not engaging in out-of-school CPD.

What was evident in the data was that some teachers expressed the view that certain national CPD initiatives had placed increased demands on teachers in Irish post-primary schools. In particular, the area of whole school development planning was singled out as beneficial in

many ways but, as has been noted by Sugrue (2004), who also shows that it placed impossible demands on time as a very finite resource as well as on the energy levels of teachers, often with negative consequences for their motivation and commitment+(pp.77-78).

Whilst the findings identify a *tug-of-war* between, on the one hand, the recognition of the merits of CPD, and on the other the timing of CPD, they also suggest that the exposure to CPD experienced by teachers in Ireland since its formal inception in 1993 has predominantly focussed on the management of the curriculum and the furtherance of the state's agenda of accountability. This is corroborated by Sugrue (2004), who argues that the programme of CPD available is predominantly subject based or whole school based, and has been driven by an agenda set by the state. Interestingly, the issue of personal development was raised by a number of the respondents (See Chapter 5, Stage 1, Theme 4). Commenting on similar themes, albeit in a different national context, Day (1999) suggests that planning of personal and professional development need to go hand in hand. He argues for a:

balance of learning and development opportunities which at any given time might be focussed predominantly upon personal need (of the teacher as a human being), and long-term professional need (of the teacher as a member of a learner community of professionals), as well as practitioner need and the needs of a particular school (p 112).

The teachers, in the main, did not feel that they have experienced this balance of provision; that is to say, they have not yet experienced CPD which is more than just partially responsive to either teacher identified or locally determined whole school needs. Furthermore, many were anxious that personal development would also form part of the policy agenda in the future.

In the context of this research, therefore, the concept of teacher exposure to CPD appeared to be restricted to that of curriculum change and the accountability agenda. Hence it had little or no impact on decision making with regard to engagement outside of the fact that teachers view specific courses as beneficial for the transfer of skills or classroom tricks or gives them an increased appreciation of the change in assessment processes applied in the state examinations. It is, however, possible that due to the enforced amalgamation in these schools

that the teachers have a sense of powerlessness in the amalgamation process are venting their disapproval by disengaging in CPD.

In summary, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of teachers are positively disposed and have shared good experiences of CPD during their careers with their colleagues.

However, their engagement has to be seen in relation to two distinct categories, i.e. CPD that is conducted in school time with which they readily engage and CPD which is elective and organised after school, where their engagement is considered through the personal lens and in the context of their own discretionary time. Furthermore, it is clear that the promotional system, in not seeking CPD as a requirement, has little or no influence on teachers' decisions regarding engagement in CPD.

Factor B- National policy and contractual or regulatory requirements

I examined what recent policy initiatives, with their associated CPD activities, undertaken by the DES had impacted most on teachers' professional lives. All of the teachers identified either initiatives with regard to individual subject inspection, combined with the introduction of whole school evaluation (WSE) or the introduction by the DES of revised syllabi in many subject areas, as the recent policy initiatives that had impacted most on their professional lives and also increased the need for them to attend CPD activities (See Chapter 5, Table 5.6).

These findings are best considered in the context of Callan's (2006) description of schooling and teaching-learning practices in Ireland as embedded in 'organisational settings that have been conditioned by socio-historical and cultural systems' (p.6). So, in this instance, the fact that the teachers viewed the DES initiative of WSE as hugely significant gives an insight into schools' history and culture and their relationship heretofore with the State. The majority of post-primary schools in Ireland are privately owned and run by religious orders or trusts (see Chapter 2). In these schools the State provides the necessary financial support, details the curriculum and has established an examinations commission to oversee the national assessment procedures. However, the State has limited control over the internal operations

and the teaching and learning practices in these schools and there has been relatively little accountability to the taxpayer since the publication of the Education Act in 1998 and the subsequent introduction of WSE.

This research supports the claim that this sea change in public accountability, allied to the corresponding increase in the provision of CPD opportunities in areas such as development planning and subject planning, have prompted significant increase in engagement by teachers in school-based CPD designed to address these particular areas. However, the fact remains that the average number of days of professional development in Ireland (5.6) still remains the lowest of all TALIS countries (Gillece et al. 2009, p 48). There is no evidence in this research to suggest that this increase in engagement is pronounced in the category of out-of-school time CPD activities. In fact the findings lead me to conclude that participation levels in out-of- school hours CPD is dominated, not by the quality of the CPD or by the efforts of the state in promoting engagement, but by the actual geographical proximity of the CPD event to the individual teacher.

Whilst internationally it seems that policy has taken a direction where there is an increasing trend to an audit society (Groundwater-Smith and Dadds, 2004 p 259) in which Governments are holding those responsible for the delivery of services to be accountable in ways which eschew professional judgement (p 259), there is evidence in my findings that suggest that national policy in Ireland has adopted a less stringent audit culture, one that is more invitational than directive regarding accountability. National policy in Ireland espouses the need for a well informed and resourced teacher cohort engaging in school review and development planning (Government of Ireland, 1999) but does not make it obligatory for schools to engage in the CPD developed to support such activities. This is reflective of the longstanding culture of support for teachers and education in Ireland and a system where individual teacher evaluation does not exist. The only reference to CPD that can be made public is whether or not a school has a CPD plan and if it is deemed to be extensive enough to meet the changing environment.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Irish Government's national policy in relation to CPD is less directive and more facilitative of its teachers than that which is found in other jurisdictions. However the evidence from this research suggests that national CPD policy still falls short of a coherent, coordinated and connected policy (see Chapter 5, Stage 1). Consequently, teachers consider themselves to be driven as opposed to be driving the agenda and believe themselves to be as, Sugrue (2004) argues, 'relatively powerless to shape their own and their pupils' futures in the face of prescriptive government-led or . driven reform agendas' (p 69).

The findings of this research have illustrated how many of the teachers desire to be consulted and have a voice in the content and delivery of CPD. They, therefore, want to retain a degree of control over decision making, with a number of the teachers proposing the devolution of CPD to the local level, as opposed to its current centralised location (See Stage 2). What has emerged as significant is that the teachers recognised the globalisation of educational policy and practices and the movement towards accountability, they nevertheless, espoused a desire to retain their professional independence and autonomy and to be central to the identification of their own CPD needs and not lead by national policy alone (See Stage 2)

I went on to establish the teachers' prior knowledge with regard to the role and function of the Teaching Council of Ireland, and, in particular, to ascertain their understanding of its role with regard to CPD. In the main, I found an absence of a realisation amongst teachers that the 'gap' or area of 'uncontrolled movement' between their professional role as teachers and the governance of this role is, in reality, narrowing. Indeed, the lack of the teachers' prior knowledge and understanding of the provisions of *The Teaching Council of Ireland Act (2001)* was very disturbing. Not one teacher was aware that the Act contained sections where the Council has the power to 'review and accredit programmes relating to the continuing education and training of teachers' (Section 39.2 (c)) and to 'perform such other functions in relation to the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers as may be assigned to the Council by the Minister' (Section 39, 2 (d)).

The data suggest that the teachers considered the Teaching Council as nothing more than an agency that maintains a register of qualified teachers. They were totally unaware that the Government, by means of legislation, had already the power to mandate and control teacher CPD through the provisions of the Teaching Council of Ireland Act (2001).

The findings show that regulatory requirement (although not fully enacted) regarding engagement in CPD has little or no impact on teachers' decision making. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers flatly rejected any imposition of mandatory CPD by any regulatory body such as the Teaching Council of Ireland. This suggests that there will be significant opposition to mandatory CPD should it be introduced.

Similarly, there was no evidence demonstrating any contractual influence on teachers' decisions to engage with CPD. It is the case that the Irish educational contractual landscape makes no reference to any teacher- irrespective of their position in a school- having to engage, or even having to consider engaging, with CPD. The contractual terms and conditions focus primarily upon the number of teaching hours per week, the subjects that the teacher would be engaged to teach and the possible extra-curricular activities that the teacher would conduct as a member of the staff of the school. There is no statement within teacher contracts in Ireland where teacher learning is expressed at a minimum as a legitimate activity not to mention as a contractual obligation. The situation - intended or not- is that current contractual obligations have no bearing on teachers' decisions regarding engagement with CPD.

Factor C- Professional disposition and outlook

In relation to Factor C, I asked the teachers to identify influences on their decision to engage with CPD, both in-school and out-of -school (Table 5.7). Again, I found that in the case of out-of-school CPD the single most important issue was that of time. Indeed, all of the teachers placed the required time commitment as the number one factor that influenced them when deciding whether or not to engage. It is significant that it was only after the issue of time and

access to the CPD event; which when explored involved the time required to travel to and from the event, did the factors that influence engagement in CPD during-school and outside-of-school converge. It was at this point that factors such as course content, expected outcomes and networking opportunities were cited as influential. Therefore the findings suggest that the teachers' own personal circumstances and discretionary time have the most significant influence on their decision to engage with elective CPD.

It is important to note, however, that the findings demonstrate that many of the teachers were willing to problematise their practice and to develop new forms and ways of thinking about their practice. However, the findings suggest that, in the case of the majority of the participants, their willingness to engage in professional development to support the issues that they have identified is almost certainly only guaranteed when the CPD is organised within their working day. Primarily, the majority of the teachers emphasised repeatedly their wish to have a specific allocation of appropriate time within their working day to participate in CPD activities.

There was also evidence of a connection between the allocation of time for teachers for in-school CPD, and their own self image and sense of position in society. The teachers regularly presented the allocation of in-school time as an essential component of their professional work. There was no evidence to suggest that it was a matter of great concern to the teachers if their schools had to close on occasions, or if teachers had to be released from teaching duties to attend CPD events. This was, in their opinion, a requirement for the system to work and to be meaningful and beneficial. Interestingly, this stands in contradiction to Sugrue's (2004) research into primary teachers' opinions of the six days compulsory CPD, where he states that 'teachers are increasingly embarrassed to inform parents of yet another closure and further erosion of teaching time' (p 80).

However, it would appear that the teachers in this research were adhering to a long held trade union position in Irish post-primary education regarding the allocation of time for CPD within the working week. Whether or not it was a conviction held personally by all teachers, or a

collective stance as a result of their membership of the community of unionised teachers, it emerged as a central factor with regard to whole staff decision making around participation in CPD.

Interestingly this stance concurs with Hartnett and Carr (1995), who argue that teachers do not work and reflect in a social vacuum; they act within institutions, structures and processes which have a past and a social momentum (p 41). The data suggest that the teachers were active agents within their institutions and that they had embraced many of the new methodologies and system requirements and that they, as practitioners, recognised that their agency was governed by structures, processes and a social momentum. At the same time, it was evident that the teachers were involved in a major ongoing struggle with what they saw as the gap between their agency and the state's desire to apply a rigour to their structure that is attempting to locate CPD as an activity that is conducted primarily outside of their teaching time.

Whilst the classroom teachers lay claim to the absolute need for CPD to be available during the working week it was apparent that the management of CPD during school time poses a major organisational headache for those teachers in senior management roles. It was evident that the senior management team believed that CPD was beneficial to student outcomes and improved teaching and learning however, they continually found themselves having to defend the absence of teachers attending CPD to irate parents. The teachers in senior management roles were adamant that the structure as currently constituted was not working for them and placing them in a situation of potential ongoing conflict with both teachers and parents.

Similarly, the changed financial environment with the associated cuts in public service salary and increased pension costs impacted on the whole area of CPD. It was evident that this was an additional filament on the lens through which the teachers viewed engagement in out of school CPD, with it being used as a means of protest by the teachers against the pay cuts that they had begun to experience. What is emerging as a result of this financial crisis is that the extensive supports for professional development are simply unaffordable and this will

prove to be very challenging for the concept on ongoing professional learning and development in the years to come

Drawing out the lessons

The research aimed towards an understanding of the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD in Irish post-primary schools. Through the interpretative framework of the model of *engagement* it became apparent that the decision to engage is a complex emotional practice that has personal, social, political and power related issues interacting and culminating in the final decision. However, my conclusion is that, in the Irish context, *the* most significant influencing factor is the personal interpretative framework of each individual teacher. More specifically, as I have explained, personal circumstances are at the core of teachers' decision making in particular with regard to engagement in elective CPD.

It is also reasonable to conclude that, in the absence of any regulatory or contractual requirements to engage in elective CPD, and in the absence of it being a key criterion in the promotional structure, each teacher is deciding for them self on the basis of the impact the decision to engage has on their personal lives. This means that their personal disposition to CPD is critical, as they weigh up the benefits of engagement against the impact on their personal lives. Thus, the *autonomous professional* (Day and Sachs, 2004, p 3) is very much alive and well in the Irish system, despite the efforts of successive governments to increase their influence on the decision making process.

This is not to say, however, that teachers do not have an expectation of the availability of CPD, quite the contrary, there was universal demand for the availability of CPD, but as part of the teachers' working week. This reality poses a significant challenge to the schools' leadership teams as they endeavour to promote excellence in teaching and learning within the schools. Given that engagement in elective CPD in particular is *teacher controlled* then school leaders find themselves persuading teachers to consider such engagement as opposed to assisting their staff in planning their elective CPD activities.

It is also reasonable to conclude that it is only when the distinction is drawn between elective and in-school CPD that the factors that influence decision making change to include the content of the activity, the opportunity to engage in developmental work, the ability to share experiences and the possibility of overall school improvement. Although, by its very nature, whole staff in-school CPD has obligatory attendance, the limitations of the scope of this research did not allow for any analysis of the level of engagement and participation by teachers with such events (outside of the sessions developed to support the amalgamation process which had almost total attendance bar those teachers absent due to illness) and similarly this research did not investigate if participation in CPD has had any impact on classroom practice, albeit that the teachers and members of the senior management teams considered it to have had impact . However, such areas do require research within an Irish context. However, it is important to state that my experience of the whole staff sessions was very positive in that the vast majority of the teachers very co-operative and interested in participating in this research.

Reflecting both on the findings and processes of this study, what seems important is the way that the model of *engagement* used to establish and guide the research also evolved. Firstly, the data suggest that the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD vary in terms of the level of their influence when different categories of CPD are being considered, namely, mandatory CPD (MCPD, a whole school activity during school time or subject based CPD during school time) and elective CPD (ECPD, subject based CPD or personal development CPD available out of school time). To represent the levels of influence I use a rating scale which moves from negligible or no influence through to a high level of influence. Table 6.2 shows the rating of these factors and the lack of convergence between them thus supporting the claim that any examination of CPD requires it to be considered as either ECPD or MCPD as the influencing factors regarding engagement differ so greatly.

Table 6.2 The level of influence different factors have on teacher engagement in ECDP and MCDP

| Factor | Elective CPD (out of school) | Mandatory CPD (in school) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Impact on personal life | High | None |
| Access | High | None |
| Content | High | Medium |
| School improvement | Low | High |
| Collaborative work | None | High |
| Contractual regulation | None | None |

Furthermore, the weighting originally attributed to Factor A and Factor B (see Figure 6.1) needs in the current Irish context, to be reduced for both categories of CPD, with Factor C receiving the prominence that this research claims it has.

Secondly, the issues of regulatory or contractual requirement to engage in CPD and engagement in CPD for the purposes of career prospects and promotion do not figure as influential as the system does not yet accord them any influence. Thirdly, it highlights what the findings of this research have brought to the fore, namely, that the content of the CPD event, its capacity to effect school improvement or its potential for an opportunity to engage in collaborative work are medium to high in terms of their influence respectively in terms of MCPD but that *the* most important factors influencing engagement in ECPD are personal; the impact on the teacher's personal life in terms of time and quality of life outside of school. Consequently, this research supports Guskey's (2004) claim that CPD is a complex phenomenon and suggests that in the Irish context it is necessary when considering engagement in CPD to consider ECPD and MCPD separately.

With this in mind Figures 6.2 and 6.3 offer a development to the original model of engagement and in particular they highlight a development in the central region of the original radial. The key outcome of this research is the finding that the decision making process is complicated, sophisticated and nuanced and that the decision making is subject to the type of CPD that is being considered. This has significant implications for policy development with regard to the future location of CPD either as an integral part of the working life of a teacher or as an elective that teachers choose according to their disposition and other commitments.

Figure 6.2 depicts a model of engagement in ECPD and highlights the high ranking and medium ranking key factors that influence teacher decisions regarding engagement in ECPD. The evidence suggests that the commitment required to attend the ECPD event is weighed up against its impact on the teachers' personal life, the amount of discretionary time available to them and the time it takes to access the event. The content of the ECPD event plays a medium to high ranking role in that it acts as the driver for considering engagement in the first place but is not the determining factor. Similarly, the teachers' own beliefs and values and their conception of their function as teachers act as motivators for consideration of engagement and therefore have a part to play in the decision making process, however, their role is secondary to that of the issue of time and impact on personal life.

Figure 6.2 The Factors that influence teacher decisions to engage in ECPD

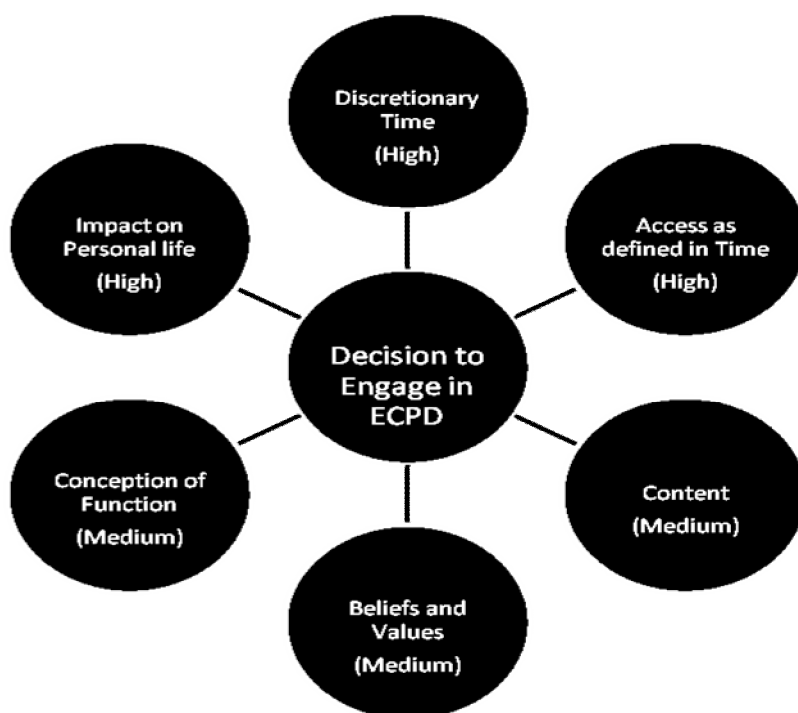
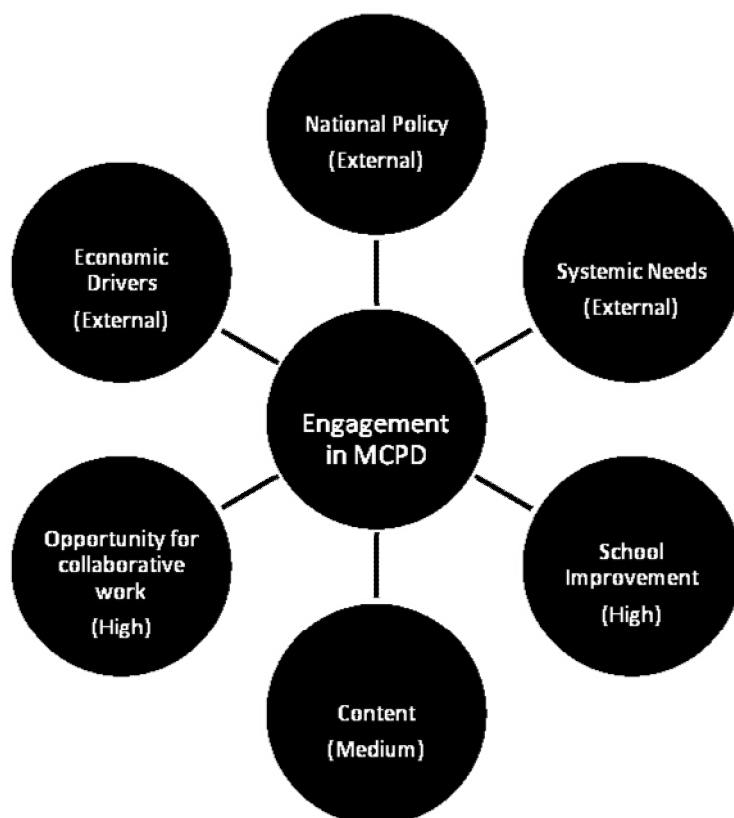


Figure 6.3 offers a model of engagement in MCPD where the reality is that the decision making has already been completed. By its very nature MCPD compels attendance and MCPD events are determined by National Policy influenced by other interest groups who have identified the need for schools to respond to their change agenda. Such economic or systemic drivers have significant influence on MCPD and in particular on its content but

teachers tend to give less weighting to the content and to focus their interpretation of these events more as opportunities for collaborative work and for school improvement.

Figure 6.3 Engagement in MCPD



Given these findings a number of key underpinning issues arise for CPD in Ireland. The first of these issues concerns the belief, both within the literature and amongst the majority of the teachers who participated in the research, that for professional development to be effective it is necessary for it to be ongoing throughout a teachers' career (Little 1993; Abdal Haqq 1995; Dadds 1997; Day 1999; Harrison 2003). What is evident is that individual teachers have extensive personal power over engagement in ECPD with everyday practice suggesting that the decision to engage rests primarily on the level of discretionary time available to teachers and the ease of access for them to the event. Therefore, from a policy perspective, if CPD is located more and more in an out of school context, the outcome of teacher decision making regarding engagement in ECPD cannot always be assumed to result in a decision by

teachers to engage. This, therefore, has the potential to reduce the concept of continuity in teachers' professional development to nothing more than occasional and episodic engagement in ECPD leading to a very uneven pattern of engagement amongst the general cohort of teachers. Should this unpredictability be the case then the concept of continuity has to be provided for within the parameters of MCPD. This, however, has the potential for the nature and focus of teachers' CPD to be wholly determined by external forces thus reducing the level of autonomy in teachers' professional activism (Little 1993) with teachers' professional lives being reduced to externally mandated professional work (Barnett 1997). This poses a challenge to the current relationships that exist between the teachers and the state in that the state as paymaster may choose to exercise total control on what knowledge and skill development is offered to its teachers. Should this power be exercised then the autonomous professionalism of the teachers will be banished and the teachers will be relocated as the uncritical receptors of externally mandated change and development.

A possible solution to this potential dilemma lies within the second significant issue to arise from this research, namely the whole issue of teacher professionalism and identity. A key opportunity, that may have the potential to unlock a new approach to ECPD, lies in teachers' attitudes as to what it is to be a professional. Teachers need to consider the values that underpin their agency and what it is that they ought to do better in order to fulfil their professional role.

To generate the potential in this approach a substantial debate needs to take place both within and outside the profession as to the nature and function of the teacher as a professional (Bottery 1996).

Such a debate needs to focus on what a professional teacher looks like, to whom he or she is accountable and whether teachers should have the autonomy and control over their own development, seeking their own solutions to the myriad of challenges that they face or if change in practice should be brought about by performance management and regulation of behaviour and practice. Teachers need to ask of themselves if they hold to the traditional trade union perspective of professionalism, which focuses on their autonomy and rights, or if

they see themselves as a new professional (Hargreaves 1994) committed to an evolving knowledge base capable of meeting the demands of the many relationships which teachers are charged with managing.

Should such a debate occur and should teacher professionalism be seen and accepted as a shifting gas opposed to a concrete phenomenon (Hanlon, 1998) then the possibility exists that teacher engagement in ECPD could increase as the influencers of *identity* and *content* would change from medium to high level influences. This change would, however, have to be accompanied by a commitment from the State to assisting teachers on this journey of change through the provision of a comprehensive ECPD programme. Such a programme of ECPD would have to both add to teachers' professional knowledge and skills but also assist them in identifying their own developmental needs. Furthermore, this comprehensive programme of ECPD would have to be developed in an inclusive way by including teachers in the identification of their own needs thus viewing them first and foremost as professionals with a professional voice.

Fundamentally, what is required is a belief in, and an acceptance that, teachers should have responsibility for the professional self (Dadds, 1997), be active agents (Eraut, 1972) in their own professional development and have a variety of learning experiences both within the school context and outside of the school domain (Lieberman, 1996). Teacher development will only take place when there is a defined and embraced model of professionalism which respects teacher autonomy based on teachers constantly reviewing their knowledge and practice and exercising their professional responsibility to be proactive in engaging in their own learning. This stands in stark contrast to the expression of professional identity as evidenced in the data where some teachers did not see the central issue of professional development as a process but as an issue of rights and confused professionalism with trade union tradition.

However, it is also true to say that wider strategic issues surfaced from this research, amongst them was whether a teacher lives to work or works to live. What was very evident

in this research was that teachers do not materialise at 9.00 a.m. and disappear at 3.30 p.m. but that they have a range of identities with associated daily commitments as they fulfil their role as homemakers, as parents, as partners and as active citizens. Thus, a number of issues arise, firstly, is there a need to examine the workload of the teachers in order to review the best use of their time and equally has the time come for a complete examination of the working week and the school year. In doing so policy makers will also have to consider how best to support teachers in their professional role without threatening teachers' extended role and forcing teachers to make decisions regarding the commitments that they already have.

This is a significant issue in light of the changing gender compositions of the profession in Ireland over the past two decades (the most recent figures available (DES, 2005) showing that 65% of post-primary teachers in Ireland are female) and the cultural tendency for female to have greater responsibility in terms of workload with regard to home making and child care. Finally, there is also an argument for society at large to reconsider what it expects from its education system, do we want pupils completing their second level education with just the competencies to access third level education or do we wish for them to be capable of taking their place in society, whatever form that may take, as young well adjusted socialised adults? Such questions strike at the central role of education and what purposes society views as critical for its education system.

Summary

This chapter offered an interpretation of the findings of this research and proposes that the factors that influence engagement in CPD are not homogenous but are dependent on the differentiation of CPD into ECPD and MCPD. The findings suggest that the impact of engagement in ECPD on the teachers' personal life is *the* single most important influencing factor on the decision making process with the personal self taking precedence over the professional self. The findings demonstrate that this was the case in both sites and suggest that this would be replicable throughout the country.

I have argued that the central dilemma arising from this is the whole concept of continuity and whether the concept of continuity is accommodated through ECPD or MCPD and the ensuing issues of professional activism and voice would be negated by the control of external decision makers mandating the nature and content of the CPD experience. Furthermore, I have suggested that there is enormous potential with regard to teacher activism if the concept of teacher professionalism is the subject of an extensive debate within the system with teachers making explicit their own understandings of what it is to be a professional teacher and their beliefs and values in relation to CPD.

The next chapter focuses on the conclusions that can be drawn from this research, what recommendations can be made for National Policy in Ireland and what potential exists for policy makers in other jurisdictions. It also examines my own learning as a researcher and a professional in the field of CPD.

Chapter 7- Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The aim of the research reported in this thesis is the development of an understanding of the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD and to present a conceptualisation of what I termed *engagement*. In particular the research examined new understandings of teachers' personal views, opinions and reflections on what factors influence them when they are considering engagement with CPD and secondly it conceptualised these factors as a contribution towards a refinement of understanding of a model of engagement with CPD. In pursuit of these aims the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD?
2. What does this mean for CPD and professional practice?

The study examined the current research and theorising about CPD and from this developed an analysis and argument about how there is a need to examine the relationship between the agency of the teacher and the structuring context in which they are located. Such structuring includes personal circumstances combined with social, political, economic and cultural factors that enable, shape or limit teacher involvement with CPD.

Case study work was conducted with teachers in six post-primary schools in Ireland. Through this work the particularities that impact on teacher engagement with CPD were unfolded resulting in the differentiation of CPD into ECPD and MCPD and the development of a method of describing, understanding and explaining the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD.

The analysis of the data led to a number of new understandings, firstly, it offered a conceptualisation of the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement

in CPD as a contribution towards a refinement of a model of *engagement* in CPD, secondly, the relationship between *engagement* and the professionalism and professionality of teachers was unfolded and new understandings emerged regarding the implications for both policy makers and post-primary teachers in Ireland.

Recommendations for national policy

The argument presented in this study is that each individual teacher, irrespective of current national policy, governs decision making with regard to engagement in ECPD by assessing the impact that such a decision has on their personal lives.

The significance of this study's contribution to policy developers is that it highlights that the availability of CPD does not equate to engagement in CPD. Data in this study suggest an enormous increase in the availability of a variety of CPD activities since 1993 but also confirms that this increased availability has not ensured engagement in CPD, and in particular in relation to ECPD. This finding has a number of potential consequences firstly, if the current reality persists, that is where teacher engagement in out of school CPD is totally elective, then the potential exists to reduce the concept of continuity in CPD to nothing more than episodic engagement, dependent on the interests and desires of the individual teacher. Secondly, if this scenario is left unaddressed it increases the pressure on the MCPD as the means of addressing both the continuing needs as identified by teachers and the systemic needs. However, in doing so, it locates the control of the content of the CPD activities in the arms of the state. The underlying issue therefore, is that of teacher professionalism and confirms the need for professional renewal regarding the purposes and practices of teaching as a profession in Ireland.

In pursuance of this renewal I recommend that at an operational level, an initial, yet a very significant step, in reaching this new professionalism would be for the Teaching Council to incorporate the voices of the teacher, the school principal, the inspectorate and the academic into any future policy development. This blended approach to policy development is potentially more likely to reflect the integrated systemic and personal focus that is required.

Consultation with the teachers is a far better starting point as opposed to the system deciding what teachers need.

Having established the consultative forum there is a need to progress to the development of a strategic framework of CPD for teachers in Ireland, a framework that has explicit objectives and specified targets. It is necessary that whatever policy is developed does not just view CPD as functional or instrumental in achieving systemic needs but is balanced between the systemic and the personal needs of teachers. Concentration on the development of such a policy would move the focus from a disparate provision which focuses on curricular issues or singular initiatives to a coherent provision where all the elements focus on the teacher as a person in a professional role with a professional voice. Such a development would view teacher professional development as a career long activity which would offer connectivity between pre-service, induction and continuing professional development.

Whilst the Teaching Council of Ireland has the remit for teacher CPD this section of the Act has yet to be commenced. By enacting this section the Teaching Council would assume a proactive role in developing the proposed strategic framework and would be obliged to function in accordance with the terms of the Teaching Council of Ireland Act 2001.

The Council's functions in relation to CPD of teachers are set out in Sections 7(2) (h) and 39 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. Section 7(2) (h) provides that the Council shall advise the Minister in relation to the professional development of teachers. Section 39 provides that it shall:

~ Promote the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers.

~ Conduct research into the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers.

~ Promote awareness among the teaching profession and the public of the benefits of continuing education and training and professional development.

~ Review and accredit programmes relating to the continuing education and training of teachers.

“ Perform such other functions in relation to the continuing education and training and continuing professional development of teachers as may be assigned to the Council by the Minister.

The framework for CPD, recommended as a result of this research, has to, as part of its foundations, appreciate that, as Partington and Stainton (2003) argue, ~~the word~~ ~~development~~ within the term CPD is a broader concept than training and implies a longer term, less authoritarian approach and one that has benefits for the individual as well as the organisation+(p 3). Thus, the framework is directly linked to the professional renewal advocated earlier and policy developers, with a remit for teacher CPD, also need to investigate how professional learning is organised in other professions.

In order to encourage and promote engagement in CPD in Ireland due consideration will have to be given to the main finding of this research which highlights, that in the current context, that it is the individual teacher and his or her own personal context that has the most significant influence on teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD. Therefore, CPD activities have to be relevant, accessible and beneficial to the teacher as a person in a professional role for the decision to engage to be taken. In view of this I recommend that the policy developers and the Teaching Council (when it has this role) consider devolving the design and delivery of CPD activities related to the strategic framework to local or regional groups of teachers working in association with representatives of school management, members of the inspectorate and academics. Local design teams who appreciate and understand the local conditions are best placed to design a programme of activities based on local needs.

Another significant feature of the design and delivery is the method in which the proposed programmes are presented to teachers. This research suggests that those charged with the development of CPD policy for Irish post-primary teachers need to appreciate the power of the personal interpretative framework that is applied by teachers when deciding regarding engagement in elective CPD. Whilst the design of the various CPD activities receives

significant attention (and rightly so) it is also necessary for policy developers to appreciate that teachers weigh up the perceived benefits of engagement prior to engaging.

Therefore, it is recommended that policy developers need to consider firstly, how the CPD activity is presented to the teachers and to make explicit the expected outcomes from participation in it. Secondly, it is essential to consider when the CPD activity is to be made available; either in school as part of the MCPD or outside of school as part of the ECPD programme or as a blend of both and through what medium it is to be presented; with increased use of ICT taken into account. Thirdly, policy developers need to give due consideration to what accreditation or other forms of incentives, if any, are to be awarded for participation. Fourthly, it is recommended that all CPD activities should be evaluated so that any future activities can be guided from the learning gained through the evaluation process.

Recommendations for teachers

This research has confirmed that, in the main, post-primary teachers in Ireland have a very well defined sense of self, not seeing themselves just as educational workers but as Loucks-Horsley and Stiegelbauer (1991) argue as people where there is still and will always be a critical place for consideration of the individual+(p 17). However, it is evident that for CPD to address its core function of improving teaching and learning then teachers need to consider the professional aspect of their role as teacher and reflect on what it is to be a professional in a changing Ireland and a changing world. Teachers need to consider how development with regards to their changing circumstances can be supported and if being a professional implies that they themselves take charge of their professionalism by ensuring that they are equipped to address the changing circumstances by means of engagement in both MCPD and ECPD. Teachers ought to consider a declaration regarding their own profession and should offer a commitment to society that being a member of the profession brings with a commitment to ensuring that they are best positioned at all times to address the issues that they face on a daily basis. I would strongly recommend that teachers seize the opportunity to be proactive and express their opinion, through a re-examination of their views on professionalism and a statement of what their professional identity is.

In stating what they consider their professional role and identity to be the person and the profession will not be separated. The teachers involved in this research presented as Greene (1991) describes, 'a distinctive biography, a singular life history' (p 4) that located themselves both as teachers within the boundaries of their schools, but also as people with their own personal broader structure outside of their working environments. This extension to their working agency involves them functioning as parents, as partners, as members of communities. It is the case that their personal boundaries are being permeated all of the time by the demands of their professional role and this research shows teachers questioning this impact when an aspect of their professional role, their professional learning impinges on their other roles. In having this national debate the issues of the teacher as a person and as a member of society will come to the fore and may have the benefit of clarifying their role in modern Ireland and removing the damaging view that certain schools' boundaries remain much less permeable to the outside issues and present as institutions that wish to defend the norm and perpetuate their tradition and refuse to embrace change.

Teachers should also consider moving to a more proactive role in designing and delivering ECPD. The teachers that participated in this research presented as people with a well defined value system and an acute sense of their role, their purpose and their responsibility. What emerged strongly during this research was that the teachers valued themselves as contributing members of society but equally as members of society with rights. These rights were not simply to have the opportunity to engage with CPD within their working day but also to be respected enough for their collective knowledge and to have a say in the design, development and delivery of their own CPD. If this is the case then it is necessary for teachers to mobilise their talents and become active partners in the design and delivery of learning opportunities for colleagues.

Finally, teachers' union representatives should consider engaging in a complete review with the DES of teachers' professional workload. Such a review requires an examination of teachers' contractual obligations, the management of class contact and non contact time and all associated duties including supervision of pupils, substitution for absent colleagues and a

willingness to re-assess the traditional trade union stance of seeking all CPD to be conducted during school time. The latter holds the potential of reducing the tension and difficulties that the management of MCPD causes for teachers in management positions. Achieving this will be problematic as the data in this research suggest that little or no argument was ever presented against the benefit of participation in CPD when teacher-identified teacher learning was the core of a CPD programme, however, this desire for continuing support for their %knowledge-for- practice+(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, p 49) was expressed almost exclusively as conditional on it occurring during working hours. This position stood in stark contrast to the sometimes dismissive attitude that emerged when the systemic needs and the states desire for accountability were perceived as the central aspect of the CPD activity. Many of the teachers were critical of, as they viewed it, the evaluative and controlling direction that CPD was taking in Ireland and were resistant to Government %interference+in education. I recommend that teachers consider the merits of an evaluation of the teaching and learning that takes places in schools and adopt a more open attitude to the suggestions that come from the inspectorate and from the world of industry and incorporate the best of the recommendations into the teaching and learning processes in the schools. Professional activism should not fear evaluation, if the profession adopts a less defensive and more open stance to evaluation it holds the possibility that it will reduce the States desire to implement additional controls and efforts to force compliance.

However, it is important to restate that during this research the strong sense of teacher professional identity was peppered with an anxiety. Specifically, the fear that an individual's opinions, which had been given in private, maybe identifiable to their colleagues. This tentativeness to be seen to move away from the collective opinion of the staffroom to a more individualised stance may be indicative of the power of the group and its desire to demonstrate a strong alliance of the practitioners against the perceived demonic structure. Similarly, this issue arose for the members of the senior management teams, they were as Mawhinney (1999) describes %taken up in daily practice of managing (such) micropolitics+(p 156). They had the additional challenge of pacifying the educational partners; parents and state authorities and this complexity was obviously very demanding on members of the

senior management teams because they are constantly endeavouring to manage as West (1999) describes the norms or ritual behaviours that underpin group membership (p 191). However, the context of the amalgamation cannot be ignored and as such the merger and the uncertainty it created is a contributing factor.

However, the unwillingness to speak openly still represents a significant obstacle that has to be overcome if the school response, with professionals identifying and addressing their own needs, is ever to be realised. It is a deep rooted cultural phenomenon within Irish schools that will not be changed without significant support, and in particular, sustained debate about the nature of our schools and the professionals who work within them.

Recommendations for school leaders

This research has demonstrated, as already outlined, the tension that exists for school leaders in promoting development in teaching and learning whilst at the same time managing parental demands that expect change and reform to be adopted with the associated necessary development processes taking place without a reduction in teaching time. This is a formidable challenge which requires both structural and attitudinal reform. At a macro level such structural reforms include a fundamental review of how schools function and operate including a review of the terms and conditions of teachers' contracts. This, in tandem with the need for teacher professional renewal constitutes a fundamental re-think of how teachers teach and how schools operate. I recommend that school leaders should be to the fore of this debate and could commence it by highlighting the international trends and approaches to promoting and managing teacher learning. Best international practice can inform a debate on CPD in Ireland and can be instrumental in the development of a new vision for CPD in Ireland. However, the new financial landscape has to be taken into account where the reality is that financial constraints will temper all activity. However, this period of fiscal and financial crisis can also be an opportunity to plan appropriately for the future with school leaders best placed to energise this debate.

On a micro level I recommend that school leaders exercise a greater role in identifying and presenting the CPD needs as they see them. To achieve this I suggest that leaders be assisted in conducting needs analysis and prioritisation of areas requiring support. To achieve this active role in leading teaching and learning in their schools school leaders will require additional resources to ease the administrative burden that they now carry. However, the benefits should accrue in that it would promote professional communications between principals and teachers on matters relating to the curriculum, teaching and learning. However, yet again it must be stated that if the re-focussing of leaders towards teaching and learning and away from administrative tasks requires additional resources then it is likely to be rejected in the current climate.

Recommendations for researchers

This research aimed to move beyond the assumption of teacher engagement in CPD by revealing new understandings of the factors that influence teacher decision making regarding engagement in CPD. This research was conducted in the post-primary sector within a specific context, i.e. post-primary schools that were engaging in the process of amalgamation. In order to provide a more complete picture of teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards engagement in CPD in Ireland research is required in post-primary schools not undergoing amalgamation, in the primary sector and also in the increasing number of schools in both primary and post-primary schools that operate through the medium of the Irish language. All such schools are also experiencing the context of public spending cuts and austerity measures which it is fair to claim are impacting on teachers' attitudes to CPD. The qualitative approach adopted in this research has proven to be most appropriate in that the presentation /workshops and the semi-structured interviews facilitated the generation of extensive data.

Whilst this research was guided by a model of engagement based on Scribner's (1999) schema with subsequent developments taking place during the research process it is recommended that further research is conducted into both ECPD and MCPD in order to ascertain the connection between the decision to engage and the commitment to constructive participation and application of learning. In particular there remains a considerable gap in our

knowledge of the impact of participation in CPD and what influence it has on teaching and learning in the classroom. Similarly, specific attention needs to be given to the different forms or models of CPD and their effect on individual teachers and how they exercise their roles as teachers.

Investigation is also required regarding how to strike a balance between meeting the systemic needs and the professional and personal needs of the individual teachers. This research has demonstrated that teachers feel that there is an imbalance at the moment and that teachers' personal needs are not met. New theorisations on professionalism are required therefore research examining comparative models for example in medicine and the law may assist the conceptualisation and practice of teaching as a profession.

Likewise, in the context of reduced funding being made available for CPD and the need to attain the best value for money significant evaluation is required of the added value acquired through the current models of CPD that are in operation Ireland and whether the yield is cost effective. Alternative models need to be researched and concepts such as learning schools and self evaluating schools need further examination in the Irish context.

Personal reflection

Conducting this research has afforded me one of the most enriching opportunities of my professional career to date. I have been fortunate to witness how schooling is viewed as a serious activity in Irish society and how so many dedicated teachers and school leaders wish to continue enriching teaching and learning processes in their schools' classrooms but also to witness how major an undertaking it is to effect changes in established practices and cultures.

One of the key learning points for me as a professional involved in the promotion of CPD is that significant consideration has to be given to both the design and provision of CPD activities as well as to the nature in which professional relationships are nurtured and developed in our schools. The expectation that CPD will be embraced because it is available or deemed necessary is not enough, teachers need to be supported in their own inquiry into

what it means to be a professional and how being a professional lies with the individualsq personal and social commitments.

I, in my role as an advocate of teacher learning have to attend more to securing teacher involvement in their own learning and to encourage greater debate and dialogue regarding the merits of engagement in CPD. Furthermore I need to represent their views to those charged with developing national policy and to encourage a flexibility within the system that will embrace the concept of adaptation of national programmes to meet the needs of the schools in my locality. In pursuit of these challenges I believe that it is important to reconnect through a written report to the 6 schools involved in the research but in order to communicate the learning outcomes to a wider audience I need to develop a report to issue to the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science and to the Teaching Council of Ireland. In order to influence the research agenda and to encourage research in the areas identified I intend to present papers on my findings at conferences and to submit papers for publication.

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Appendix 1 - National CPD Policy and Structures in Ireland

The development of CPD policy in Ireland

Throughout the 1990s the debate regarding the provision of appropriate CPD for teachers continued. Chapter six of the Government of Ireland's *Green Paper on Education* (Government of Ireland, 1992), chapter eleven of the *Report on the National Education Convention* (National Education Convention Secretariat, 1994), and chapter eight of the Government of Ireland's *White Paper on Education* (Government of Ireland, 1995) espoused the 'is+ policy, affirmed the quality of the teaching force, proposed qualitative reforms for a better future and recommended the establishment of a Teaching Council.

A White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1995) affirmed the intention to progress a policy of professional development and to allocate funds to it as never before. The Government's stated purpose in doing so was:

..to equip teachers with the capacity to respond effectively to major changes in the education system, including changes in the curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment, school organisation and management and to provide for teachers' personal and professional development needs. Ideally, the school climate should be one which welcomes and seeks to manage change and which exemplifies to students how change can be implemented and managed.+(Government of Ireland White Paper, 1995, p 127).

The White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1995) outlined in its 'Approach to Policy+(p 128) a commitment by the DES to formulate; in active co-operation with the partners, a strategic framework for the in-career professional development of teachers, with explicit, achievable objectives, specified target groups and criteria for evaluating the impact of in-career development programmes. It claimed that this approach would draw together the 'disparate elements+(p 128) into a 'coherent strategy setting out priorities and associated budgetary allocations+(p 128). The core elements of the strategy were presented as covering the following 'critical+(p 128) matters:

- the systematic identification of key objectives, priorities and target groups
- the manner in which training needs are identified, including the balance between school-based, regional and national needs
- criteria to assess the quality, relevance and cost effectiveness of programmes required to meet the specified objectives and to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of courses and programmes
- the establishment of criteria by which courses will be approved

- broad guidelines on models of delivery encompassing the timing, organisation, duration and structure of courses, including appropriate arrangements for the formal certification of courses
- appropriate continuity with pre-service education and induction training and taking account of the desirability of planned development over a number of years for individuals and groups
- criteria for the promotion of relevant research among teachers
- practical arrangements in relation to, for instance, substitution for teachers, travel and subsistence and appropriate arrangements for study leave. (pp. 128-129)

These eight aspects served as the guide for the development of CPD in the Irish system from 1994 to 2004. The extent to which each of the eight critical aspects was addressed is open to research of its own right however specific milestones characterise the implementation of this policy framework.

The rise and fall of the ICDU

The ICDU team included both administrative and professional staff and it engaged with the education partners through a variety of implementation, consultative or advisory groups. The ICDU was responsible for supporting the development of a comprehensive national approach to the in-career professional development of teachers at first, second and further education levels.

Allied to the establishment of the ICDU a programme of CPD activities serving the stated aims of the ICDU translated into a reality through the assistance of the Human Resources Operational Programme (HROP) of the European Union under the National Development Plan. Over IR£35m (" 44.44m) was allocated to the ICDU for this dedicated purpose for the six years 1994-1999 (Government of Ireland, 1993, National Development Plan 1994-1999).

However, the Cromien Report (2000) considered the ICDU's policy approach to be too narrow and also stated that the unit's reliance on seconded teachers constituted an *ad hoc* response. The report stated that teachers considered that there should be greater differentiation of course provision and in particular that it ought to be linked to the needs of teachers at different stages of their careers. The report also supported teachers' concerns that accreditation be available for a greater variety of continuing professional development. The report concluded that while much continuing professional development had been of high

quality and well regarded, that it was time to upscale the enterprise and institutionalise continuing professional development to make it more strategic and comprehensive, while continuing to be sensitive to system and individual needs.

In pursuit of the aims of Cromien a newly convened representative national advisory committee on CPD for post-primary teachers recommended the establishment of a comprehensive policy on continuing professional development, whereby the contributions of all providers are recognised and supported. The committee proposed the establishment of a national co-ordinating framework, with the design and content of curriculum-oriented CPD agreed at national level, combined with local delivery processes.

A further criticism of the ICDU was contained in the DES commissioned Centre for Management Organisation Development (CMOD) review of the Education Centres published in 2003. It pointed to inadequacies in the operation of the Centres and of policy regarding them within the DES. The report stated, %t became evident to the CMOD team that there was no clear policy in relation to Education Centres in the DES and that strategic planning in relation to Centres was undeveloped+(p 22). Such criticism led to the establishment in 2004 of the Teacher Education Section within the DES which brought together all strands of teacher education from pre=service to induction to in-career CPD.

Policy in Action: The Delivery Model and Supporting Infrastructure

The TES does not act as the delivery agent of CPD in Ireland but operates in the realm of policy formation. Support services are generally established by the TES to support the introduction of revised curricula or to provide support in non-subject specific areas, such as whole school planning, leadership skills, or special educational needs. National Support Services are established for a limited number of years. These are staffed by teachers on secondment and are generally administered through Education Support Centres. They operate under steering committees, chaired and led by inspectors and others from the Department of Education and Science.

One of the major criticisms of the structure was that each support service was developed in isolation and that there was no coordination between the support services. In an effort to address this criticism and in the spirit of Cromien type reform, the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) was established in 2001. SLSS incorporates a dedicated support service after the intensive phase of curriculum reform has been completed. This structural reform has been mapped at primary level with the formation of Primary Professional Development Service in 2008 through the merger of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the School Development Planning Service (SDPS). These umbrella groups are aimed at providing greater coherence and coordinated approaches allied to more tailored and bespoke professional development for teachers and school communities.

Local Infrastructure- Education Support Centres

The first Education Support Centres in Ireland were established in Ireland in 1972. Centres developed largely due to local initiatives by groups of teachers and were not planned on a national basis. There are currently twenty one full-time and nine part-time centres. There was no formal statutory recognition of Centres until the *Education Act* (Government of Ireland, 1998). The *Education Act* defined them as "a place in which services are provided for schools, teachers, parents, boards and other relevant persons which support them in carrying out their functions in respect of the provision of education which is recognised for that purpose by the Minister" (Section 37 (1)).

Other providers

A range of other agencies offer CPD development programmes of various types largely funded by the TES. These include third level providers, post primary subject associations, teacher unions, school management/trustee bodies, national organisations of school principals, national agencies such as the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) and the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE).

Activity levels

If expenditure is an indicator of activity then an examination of the budget allocation demonstrates the exponential development in the provision of CPD in Ireland since 1994. The

TES budget in 2007 was approximately " 64m. This represents an increase of more than 900% on the budget of " 6.35m (IR£5M) allocated to the ICDU in 1994.

In relation to the three main policy areas in which the TES is involved the largest area of expenditure is in-service training/CPD which received an allocation of some " 46m in 2007. This comprises the National Programmes and the Education Support Centres. The second largest area of expenditure by the TES is pre-service Education. The three Colleges of Education supported by the TES received an allocation of approximately " 11m in 2007. The area of induction received the lowest financial allocation . the primary and post primary pillars of the National Pilot Programme for Teacher Induction (NPPTI) received a combined allocation of approximately " 0.3m in 2007.

The budget allocation detailed above does not reflect the true level of TES activity as it does not include the costs associated with seconding teaching personnel to work as part of the National Programmes or the costs of providing substitution cover for teachers attending prescribed in-service training. When the cost of the secondments to National Programmes is included, expenditure by the DES on teacher education amounts to approximately " 79m which represents 0.9% of total Departmental expenditure. If expenditure on teacher education is expressed as a percentage of the total salary cost for first and second level teachers in 2007 (approximately " 3.6 billion including superannuation), the figure rises to 2.2%. This is still below the recommended target level for investment in CPD in the Civil Service . which is 4% of payroll - and is also below the estimated 3% to 5% of annual budgets that is spent on professional development of employees in private sector firms. (Figures sourced from the Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General 2007).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The TES monitors the quality of the in-service training and professional development it supports through the Education Centre Network and the National Support Programmes. This is routinely done through participant evaluation sheets at the conclusion of training, and also increasingly through formal evaluations of the support services engaged in providing the training for example, recent years have witnessed reviews of the NPPTI, the Primary

Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). The data from this review and evaluation process inform the future development of CPD opportunities. However it is very arguable that evaluation is still the weakest aspect of the design and implementation model and is an area of policy that requires more vision and focus.

Appendix 2- Data Gathering Stage 1, Reviewing CPD in Ireland

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <p>What is working well?</p> | <p>Which of these elements which are not yet working well are open to change?</p> |
| <p>What is not yet working well?</p> | <p>Which of those elements, which are not yet working well, are not open to change?</p> |

Appendix 3- Prompt questions for individual interviews

Factor A- Personal career, prospects, context and exposure

May I ask you what qualifications you have?

Have you taught in other schools or was this your first appointment?

Do you hold a post of responsibility in your school?

Can you outline briefly the duties attached to the post?

Do you feel that you have a clear career pathway open to you in this school?

Do you have an interest in pursuing promotion within the system?

Would you mind outlining your commitments, family or otherwise, outside of school life?

How would you describe the general attitude to professional development in your school?

What are your own personal attitudes to professional development?

Factor B- National Policy and contractual or regulatory requirements

What recent policy initiative do you consider to have impacted most on your professional life in recent years?

Are you familiar with the role and function of the Teaching Council of Ireland and in particular its role in relation to CPD?

Do you think it would be a positive step if all teachers were obliged by the Teaching Council to attend ongoing CPD?

Factor C- Professional disposition and outlook

What influences your decision regarding engagement with CPD both in school time and outside of school time?

Appendix 4A: Fictionalised Narrative 1 representing the views of the Senior Management

Orchard Valley Secondary School Board of Management

The Agenda for the Board of Management meeting arrived from the principal as expected seven days prior to the actual meeting. The generic nature of the agenda: opening prayer, minutes of previous meeting, matters arising, correspondence, principal's report, treasurer's report, policy development, plant development, A.O.B and agreed report, undermined the nature of the meetings. Although encouraged to operate as a corporate unit it was almost always the case that the members of the Board of Management; nominated as representatives of their constituent groupings; teachers, parents, community and trustees, viewed each item through their respective groupings' lenses. It was always difficult to fully appreciate why people agreed to act on the Board of Management of Orchard Valley Secondary School but agree they had and attendance was almost always total and this in its own right in this day and age of decreased volunteerism was admirable.

The atmosphere was, as always, convivial, the staffroom, uncluttered by means of packing shelves and lockers to overflow, was the venue for the Board's meetings. People gathered and welcomed the offer of tea and sandwiches which was a ritual of all of the Board's meetings. The Chairperson called on all present to take their seats and a prayer was read to focus all minds on the work in hand. Whilst the initial items passed without contention the principal's report was the energiser of debate. The item which provoked most question and comment was the attendance of teachers at various professional development sessions during school hours since the Board of Management last met. The detail was interesting, teachers had attended professional development in a range of subjects and curricular programmes, Technology, Leaving Certificate Applied, Transition Year, Junior Science, Mathematics, Social Personal and Health Education and Civic, Social and Political Education. The net effect showed that in the month that had passed since the last meeting 14 teaching days had been taken with Department of Education and Science sponsored professional development. Members asked of the principal if it was her considered opinion

that such a level of professional development was beneficial to the school as a whole.

Supplementary questions followed which sought to determine if consideration had not been given by the management representative body to seeking all professional development to be offered at weekends and during periods of official school closure.

The level of angst was palpable as teacher representatives interrupted and pointed out that teachers needed professional development to address the ever changing demands of the curriculum and the ongoing social challenges that they faced on a daily basis. The discussion that ensued did not provide any solutions. Whilst all agreed that professional development was necessary it was clear that the non-teaching members considered the provision of professional development should be outside of school hours and hence less disruptive on school life.

The ardency of the teachers' defence was indicative of the strength of feeling amongst teachers that they, like all other professions, were entitled to mandatory professional development during work hours and that it was up to the Department of Education and Science to provide adequate cover for the functioning of the school.

Little opportunity was being provided for subjective discussion of the substantive issues involved. The level of entrenched opinion was clear and the principal was left in the invidious position of having to negotiate the thin line between alienating members of the Board of Management whose opinions were formed on the basis of the impact of teacher absence on their own children or children that they knew of and the teachers who worked so diligently but who held so stridently to the teacher unions' commitment to preserving mandatory professional development as an integral part of a teacher's daily work.

In endeavouring to calm the turbulent waters the principal spoke of the negotiations that were taking place at national level where the coordination of professional development, the timing of all activities and the remuneration for attendance were being discussed. Whilst little progress had been made to date the principal reported that her information was that there

was a commitment from all parties that discussions would continue until all avenues had been explored and a solution acceptable to all was arrived at.

At this point the Chairperson thanked everyone for their contributions and located the discussion in the fact that at this moment in time the system was structured as it is and that until the system altered Orchard Valley was not unlike any other school with regards to the release of teachers to attend professional development. The national authorities were aware of the local issues and the management representatives at the negotiations were mandated to arrive at a solution that minimised disruption at school level however there was little point in this meeting rehearsing the arguments when the decision making was vested in others and strife is so wearing on all that it did not serve Orchard Valley for its Board of Management to expend such energy on the issue at this moment in time.

With that the Chairperson considered the issue to be addressed and moved to the next item on the agenda, the Treasurer's report.

Appendix 4B: Fictionalised Narrative 2 representing the views of the Senior Management.

Orchard Valley Secondary School: An Irate Parent

Life as a principal teacher is defined by uncertainty; each and every day brings many new and many repeated challenges sprinkled with many unknowns. How people view the role of principal is more than interesting, there is a commonly held belief amongst parents and teachers alike that the principal teacher can and should rectify all ills. All issues, whoever created them, have a tendency therefore; despite many principals' best efforts, to find their way to the principal's door and Orchard Valley is no exception.

The new school year is but six weeks old and already in the fledgling new term there have been tensions and struggles but thankfully the energy levels are still registering quite high and the ability to cope is quite strong. On a bright Tuesday morning in mid- October the principal of Orchard Valley walks the corridors on her routine morning tour of the school making her way to her office. Her pager beeps red and she pauses to read the text message. To receive a page at the start of a day usually means only one thing, a teacher has contacted to say that he/she is ill and will not be in. Today was no different indeed it was a notice that one of maths teachers was ill. Thankfully the responsibility for arranging cover has been transferred to the deputy principal since the last internal review of roles and responsibilities. A quick mental check of planned activities reminded her that there were several other co-curricular activities planned for that day and that there would be a significant level of disruption to classes. However, Orchard Valley was proud of its tradition in co-curricular activities and in particular its sporting achievements.

With such disruption to the normal timetabled day there was a strong possibility that all hands would be required to keep the ship afloat. This meant that tackling the unending and seemingly ever increasing amount of administration would have to be postponed yet again.

A quick consultation with the deputy principal showed that her fears were realised and it was the case that the planned activities along with the unplanned absences due to illness required a significant level of classes to be covered. However, such was life, school life never was, never is, and never will be predictable.

In real terms the day passed with minimal difficulty, the pupils were well behaved and their success on the sporting field put everyone in good humour as both teachers and pupils gathered their belongings to make their journey home. The principal bade farewell and made her way to her office. Yet more post had arrived and it remained unopened. She decided that the preparation of her report to the Board of Management was one task that if completed would lessen the task list so she set about searching for the relevant files. The principal's report was all embracing and generally it was most time consuming however she felt that it was manageable at this hour of the evening. Whilst in the middle of re-reading her notes on the last meeting her phone rang. It had only been twenty minutes since school finished yet the silence that had befallen the school led her to believe that it had been longer. The school secretary informed her in a somewhat apprehensive voice that she had a final year pupil's mother on the phone that was irate and would not accept that she could not speak with the principal. It was a feature of parental interaction with the secretary in recent years that they demanded to be put through to somebody in authority. The culture of service provider and customer care, common in all department stores and supermarkets, had transposed itself to all schools. Parents were entitled to call when they choose, were entitled to question as they choose and were most certainly entitled to speak with the principal at a time that suited them.

The principal had adopted an accommodating approach to parents in recent times believing that addressing the issue at the time was better than avoiding it. The secretary was pleased to transfer the call and the principal cleared her throat in preparation.

Pr: Good afternoon, how may I help you?

Pa: My son has just arrived in home to tell me that he has no homework or revision to do as he had four free classes today. How can this be happening? I mean he is in his final year, facing exams within months and yet he is constantly missing out on valuable teaching time. I simply cannot believe that you as principal can allow this to happen knowing the possible impact on his and his friends results. It simply has to stop.

Pr: I appreciate your concern however today saw the involvement of our senior team in the regional semi-final and as you will appreciate we are bound by insurance stipulations to have adequate supervision of those who travel to support our team as well as those who are involved in a voluntary capacity in training and coaching the team.

Pa: Why then did you not send those teachers who are not teaching the exam classes? What type of consideration is being given to their situation? I am not the only parent who is most unhappy with this situation, I have heard many others complain but they are reluctant to contact you openly in fear of their own children being victimised. I have been keeping a record since the school year began of the number of classes my son has lost either through sports or other activities that the school is involved in or by teachers being sick. If this was in industry somebody would have to answer. Why should I have to make further sacrifice and pay for additional tuition to make up for what he is losing in your school?

Pr: You will appreciate that sport and other co-curricular activities are very important in a pupil's life

Pa: Yes but it won't get them into University or get them a job will it? It is ridiculous, 24 classes in total since he went back to school but today was ridiculous altogether, he had a double maths class that was cancelled and he missed History and Biology.

Pr: As I was saying we have a long and proud co-curricular involvement in Orchard Valley and I believe that this holistic approach to our pupils' education is supported by the parent body at large.

Pa: But why aren't you coordinating it better, why did you not examine what students were missing out on what classes and make judgements on that basis? Why did you not minimise the impact on the exam classes?

Pr: I can assure you that every effort was being made but the situation was exacerbated due to teacher illness. I have no control over teacher illness, I am sure that you appreciate that.

Pa: Well I am furious at the rate of absenteeism in general, you really should speak with your staff and you should plan things better, this is my son's future that is at risk and I will be watching this closely. I intend to take this further if necessary and there are many others who are equally as concerned.

Pr: I can assure you that your concern has been noted but again I would ask you to take into account that today was exceptional in that we had teacher illness as well as this very important match in the sporting calendar. I am confident that the teachers who were absent from class today will make every effort to ensure that their pupils will not lose out and the material that is required to be covered will be. Can I thank you for contacting me and I will take your comments on board.

Pa: As I said I will be watching and I won't hesitate to go higher with this, it is simply not good enough. I have to ensure that my son's future is not put at risk by your school's inability to plan properly. And if I may say the least you could do as principal is to have proper substitute teachers in to cover the classes and not hoard them into the library with an instruction to study.

Pr: Again I can assure you that your comments have been noted and every effort will be made to minimise teacher absence for whatever reason on exam class students. I would like to thank you for your call.

Pa: I certainly hope so, thank you, goodbye.

The click on the phone signalled the end of the phone call and the principal reflected for a moment on why all and every aspect of school life was contested these days. She wrote a brief memo of the phone call and decided to open a folder on her pc for this particular parent as something told her that this may not be the last of this complaint. The fact that she cited 24 classes having been missed by her son since the start of the new school year niggled her and she flicked back over her diary to check teacher absences and indeed noted pupil absences, the said pupil had been absent for 4 days which meant that he had missed 56 classes in total but that did not receive any attention.

A quick glance at the clock showed that 45-50 minutes had elapsed since the secretary heralded the call and darkness was falling. The enthusiasm for the principal's report had waned.

Appendix 5: Fictionalised Narrative 3 representing the views of individual teachers.

Orchard Valley Secondary School Staff Room

There is always that intangible factor when you enter a school, it permeates throughout the building and wafts at times to the outside car parks and play areas. It is invisible yet omnipresent, forceful yet unarticulated, dense yet at the same time diffuse. Some herald it as ethos others call it atmosphere. Orchard Valley Secondary School is no exception, energy and activity, both productive and less so, characterise everyday life. Predictability and unpredictability lie side by side to each other in a communion of normality, a normality capable of interpretation only by those who inhabit Orchard Valley.

This locus of human activity materialises every morning at 8.00 a.m. and has vapourised each evening by 6.30 p.m. with the departure of the last wondering soul from evening study. If there were a device that could measure this intangible then it would glow uncontrollably, raise levels of some organic compound to a dangerous high or sound alarms at levels of decibel unsafe for the human ear in particular areas of Orchard Valley, none more so than in the Staffroom.

The Staffroom in Orchard Valley is not atypical, cluttered with the artefacts of teaching and learning, textbooks and copybooks abound. Notices and flyers hang precariously to over cluttered notice boards, many out of date some gaining prominence over others by virtue of size and colour. Used coffee mugs retain position despite their proximity to the kitchenette and lockers and presses seem to ache from overload. Restricted workspace is the norm and the temptation to socialise; despite the lack of comfortable chairs, is far stronger than the draw to engage in summative assessment practices.

Orchard Valley's staff room has a sense of discommodore for the visitor and secure boundary for the resident. Its asymmetrical arrangement of chairs and tables, laden worktops and cluttered loci of information bring stability to the working lives of so many people. Scattered

throughout this room are various groups of teachers engaged in a variety of activities. Being curious by nature I listen, uninvited I may add, to the various conversations and observe the interactions. The topics of conversation vary from politics to sport to the dreadful behaviour of a well known cohort of students whose eventual graduation or departure will be heralded by celebration unseen to date in Orchard Valley.

One of the conversations attracts my undivided attention. The conversation seems to be structured around the preparation by a small group of teachers for a forthcoming staff meeting. The tasks are being divided out amongst the group each being asked to outline the key aspects of their forthcoming presentation on ways in which improvements can be made to a curricular programme which targets the social, personal and health education of sixteen year olds.

It is always difficult to glean the entirety of a situation from a conversation and in particular when it is a conversation that I overheard. One runs the risk of making assumptions and drawing incorrect conclusions, however, as in all aspects of life I can only represent what I thought I heard and saw.

The group consisted of five teachers, two male and three female. There was a substantial age gap amongst the men with my guess being that the older male was not too far from retirement with the younger man relatively new to the profession. The female teachers seemed closer in age but it was difficult to locate them in terms of duration of service. Consensus had been arrived at by the group regarding the structure of the presentation, the flip chart, located beside the younger man, proclaimed in red bold block capitals: the current content of the programme, the recommended changes to the programme, the in-school structures to support the programme, the systemic structures required to support the programme and the barriers to delivering change in Orchard Valley; delivery of the programme.

There followed an energetic discussion as to who was best placed to address each section of the presentation. The current content seemed to be most attractive, it became obvious that

the description of the current reality, the here and now posed less challenge and thus became the prized aspect. With such a flurry of interest the group decided to leave its allocation to later and to focus on the others. Emerging from the conversation was unanimity around their need to prioritise within their allocated presentation time. With an accelerated agreement, not common in staff rooms, it was decided to apportion the majority of the time to the in-school and systemic structures required to support the programme. The younger male stood attentively beside the flip chart diligently recording as much as was being hurled at him into the two boxes that he had so neatly drawn and labelled as %In-School+ and %System+. Located in the %In-School+ column were a series of words and unfinished sentences.

My attention was drawn to those statements that were more complete. In underlined print he had written %The need for Snr. Man. to allocate time for curricular prog. development %with an arrow crossing with an arced velocity to the %System+ side of the box and N.B. in bold capitals. The discussion had been abandoned for a free for all and eclectic verbal gymnastics that exuded passion and commitment that had been frustrated by unyielding regulation and system controls. NO TIME roared out from the page followed by LITTLE RECOGNITION which straddled both boxes. One of the female teachers stressed the need at system level to recognise programme evaluation and development by means of an additional allowance. The reaction to her comment was not overt in its support and was terminated rather swiftly as if the mention of allowance or payment for additional work was the elephant in the room however there seemed to be a loose coalition of agreement amongst them that additional work requires additional remuneration if such work has to be done outside of school hours.

Others in the room overheard this section and shouted unapologetically %no pay no work+. The younger man recorded the single word %pay+ in the system column. A quick look was taken at the staffroom clock to gauge the amount of time left to bring this task to a conclusion.

One of the quietest in the group so far indicated that she felt that involvement in the curricular programme should be invitational as opposed to mandated by school authorities. She alerted the others to her strongly held belief that in life if you don't ask you will not receive. Therefore

she wanted her point regarding elective participation in such curricular programmes, which as she stressed, were outside of her main subject and work areas to be a central aspect of the in-school and system issues. The young male recorded it as %elective v mandatory?+. The older male asked the recorder to add the word %suitability+as a subset to teacher involvement in these programmes and wondered what criteria were ever applied to allocating people to these programmes in school?. He pondered aloud if in all of his thirty eight years of service if he had ever been asked about what he wanted to be involved in or if it had always been determined by others. Others in the group rushed to change the topic with an increasing sense that they were going to be entertained to a treatise of how things used to be in the times when teaching was a recognised profession but they realised that there was no going back with past life as a teacher and their present life akin to life forms from two very different gene pools.

A quick and hurried review of the flipchart points was conducted; the main themes of time, recognition, payment, electivity and suitability were restated. There was collective agreement amongst the group that they had the bones of the presentation and that they now would have to assign the different aspects to particular contributors. Just as if in the nick of time the bell sounded sharply and a coordinated movement came into play. The older male called for the next meeting at the same time on the following Wednesday, this was followed by a collective return to lockers and presses with text books and bundles of copy books being heaved in the direction of the staffroom door.

I sat and wondered about the conversations set to unfold amongst the next group who were charmed at having the next class period free.

Appendix 6: Stage 7 presentation to the combined staffs in both sites.

The Factors that Influence
Teacher Engagement in
Continuing Professional
Development:

An Analysis of my Research
Findings

Joe O'Connell, May 2009

Slide 1

Outline of Session

- ▶ My research questions
- ▶ The fieldwork process
- ▶ Locating my research in the Irish context
 - CPD: The Irish experience
 - Practitioner Learning: Some Conceptualisations
- ▶ Conceptualising the Factors that Impact on Teacher Engagement with CPD and drawing conclusions
- ▶ Recognition of the radically altered context and considering it as an opportunity?
- ▶ Plenary

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Slide 2

My Research Questions

- ▶ What are the factors that influence teacher engagement in CPD?
- ▶ What does this mean for CPD and Professional Practice?

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Slide 3

A Review of the Fieldwork

- ▶ Sincere thanks to all of you for engaging with me in my research
- ▶ Our group sessions: examining what was working well, what was not yet working well and what was open or not open to change in relation to CPD in Ireland and the subsequent feedback
- ▶ Meetings with senior management teams and feedback
- ▶ Individual (18) interviews and feedback
- ▶ Process of reflection and analysis

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Slide 4

Our experience of CPD in Ireland

The changing face of CPD over a short time span

- Relatively recent phenomenon from the DES (OECD 1991)
- Serves (ed) the introduction of revised or new syllabi
- The predominant model (**The Deficit Model**) that we had been exposed to is that of the teacher as technician: the teacher is positioned as the uncritical implementer of outside policies
- Inner knowledge, judgement and wisdom of the professional teacher viewed as one of the greatest resources available to children, (encouragement around subject associations leading to TPNs)
- Staff development embedded in the workplace (whole staff professional development) with increased inquiry into new practices and the implementation of school improvement initiatives such as SDP
- The teacher therefore has as much to give as he/she has to receive, SSE (School Self Evaluation) seeing each school as identifying and addressing its own issues

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Slide 5

Our experience of CPD in Ireland

Social Cultural and Legal Context:

- ▶ The changing pillars of Irish Society: The destabilisation of the traditional canons and the transfer of responsibility to the education system moving from *School Master to Redeemer*
- ▶ The changing legislative context and the introduction of SDP and WSE
- ▶ The enactment of the Teaching Council Act

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Slide 6

The absence of a P?

- ▶ The case for CPPD

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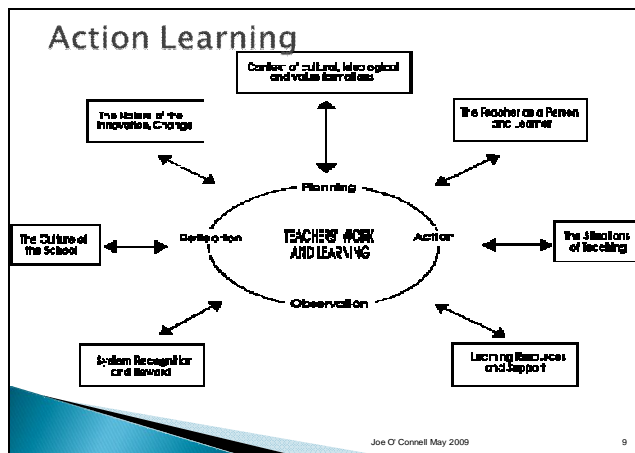
7 Slide 7

Two of the Leading Current Conceptualisations of Practitioner Learning:

- ▶ Action Learning
- ▶ Community of Practice Theory

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9 Slide 9

Action Learning

- ▶ It is defined as being used when there is a need to find a solution to real problems, it is often used when learning is voluntary and learner driven
- ▶ The model rests on the premise that the learners develop questioning insights based on experiences at work to find solutions to work related problems or issues
- ▶ Activity grows out of the particularities of a given situation and its immediacy

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Some assumptions in Action Learning

- ▶ An Implicit assumption that the learners are open to trying out new approaches
- ▶ An assumption that the learners are willing to reflect on the results of such activity
- ▶ An assumption that the learners are willing to share the experiences with others
- ▶ Based on a context where a culture of enquiry fuels engagement and participation

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Slide 11

A Social Theory of Learning

- ▶ Communities of Practice Theory

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Slide 12

Wenger: Education and Identity

“Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the openings of identities- exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. Whereas training aims to create an inbound trajectory targeted at competence in a specific practice, education must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self. It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. Education is not merely formative- it is transformative.” (p.263)

Wenger, E.(1998). Communities of Practice, Learning, Meaning and Identity. Cambridge University Press.

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Knowledge, Knowing and Knowers

Wenger has 4 assumptions as to what matters about learning and as to the nature of knowledge, knowing and knowers:

1. We are social beings, this is a central aspect of learning.
2. Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises.
3. Knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, that is, of active engagement in the world.
4. Meaning – our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful– is ultimately what learning is to produce.

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A community of practice is ...

- ... a group of practitioners, who
- ▶ share similar challenges
 - ▶ interact regularly
 - ▶ learn from and with each other
 - ▶ improve their ability to address their challenges

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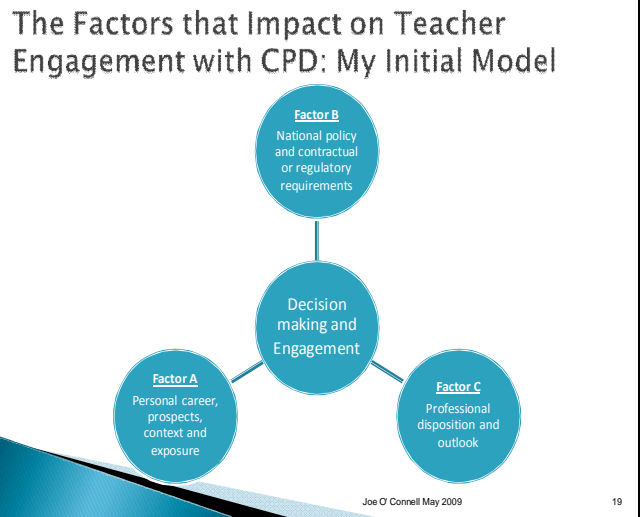
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- ## Some Assumptions in C of P Theory
- A Cof P exists because participants sustain dense relations of mutual engagement organised around what they are there to do
 - Whatever it takes to make mutual engagement possible is an essential component of any practice
 - The mutuality of engagement as opposed to the individual's reasons for engaging..... Membership of the Cof P rather than the decision to become a member
- Joe O'Connell May 2009

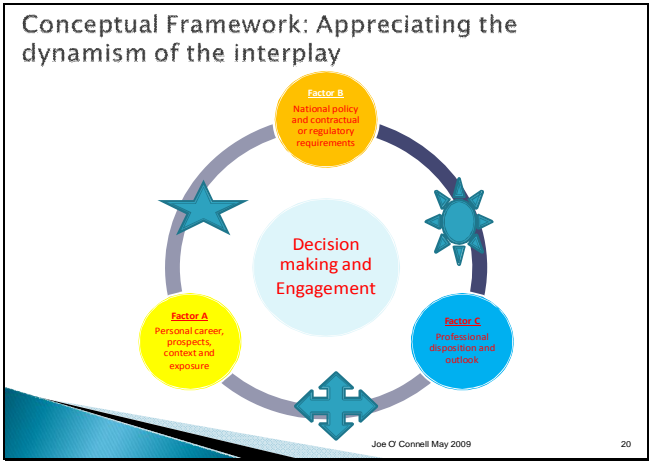
Slide 17

- ## My analysis of your views, how was this conducted?
- Reflection on each experience: trying to adopt a critical stance,
 - Careful consideration of a "supposed form of knowledge"
 - Examining if factors were active and persistent
 - The development of interpretations and the integration of ideas in order to understand the meanings
 - Linking to the conceptualisations
- Joe O'Connell May 2009

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Slide 19



Slide 20

The unfolding story

| Personal career, Prospects, Context and exposure | National Policy Contractual or regulatory requirements | Professional Disposition and Outlook |
|---|--|---|
| Teachers' personal and social commitments | Legislative requirement for organisational policy | Understanding of role of a teacher |
| The School's own context, traditions and settings | Introduction of a myriad of new programmes and syllabi | Teachers sense of professionalism |
| The possibility for advancement in the system | National focus on teaching and learning | Teachers' attitudes to personal reflection and inquiry |
| The influence and style of school management | Registration requirements in the future | Teachers' willingness to engage in innovative and developmental practices |

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The Significant Findings that have emerged

- ▶ Critically the decision making is individualised to the teacher whilst recognising the power of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators
- ▶ The disposition of those in authority to CPD is significant but has extrinsic controls influencing it, namely parental perception
- ▶ The quality, frequency and variety of learning activities influences engagement
- ▶ The career profile of the teacher has an impact
- ▶ Everyday life represents a strong if not the strongest influence on the decision to engage

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What does the research say with regard to future developments?

- ▶ The assumption that the identification of an issue addressed by the design of a programme of professional development to address it is successful is flawed
- ▶ The existence of a programme is just that, meaningful engagement by teachers has to be considered by involvement of the teachers at local level
- ▶ Decentralisation and school self determination is of greater long term value

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Strategies to be considered

| In-school | Systemic |
|--|---|
| BOM /Trustee Mandated and Financially Supported CPD | Move from WSE to SSE |
| Post Holder and Team Meetings to encourage CPD | Negotiation re Time in School/Contractual obligation/Incentivise activity |
| Formal Department Structures to support in school CPD | School self determination re CPD/SDP and delegated budget |
| Reform of Staff meeting Structures to accommodate mini CPD sessions | Increase focus on TPN |
| Timetabled dissemination of Learning from CPD Activity | Establish Inter school collaboration and cooperation on a formal basis |
| Project based activity, i.e. the Learning School, active participation | Increased parental awareness of the benefits of CPD |
| Self development programmes to be designed by each teacher | Regulatory requirement: Teaching Council, make the role explicit |

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Our changed environment- an opportunity?

- In accepting our current financial reality does it provide an opportunity for a rethink?
- Can and should we look more within our collective experience as opposed to the external expert?
- If so how can we develop this?

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Plenary

Mo bhuíochas arís as ucht bhúr
gcomhoibriú

Aon cheist/ráiteas ó éinne?

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