THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROFESSIONALISM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND:
A mixed methods study of trainers' roles and professional development in the workplace

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor in Education is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study aimed to develop understanding of professionalism in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Ireland through exploring the nature of practice and practitioners, and how practitioners conceptualise and construct professionalism and develop as professionals in the VET workplace. This was done using a conceptual framework incorporating workplace learning theories to provide a fresh way to consider how VET trainers are prepared for professional practice (i.e. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Fuller and Unwin, 2004)

It emerged from the study that trainers perceived their role primarily in terms of preparing learners for the labour-market. Novice trainers were rapidly immersed in their new roles and the workplace context experienced by them appeared to have inadvertently encouraged them to hold onto former occupational identities, in many cases prioritising subject-matter expertise over pedagogic knowledge. It also emerged that the trainers' journey from newcomer to competent or expert practitioner was dependent on the learning environment they experienced and that their progress was influenced by 'expansive' and 'restrictive' characteristics (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). As the study progressed it emerged that Fuller and Unwin's theory became much more significant than was originally envisaged when developing the conceptual framework.

Professionalism was predominantly constructed by many trainers as 'structure' with a focus on the achievement of targets and outcomes (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). The study concluded that there is a challenge for VET providers to make workplace learning more visible and to enable it to take place in a more expansive environment. A new model of professionalism is proposed which integrates formal and informal professional learning in the workplace.

This study contributes to the research by: generating a profile of current VET trainers which outlines their qualifications and experience and the nature of their work; developing an understanding of practitioners' perception of the nature of their practice, competence and professionalism and their experience of entry to and professional development in the VET sector; and, providing a model of the dominant construct of professionalism emerging from the practitioners who participated in the study and suggesting an alternative model of professionalism for VET.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to explore how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and constructed by trainers in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) workplace in Ireland. This study is highly relevant to my field of work and it is a very topical area due to a number of changes currently impacting on VET, including restructuring of Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland. This is being undertaken following a Government decision to establish a new FET authority called Seirbhísí i Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS) that will operate under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills (2011). Views of stakeholders are currently being sought by an Implementation Group, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Training and Skills on key issues to be considered (Department of Education and Skills, 2012). In addition an agenda to modernise education and training systems, including the professionalisation of practitioners, is being implemented in Europe (Cedefop, 2009). Academic research on the VET sector in Ireland is scarce, particularly research focusing on practice and professionalism, and therefore it is timely to develop 'practice-based evidence' (Fox, 2003, 84) to inform development of the sector.

Background

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act was implemented in Ireland in 1999 and gave legislative status to the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. The act defines FET as 'education and training other than primary or post-primary education or

higher education and training'. FET incorporates vocational education and training (VET) and bears some resemblance to the Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) sector in the UK. VET has traditionally been defined by its aims which are linked to the labour market and preparation for work (Cedefop, 2011a). One such definition is provided by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, 2011b, 126) which states that VET aims to 'equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market'. It should be noted that often FET programmes in Ireland include elements of VET and many VET programmes include elements of further education. Both FET and VET in Ireland are complex systems and a more detailed overview of these systems is provided in Chapter 2.

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 has been a significant development in professionalising FET in Ireland. The Act led to the establishment of a national framework of qualifications which determines standards and learning outcomes for qualifications on the framework. It also led to a requirement for training providers to have quality assurance systems in place for their training programmes. However, the Act does not specifically provide for the professional development of practitioners, rather it is the responsibility of individual FET providers. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC, undated, 25) states that:

> *One of the key determinants of the quality of a programme or service is the ability of the people employed in its development and delivery. It is essential that every provider has a systematic approach to the recruitment and further professional development of people engaged in programme and service delivery. In particular the provider should ensure that staff have sufficient experience and expertise to fulfil their designated roles. Providers should also ensure that staff members have access to support and development opportunities based on a systematic approach to the identification of their training and development needs.*

Environmental and economic factors are driving changes in the world of work and these changes are impacting on the FET sector. The globalisation of business markets has resulted in pressure for countries to remain economically competitive (Chappell and Johnston, 2003; Béduwé et al, 2009). Many countries, including Ireland, have responded by adopting policies to develop as knowledge-economies, and have elevated the status of lifelong learning (OECD, 1996). These changes are impacting on education and training systems, which need to adapt to meet requirements to provide the appropriate knowledge, skills and capabilities for workers to participate in knowledge-economies (Avis et al, 2002a; Chappell and Johnson, 2003; Reid et al, 2004). Throughout Europe, reforms of education and training systems have been driven by an agenda to modernise systems, mainly through implementation of national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance systems (Lipinska et al, 2007). This brings a focus on monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement. Education and training systems have also been influenced by trends in public sector reform which in Ireland, combined with the recent downturn in the Irish economy, is driving a move towards maximising value from public expenditure through improved efficiency and effectiveness and an emphasis on performance (NESC, 2002; OECD, 2008). FET providers and practitioners will need to respond to the challenge of meeting accountability and performance requirements.

These changes are challenging and have significant implications for the professional development of FET practitioners. FET providers and practitioners will need to have the capacity to respond to the changing environment. This demands a new conceptualisation of professionalism within FET in Ireland and an understanding of the roles, capabilities and professional development needs emerging for practitioners entering and working in the FET sector. Gleeson et al (2005) suggest that new theories of professionalism are

needed in education and training to guide pedagogy and practice while positioning professionalism and public accountability requirements alongside each other.

Context

It is necessary to limit the scope of the study because FET and VET in Ireland are diverse. As significant investment in VET is provided by the state, the study focuses on VET organisations that are state-funded as a case study. A recent OECD (2010, 44) review differentiates between the state 'vocational education' sector and the 'vocational training' sector[1]. The study is concentrating on vocational training organisations which assist learners to progress towards the labour-market, where eligible learners attract a training allowance and where practitioners are predominantly employed in a permanent and full-time capacity. There are 4 key providers of VET, Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FÁS), Fáilte Ireland, Community Training Centres (CTCs) and Teagasc. Access was sought to include them in the study. Teagasc was not in a position to participate at the time. However, access to FÁS, Fáilte Ireland and CTCs provided access to different types of VET providers catering for different categories of learners and offering varying VET programmes.

[1] At the time the review was completed, the main difference was that vocational education was provided under the then Department of Education and Science (predominantly provided through Vocational Educational Committees), and that vocational training was then mainly under the control of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (predominantly provided through FÁS the national training and employment agency).

Participating VET providers

Since its establishment in 1987 the national training agency, An Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FÁS), has been a major provider of VET in Ireland. FÁS provides training programmes in 20 Training Centres, and offers a broad range of courses including bridging and foundation courses, traineeships, apprenticeships and specific skills training to cater for a diverse range of learners. FÁS also funds and supports training for early school leavers, unemployed people and people with disabilities in community settings and specialist training centres. FÁS is currently being restructured with services provided through its Employment Services being transferred to the Department of Social Protection and training services being initially transferred to a newly created further education and training authority, Seirbhísí i Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), and then to the Vocational Education Committees (VECs).

Fáilte Ireland provides training programmes to respond to the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry to 'operate to the highest standard necessary to reach their full potential' (Fáilte Ireland, 2009). There are 5 Fáilte Ireland training centres in Ireland which are funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Community Training Centres (CTCs) are supported by FÁS to provide programmes for early school leavers. They offer flexible vocational education and training programmes to assist learners to achieve major awards on the national framework of qualifications. There are 40 CTCs in various locations throughout the country.

My background

This study is highly relevant to my current work, to my organisation, to the organisations that participated in the study and to other organisations within the wider VET sector involved in VET provision or development of policy for professional development of practitioners. I have worked in the VET sector for more than 30 years first as a trainer and then as a manager, and this has given me extensive knowledge and experience of the sector. My work has included development of organisational training policy and programmes, managing training provision, training of trainers and delivering training. I currently work for FÁS as a training manager. As discussed above, some of the study was carried out in FÁS and in CTCs which are funded by FÁS. This element of 'insider research' required some consideration of ethical issues and this is discussed in Chapter 4 (Robson, 2002).

I acknowledge that my role as researcher is influenced by my values, history, knowledge and experience. My view of learning and training is influenced by my development and experience as a VET manager and VET practitioner and through my development and work as humanistic psychotherapist (e.g. Rogers 1951; Perls, 1992; Rowan, 1998). My predominant orientation is towards constructivist, humanist and transformational learning theories (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978; Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 1993). I view learning as a process during which knowledge and meaning is socially constructed and I believe that learning can be empowering and emancipating. This has been a key driving force in my personal development and my work within FET. A study located in the FET sector best reflects my interests and my professional experience.

Aim of the study

This study followed an initial exploration I completed in 2008 of the role and professional development of VET trainers which had identified a need for further research in the topic area. The central research problem is to examine how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and experienced by VET trainers in their workplace. The study uses VET organisations as a case study to explore the nature of VET practice and its practitioners and to generate a profile of VET trainers to ascertain their qualifications and experience, and it explores how practitioners conceptualise professionalism, effective practice and key competences and how they experience developing as professionals when they enter the VET workplace.

Research questions

The overarching research question is:

- How is professionalism and professional development conceptualised and constructed by VET trainers in their workplace?

The research question will be addressed by focusing on the following questions:

- What is the current profile (including qualifications and experience) of VET trainers?
- How do practitioners perceive and experience their role, their practice, professionalism and the competences required in VET?
- How did trainers enter the VET sector and how have they developed as professionals in the VET workplace?

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in how workplace learning is used to prepare people for their work, and new theories of conceptualising the workplace have emerged (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Fuller and Unwin 2004). These theories provide a fresh way to consider how trainers are prepared for the world of professional practice in their workplace in VET. Following a review of relevant literature, a conceptual framework was developed to focus the study drawing from Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory and Fuller and Unwin's (2004) concept of expansive-restrictive workplace learning environments. This is presented in Chapter 3.

Methodology

A mixed methods approach will be adopted to address how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and experienced by VET trainers in their workplace. An 'embedded' design will be used in which quantitative data are collected and analysed and embedded within a major design i.e. case study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, 90). The quantitative strand will collect quantitative (numeric) data by surveying a large sample of VET trainers to identify trends and generate a national profile of current VET trainers, whereas the qualitative strand will collect qualitative data (text) by using a small sample to develop detailed and in-depth understanding of how VET practitioners perceive and experience professionalism in the workplace. The rationale for this approach is that a single set of data will not be sufficient and the research questions will require different types of data to be answered (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

Outline of the Study

This study sets out to develop understanding of professionalism and professional development in the VET workplace in Ireland. It is important to contextualise how the sector has emerged and the environment in which it operates and Chapter 2 provides a discussion on changes in the world of work impacting on FET and VET and an overview of education and training systems, including education and training in Ireland. Chapter 3 include a review of academic literature related to professionalism, the nature of work and the workforce within the field of Further Education and Training (FET), situated learning and workplace learning, following which a conceptual framework to inform the study is presented. Chapter 4 develops a rationale for the selection of a mixed-method research approach and describes the research methods. A profile of VET trainers emerging from the findings from the quantitative strand of the study is presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 presents findings from the qualitative strand of the study and outlines themes emerging from data drawn from interviews with practitioners. Chapter 7 presents a discussion and conclusions.

Chapter 2: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

This study sets out to develop understanding of how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and constructed by practitioners within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) workplace in Ireland. Research on VET sector in Ireland has predominantly been produced by organisations such as FÁS the national training and employment authority, Irish government departments and European organisations such as the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (e.g. Cedefop 2004; 2000; 1995) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (e.g. OECD, 2010). Academic studies of VET in Ireland are scarce with those available only emerging since the 1990s (e.g. Garavan *et al*, 1995; Heraty and Morley, 1998; Heraty *et al*, 2000; Boyle, 2005; Heraty and Collings, 2006; Gleeson and O'Donnabháin, 2009). These studies are drawn on in the first section of the chapter. Research on VET to date has mainly studied policy and systems and studies on VET practice and practitioners are scarce, particularly in Ireland.

It is important to contextualise how the sector has emerged and how it is developing. Therefore, this chapter commences with a discussion on the changing world of work and its impact on VET providers and practitioners. It then provides an overview of national

VET systems. A brief description of the knowledge-based system of VET in Germany, the skills-based system of VET in the UK and the nature of VET is also included in the first part of the chapter. It continues with an overview of education and training in Ireland. This part of the chapter outlines how education and training policies have developed to contribute to economic development, reflecting the influence of human capital theories, and the development of vocational training policy in Ireland. The next part of the chapter continues with a discussion on reforms being implemented in the further education and training sector in Ireland since the implementation of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act in 1999, and developments in the professionalization of VET practitioners. This part of the chapter draws from government reports and policies and reports produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD).

The chapter concludes that modernisation of VET in Ireland is impacting on the roles and capabilities of VET practitioners, and that there is a need for research to develop understanding of the roles, capabilities, professional development and future needs emerging for VET practitioners.

The changing world of work

Changes in the world of work are impacting on the VET sector. The world of work is responding to new technological innovations and economic globalisation. Globalisation refers to economic and political trends that have emerged over the past thirty years and

have resulted in a tendency for national economies to become increasingly interconnected with national governments having less control over them (Young and Allais, 2009). There is increasing economic pressure at local and national levels to remain economically competitive and to develop human capital to be responsive to innovation and new ways of organising work (Chappell and Johnston, 2003; Béduwé *et al*, 2009).

The impact of globalisation and the drive to be economically competitive underpinned the development of the Lisbon strategy. The Lisbon objectives were formulated in the 1990s and began a process of increased cooperation between EU member states, including the area of training and education, to ensure that Europe would become the most competitive economy by 2010 (Lipinska et al, 2007). Member states were called on to 'modernise' their education and training systems (Lipinska et al, 2007, 7). Developments in policy resulting from the Lisbon strategy have not yet yielded a sufficient shift towards a knowledge society and economy in Europe (Béduwé *et al*, 2009). Nevertheless, positive steps forward have been taken such as cooperation between governments and stakeholders in the development of common goals, priorities, actions and programmes for lifelong learning and education and training systems (Béduwé *et al*, 2009).

The importance of education and training systems to achieving the Lisbon objectives was embedded in the *Copenhagen Declaration* in November 2002 which set out to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe (Harris et al, 2009). A recent review of the *Copenhagen Declaration* proposed closer links between VET and the labour market as a priority. The need for greater alignment between VET and labour market requirements in Ireland was reflected in a review of Active Labour Market Programmes completed by Forfás (2010, 17) which

states that the 'much changed labour market context requires a reshaping and mobilisation of labour market programmes and services to meet the needs of enterprises and individuals'.

The role of knowledge

Knowledge is regarded as the key to economic growth and many economies are, or aspire to become, highly skilled knowledge-based economies (OECD, 1996). In Ireland 'the overall policy objective is the development of our economy into one that is knowledge-based, innovation-driven and inclusive' (Government of Ireland, 2007, 190).

The focus on knowledge economies has elevated the importance of approaches to learning, development and training (Reid *et al*, 2004). Lifelong learning is perceived as key to supporting Ireland's aim of improved competitiveness and it is espoused as 'the guiding principle for education and training policy' (Government of Ireland, 2007, 189). Learning relevant to the labour market is seen as the means of ensuring inclusion in such a knowledge-based economy. Wider participation in lifelong learning to raise levels of achievement is seen as imperative to achieving economic competitiveness and to address barriers to participation in a knowledge economy that may be encountered by individuals with low levels of education and training (Bathmaker, 2005; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

Avis et al (2002a) suggest that in a knowledge economy, knowledge is seen as transient and fluid and quickly becoming obsolete. In this environment the process of learning to learn and relevant knowledge becomes significant. Béduwé et al (2009, 28) suggest that in addition to the technical knowledge required to participate in the labour market,

emphasis is also being placed on 'softer skills, new values, new codes of behaviour and the remodelling of past experience'. Acquisition of generic skills by individuals, including basic/functional skills, people-related skills and conceptual/thinking skills, is perceived as significant for Ireland to become a knowledge-based economy (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, 2007).

The focus on economic competitiveness and globalisation has led to a critical role for training and educational systems in the construction of relevant knowledge (Avis *et al*, 2002a). Chappell and Johnston (2003, 6-7) argue that training and education providers will need to ensure that they are providing 'the appropriate knowledge, skills and capabilities required' to develop workers who are 'flexible, autonomous, motivated, self-regulating and oriented to lifelong learning'.

The socio-economic changes described earlier have important implications for the VET sector, and are transforming the training and learning practices used (Avis, 1999). There is a need for a new VET pedagogy, which is context specific, and is aligned with constructivist theories (Descy and Tessaring, 2001; Cullen et al, 2002; Chappell, 2003). Constructivist theorists argue that learning is mentally constructed by individuals through the interaction of an individual's current knowledge and understanding with new ideas, events and activities. In constructivist settings the teacher is a 'guide, facilitator and co-explorer who encourages learners to question, challenge, and formulate their own ideas, opinions, and conclusions' and learning activities involve 'active engagement, inquiry, problem solving, and collaboration with others' (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). Constructivist learning is broadly interpreted in two different ways, psychological constructivism and social constructivism. Psychological constructivism, associated with Piaget, emphasizes

individual cognitive development, and social constructivism, influenced by Vygotsky, emphasizes the social co-construction of knowledge (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). A useful synthesis of both perspectives is the view that 'knowledge is personally constructed and socially mediated' (Windschitl, 2002, 137).

VET training practices are increasingly being seen as needing to become more learner-centred (Chappell, 2003). Avis et al (2002a, 189) suggest that a learner-centred approach involves 'providing contexts that enable learners to develop in preferred directions', assessing where they are at and developing strategies to facilitate their learning. According to Avis et al (2002b) this necessitates trainers and teachers becoming learning professionals, with subject-based expertise becoming less important than a learner-centred pedagogy. Pedagogy is defined by Sanguinetti et al (2005, 275) as

> *the processes and dynamics of teaching and learning, including the purposes, methods, multiple literacies, relationships, strategies, management, physical environments, power relations and social contexts involved in learning.*

National education and training systems

It is difficult to map and compare national education and training systems. A number of studies have developed typologies for comparing VET systems. The typologies differ and include typologies that group VET systems according to: institutional principles around which training is organised incorporating apprenticeship systems, company training, government-led training, school-based training (e.g. Lynch, 1994, Green 1991); how training relates to national economies including market, corporatist and developmental state approaches (e.g. Iversen and Stephens; 2008; Ashton et al, 2000;

OECD, 1998); and, the degree to which government assumes responsibility for VET through interventionist approaches, devolution or flexibility (Edwards and Garonna, 1991). Other studies focus on the interdependency of the state, the labour market, labour and capital and education and training systems and how the interaction of these relationships are central in influencing the skill formation process (e.g. Bosch and Charest, 2008; Ashton et al, 2000). Bosch and Charest (2008, 430) argue that VET is 'deeply embedded' in these national systems and that VET institutions reflect historical interests and strengths of the various actors and compromises reached. This has resulted in a high level of diversity in national VET systems and VET institutions as each society responds to the different circumstances it faces (Bosch and Charest, 2008, Ashton et al, 2000).

Brochmann et al (2008) draw on the work of Rauner (2006) and distinguish between two models of VET systems, one system focusing on knowledge-based systems (education for an occupation) and the other system focusing on skills-based systems (the employability of individuals). Brockmann et al (2008) suggest that it is useful to place the two models on a continuum and argue that Germany, Switzerland and Austria are examples of knowledge-based VET systems, the UK and USA are examples of skills-based VET systems, with countries like the Netherlands and France positioned somewhere in between (Brockmann et al, 2008).

In Germany, the government in collaboration with social partners (employers and unions) play a prominent role in the process of industrialisation and adopts a 'corporatist' approach to regulate the training system and employment relationships (Ashton et al, 2000, 16). There the aim of VET is to develop learners' occupational, social and

individual competence to take autonomous and responsible action in the workplace denoting a 'multidimensional' concept of competence (Brochmann et al, 2009, 102). The knowledge-based system of VET in Germany underpins the German system of 'dual system' apprenticeship which incorporates a long-established vocational route, as an alternative to the academic route, and combines work-based training, development of theoretical knowledge and general education (Brochmann et al, 2008, 556).

The VET system in the UK is a 'market' model (Ashton et al, 2000, 13). The English VET system was considerably reorganised following the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the 1980s (Brockmann et al, 2008). This has resulted in a shift towards a VET policy reflecting a skills-based system driven by employers' needs and measured in terms of learning outcomes based on required workplace competence (Brockmann et al, 2008). Government programmes are primarily focused on 'market failure' and involve training of the unemployed to re-enter the labour market. Options to participate in VET are provided through a variety of routes including participation in government-sponsored apprenticeships and programmes in further education (FE) colleges.

FE in the UK is an area of publicly funded education (Richardson, 2007). FE colleges were under the control of Local Education Authorities until the 1988 Education Reform Act was implemented. FE colleges then became incorporated and their funding became centrally controlled by a funding council, currently the Learning and Skills Council (Richardson, 2007). FE colleges in England have developed from originating as technical and commercial colleges which provided occupationally related courses to students attending voluntarily, to develop as centres which provided training for young people and

adults when unemployment was high during 1970s and 1980s, to transforming during the 1980s and 1990s to become 'general' colleges of FE (Richardson, 2007). FE colleges now offer basic and sub-degree vocational programmes that cater for all age groups and levels, and in some cases offer alternative sixth-form options for students to complete their schooling (Richardson, 2007). As FE colleges include an involvement with vocational education and training as part of their role they bear some resemblance to VET centres and Institutes of Technologies (ITs) in Ireland and to community colleges in the USA and with technical and further education colleges (TAFE) in Australia (Lucas, 2004).

Richardson (2007, 410) argues that in the absence of a national strategy for FE colleges, they have had to adapt to local circumstances to survive and grow, and that this has resulted in an 'eclectic, uncoordinated organisation of vocational education and training' in England. VET in England has not gained high status and has been associated with academic failure, leading to it sometimes being labelled a 'Cinderella' service (Brockmann et al, 2008; Richardson, 2007). Brockmann et al (2008, 556) argue that the English skills-based system has failed to produce the knowledge and competencies needed for a high-skills economy, rather 'it has actively promoted the production of low-skilled labour'. Relevant studies drawn from the FE sector in the UK are among those reviewed in Chapter 3.

Studies of roles and responsibilities in Vocational Education and Training in Europe and Australia

The literature suggests that new roles and responsibilities are emerging for VET trainers (Attwell, 1999; Avis, 1999; Avis et al, 2001; Avis et al, 2002a; Bathmaker, 2005). Attwell (1999) contends that an expanding role is emerging mainly due to the focus on the concept of lifelong learning and changes in work organisation. He provides an overview of research undertaken as part of an EU Leonardo EUROPROF project which aimed to develop a community of VET researchers and practitioners in Europe and to professionalise VET. The EUROPROF project was a two-year programme carried out by a team of 16 partners from 14 different European countries. Attwell (1999) states that future roles and occupational profiles for VET professionals were investigated by each of the project partners in their countries through interviews with practitioners and training providers using a common semi-structured questionnaire. However, no further details are given of the methodology used. The findings were that in most of the countries increased attention was being paid to VET mainly due to the focus on the concept of lifelong learning and changes in work organisation, and that a broader role for VET professionals was emerging. According to Attwell (1999, 193) the emerging role for VET professionals is

> *in creating learning conditions, in structuring learning, in providing guidance and monitoring for learners and in planning learning objectives and activities with an emphasis on the provision of situational learning, encouraging learning through doing and on guiding and facilitating the process of reflection.*

Attwell (1999) suggests that to carry out this role, VET professionals must develop competence to reflect on their vocational and pedagogic practice, and that the need for

this competence must inform training and education programmes for them. Attwell's (1999) suggested role implies a role more focused on facilitating learning reflecting the current trend in VET towards a learner-centred approach (Avis et al, 2002a; Avis et al, 2002b; Chappell, 2003).

A key feature of the further education and training sector is the diversity of providers offering programmes, the type and levels of courses on offer and the nature of the learners who participate (FETAC, 2005). Therefore, the roles and activities of practitioners are also diverse and encompass a 'variety of pedagogic cultures and practices' and varying 'understandings of teaching and learning' (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005, 49). In Australia, Sanguinetti et al (2005) completed an action research study and found that youth, adult and community education teachers drew on a wide range of strategies and approaches and had developed 'sophisticated pedagogical repertoires' (Sanguinetti et al, 2005, 285). The study does not include information about the qualifications and experience of the participants, nor does it describe how the teachers developed their pedagogic repertoires and their practice. A study by Bathmaker (2005, 95) found that FE lecturers in the UK constructed a 'teaching and learning culture' to help students by developing supportive relationships with them. Details of how they developed a teaching and learning culture and what practices they used are not available, other than stating that lecturers used a variety of 'sanctions and warnings' and 'threats in relation to the future' to create motives for students to attend extra classes (Bathmaker, 2005, 92-93). However, Bathmaker (2005) concludes that positive learning cultures and supportive relationships between teachers and students help contribute to a more successful orientation to learning by students.

An empirical study by Avis et al (2001, 68) found that, although there was variability of work processes and diversity in what a 'week in the life of an FE teacher' looked like, the role of FE lecturers in the UK predominantly involves conventional classroom teaching and a significant amount of administrative work. However, it is important to note that unlike VET trainers in Ireland, FE lecturers do not solely work with one course, rather they teach one or more subjects across a range of qualification types and levels and their teaching contact time with students is timetabled (Prospects, undated). By contrast, an empirical investigation of the FE sector in Ireland by McNamara et al (2005, 165) found that the role of FE practitioners was 'multifaceted', requiring them to deal with a wide range of issues. The FE practitioners perceived their role as 'facilitator' and that 'much of the success of students hinges on the ability of staff to tap into their needs and to provide guidance and support' (McNamara et al, 2005, 165). These studies highlight diversity in the role of FET practitioners. In their study, McNamara et al (2005) also found that a complex range of skills and competencies are perceived as vital in the FE sector. FE practitioners perceived personal development and interpersonal communications to be key skills in their work. Their study identified staff training needs such as facilitating learning, counselling, team building and the area of adult learning (McNamara et al, 2005). McNamara et al (2005) stated that their study was limited to certain areas within FE in Ireland and did not include VET organisations such as FÁS, Fáilte Ireland or Community Training Centres.

A strong commitment by FE practitioners to their work and their learners emerges from the literature (Bathmaker, 2005; McNamara et al, 2005; Sanguinetti et al, 2005). Bathmaker (2005) found that FE lecturers were highly committed to helping students succeed. This support was in the form of additional support, help and time to normal

training and learning provision, primarily to ensure students completed assessment tasks (Bathmaker, 2005). McNamara et al (2005) found that a strong ethos of commitment to the personal and academic development of the clientele exists in the FE sector in Ireland. They point out that 'educators in the FE sector are drawn to their work because of a commitment to what they are doing and especially to those with whom they work' (McNamara et al, 2005, 167). Building positive, respectful and supportive relationship with learners is fundamental to the work of FE practitioners (Sanguinetti et al, 2005). Sanguinetti et al (2005, 280) refer to this as 'engaged pedagogy'.

A study by Chappell and Johnson (2003) investigated the changing nature of the VET workforce in Australia, in particular ways in which the site-specific location of VET practitioners influences their understanding of their identity at work. Data was drawn from interviews with 28 VET practitioners working in a range of VET sites. Chappell and Johnson (2003) found that the working lives of VET practitioners were very varied but teaching remains a significant part of their work. The most common entry route to VET by practitioners in the study was through part-time teaching. The education identity of the practitioners was strong, but Chappell and Johnson (2003) explain that this could be because the VET sites studied are socially constructed as educational institutions. They found that the practitioners place great importance on the teaching-learning relationships, and underlying educational norms, values and conduct.

Harris et al (2005) studied how the changing environment is impacting on the work and role of VET practitioners in Australia. Data was developed through 10 focus group discussions and 64 interviews with VET practitioners in a wide range of roles in a number of different types of training organisations, including public and private training

organisations. Harris et al (2005) found that influencing factors such as policy, needs of industry and the economy were the main drivers of change and impacted in different ways. Shifts in aspects of VET working life were required, particularly shifts in the habits, beliefs, values, skills and knowledge of practitioners. The impact of change differed amongst organisations and practitioners, and Harris et al (2005) argue that a rethink of the 'one size fits all' approach to policy implementation is necessary.

These studies reveal some understanding about the nature of work and practitioners' understanding of their work in FE in the UK and VET in Australia. McNamara et al (2005) concluded that the role of FE practitioners in Ireland was multifaceted which contrasted with a more conventional teaching and administrative role found in FE in the UK. However, a need has emerged for further research to explore how practitioners in VET organisations in Ireland understand and experience their role, and this study is addressing this gap.

Education and training in Ireland

There are three levels of education in Ireland, primary, secondary and third level. Two state examinations, the Junior Certificate (aimed at 15/16 year olds) and the Leaving Certificate (aimed at 17/18 year olds), exist at secondary level. Until relatively recently, the schooling system in Ireland had been academically focused and had predominantly aimed to prepare students for third level education and white collar occupations (Garavan *et al*, 1995). However, the introduction of a transition year after the Junior Certificate, and restructuring of the Leaving Certificate to incorporate the Leaving Certificate

Applied Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme alongside the established Leaving Certificate may be viewed as an attempt to create a stronger vocational focus at secondary-school level (Heraty et al, 2000). Third level education in Ireland is provided by universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education.

In Ireland, Further Education (FE) is defined as 'education and training which occurs after second level schooling but which is not part of the third level system' (Department of Education and Science, 2004, 21). Vocational Education Committees (VECs) are statutory education authorities and their responsibilities include vocational educational training. FE programmes mainly fall within the remit of the VECs and include Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS), programmes in Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres for early school leavers, adult literacy and basic education (Department of Education and Science, 2004).

Since the 1960s, education and training policies have been increasingly influenced by human capital theories (Gleeson and Ó'Donnabháin, 2009). Irish government policy, in line with that of other countries, began to increasingly reflect the growing consensus on the links between economic growth and investment in education:

> *Investment in education, training and upskilling, broadly termed as investment in human capital, has played a very important role in Ireland's successful economic performance*
>
> (Government of Ireland, 2007, 190)

The influence of economic requirements on the development of educational policy, has been labelled 'vocationalism' by some scholars (e.g. Hodkinson, 1991; Grubb, 1996; Ball, 1999), and has been the subject of academic debate. Vocationalism was criticised for its undermining of the importance of knowledge and understanding through its focus

on the product and outputs of education and training (Armitage, 2003). However, it is useful to view vocationalism as a social inclusion measure that challenges disenfranchisement by providing opportunities for people with low or no educational qualifications to progress to the labour market through vocational learning opportunities (Armitage, 2003). A recent report by the Expert Group of Future Skills Needs (2007) links educational qualifications and successfully gaining employment, and suggests that individuals with no or low qualifications are amongst the most likely to be unemployed.

Policies to develop links between education and the economy in Ireland have been influenced by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's (OECD) report Investment in Education published in 1965. This report laid the groundwork for a number of major policy initiatives and was followed by a series of reforms in the state, including the introduction of free post-primary education. This led to greatly increased participation rates in second and third-level education (Heraty et al, 2000). Retention rates in secondary schools, i.e. the estimated percentage of students who complete school with a Leaving Certificate increased from 20% in 1965 to more than 80% in 2000 (Department of Education and Science, 2004).

Until 2010, education and training policy in Ireland predominantly fell within the remit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment who were responsible for VET programmes delivered by FÁS, and the Department of Education and Science who were responsible for primary, secondary and third level and further education programmes in further education schools and colleges. This has resulted in a parallel approach to the development of the training and education system in Ireland, the evolution of which Heraty and Morley (1998, 192) argue has been unstructured as it 'lacked cohesive policy

development'. In March 2010, the government at that time reallocated responsibility for all skills and training policy to the newly named Department of Education and Skills (DES), including the transfer of responsibility for FÁS, with the aim of aligning further education and training activities more closely. In July 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills announced the imminent disbandment of FÁS and establishment of a new further education and training authority called Seirbhísí i Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS) that will operate under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. The Minister stated that the mandate of SOLAS will be to 'ensure the provision of 21st century high-quality further education and training programmes' which will be 'responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy' (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).

The origin of vocational training in Ireland, as in the UK, can be traced to the Guild System of the eleventh century, which operated a process of apprenticeship to provide trained craftsmen. The impact of the Guild System has resulted in similarities in how training policies and systems have developed in both countries (Garavan *et al*, 1995; Heraty *et al*, 2000). The Guild System gradually declined during the eighteenth century as the growth of industrialisation introduced factories, the mechanisation of production processes and division of labour. This led to a form of work classification and occupation categories such as 'managerial, clerical, technical, semi-skilled and unskilled employees' (Garavan *et al*, 1995, 59), which still influence how work and training is organised today.

Early forms of training reforms were mostly associated with apprenticeships, and the regulation of craft apprenticeship was the focus of the earliest vocational training policies in Ireland. The Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Irl) Act (1898) set up the first

form of regulated apprenticeship in Ireland and stated that all training and instruction should be 'on-the-job'. Following Irish independence in 1921, the Government set out to develop the Irish economy. On foot of a report by the Commission on Technical Education in 1926 which was highly critical of the educational system for its inability to meet the needs of trade, industry and agriculture (Garavan *et al*, 1995), a number of statutory reforms were implemented, including the Vocational Education Act, 1930 and the Apprenticeship Act, 1931. The Vocational Education Act, 1930 focused on vocational training and continuing education and established Vocational Education Committees (VECs). This Act is significant as its reference to 'technical education' and 'continuation education' provided general categories which have been widely interpreted and which have allowed for the 'progressive development' of a wide range of further education courses (Geaney, 1998, 53). The Apprenticeship Act, 1931 was established to reorganise the apprenticeship system though the formation of apprenticeship committees to regulate apprenticeship duration, wage levels and courses (Heraty *et al*, 2000). This was later followed by the Apprenticeship Act (1959) which established a national apprenticeship board, An Cheard Chomhairle, to regulate the apprenticeship system. This Act gave An Cheard Chomhairle power to standardise and monitor education standards and to ensure release of apprentices to attend technical colleges (Heraty *et al*, 2000).

Ireland was slow to develop training policies in areas other than apprenticeship until the 1960s, when the Irish government adopted many of the recommendations of the 1964 OECD report *Council on Manpower Policy as a Means for the Promotion of Economic Growth*. From the 1960s onwards, there was a change in government policy as the state pursued a strongly interventionist approach to economic development (Heraty and Morley, 1998; Heraty and Collings, 2006). This involved embracing an 'industrialisation

by invitation' policy from the 1960s and attracting foreign direct investment, predominantly through US-owned multinational corporations (Gunnigle et al, 2003, 11). It also involved the establishment of an industrial training authority, An Chomhairle Oiliúna (AnCO) under the Industrial Training Act (1967) which compelled organisations to adopt a more systematic approach to identifying and delivering training requirements (Heraty and Collings, 2006). During the 1980s and 1990s, high priority was given to meeting the needs of the unemployed.

The Industrial Training Act was superseded by the Labour Services Act (1987) which established a new national training agency, An Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FÁS) to provide, co-ordinate and promote training activities for employment (Heraty and Collings, 2006). The Labour Services Act was significant in that it gave 'political and administrative prominence to labour market policy' (Boyle, 2005, 24).

During the 1980s and 1990s and again since 2008 Ireland has been faced with the challenge of reducing high levels of unemployment. High priority was and is given by the government to providing vocational training to meet the needs of the unemployed. This has resulted in a greater proportion of state funding for training and development in Ireland being directed towards unemployed workers, leaving training of the employed as the responsibility of individual organisations which are seen as the primary beneficiaries from the return on investment (Heraty and Collings, 2006).

The approach to VET in Ireland has been influenced by the concept of systematic training. Systematic training was advocated by the Irish Government through the Industrial Training Act, 1967, in an attempt to professionalise training (Garavan et al,

1995). It aimed to ensure that learning or behaviour change occurred in a structured format to ensure the 'experienced worker standard' (EWS) was reached, and usually involved assessment and identification of organisational training needs and job training requirements, programme design and evaluation and feedback (Garavan et al, 1995, 317). It has been argued that the systematic training model is no longer relevant to current training and development because of the changing labour-market environment (Garavan et al, 1995). Field (2007, 313-314) argues that behaviourist psychology significantly impacted on VET and provided an underlying theory and 'a set of guiding principles and practical approaches'. He states that behaviourism was operationalised as 'programmed instruction' which aimed to achieve a set of behavioural objectives (Field, 2007, 314). Descy and Tessaring (2001, 13) argue that VET must change from 'instructionist education' to realise the concept of lifelong learning as 'a new educational paradigm'.

Public Sector Reform

Education and training in Ireland has been influenced by a government programme to reform the public sector which was launched in what was termed the "Strategic Management Initiative" in 1994, and was expanded in the publication "Delivering Better Government" (Department of the Taoiseach, 2006; Hardiman and MacCárthaigh, 2008). The main focus was on improved services to the public and improved accountability and use of resources. Gleeson and O'Donnabháin (2009) argue that this represented the arrival of the management culture, New Public Management (NPM). NPM is a liberal market ideology in which the public are seen as clients, performance is controlled and there is accountability for achieving results (Hardiman and MacCárthaigh, 2008; Gleeson and O'Donnabháin, 2009, 27). The government of Ireland avoided using the term New

Public Management (Hardiman and MacCárthaigh, 2008). However, advancements made by Ireland 'along a *New Public Management* continuum' were recognised by the OECD in a review of the public service in Ireland (2008, 18). A task force established following the OECD review set out a series of actions in a report *Transforming public services: citizen centred - performance focused.* These were underpinned by a focus on 'achieving improved performance by organisations and individuals' and 'achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy' (Department of an Taoiseach, 2008).

A number of expenditure reviews have been completed by government departments including a value for money review of the Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres by the Department of Education and Science (2008). The report's recommendations included developing a new basis for the allocation of funding for VEC/centre administration, developing a set of performance indicators to measure outcomes, engagement by centres in quality assurance processes, recruitment of staff with a mix of professional experience and backgrounds and provision of access to appropriate continuous professional development by staff to support delivery of VET programmes. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, through Forfás (2010), carried out a review of Active Labour Market Programmes which as discussed in an earlier part of this chapter proposed greater alignment between VET and the labour market. Recommendations from the both these reviews, reflect the key actions espoused to modernise the public service recommended by the National Economic and Social Council (2002) and the OECD (2008), and include a move towards focusing on outcomes, outputs and achievements rather than inputs and processes. The drive for improved efficiency and effectiveness has been compounded by the downturn in the Irish economy, which has led to significant decreases in public expenditure and a push to do more with less. This

suggests that within the VET sector in Ireland, there is a shift towards a culture of 'performativity' (Ball, 2003, Avis 2005).

Reforming the education and training system in Ireland

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, which was enacted in 1999, is a significant development and is transforming education and training in Ireland. Key features of the Act are the implementation of a national framework of qualifications (NFQ), the legislative status given to the further education and training sector (encompassing Vocational Education and Training, Further Education and Adult and Community Education) and a requirement for training providers to have quality assurance systems in place.

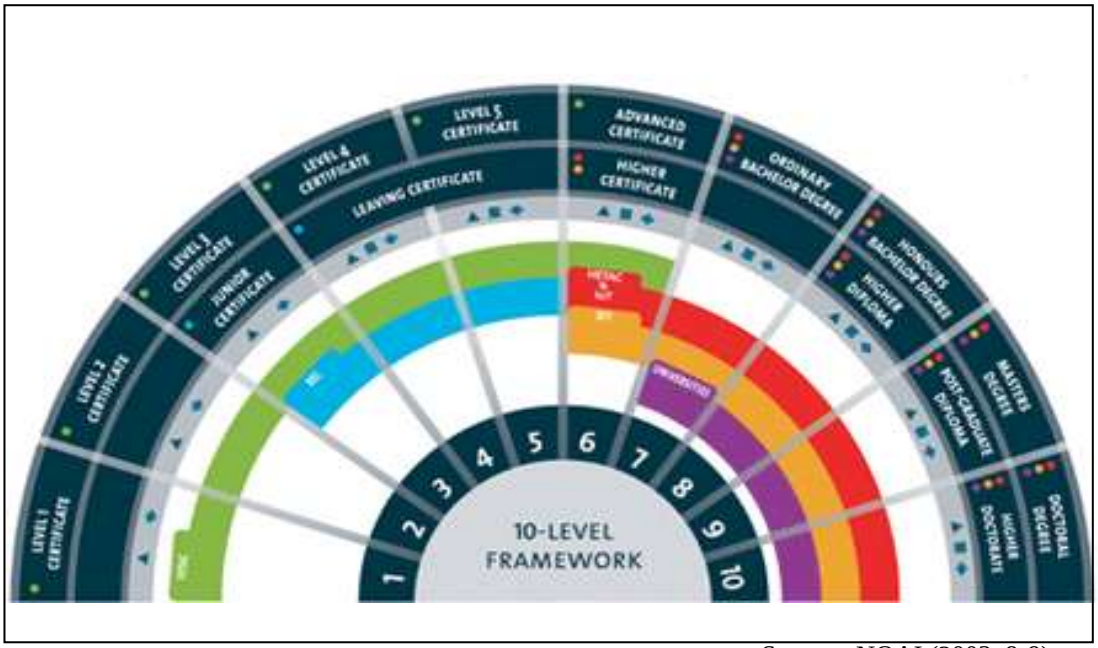
The Qualifications Act (1999) led to the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). In July 2011, the government published a Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill which provides for the amalgamation of these three organisations into a new body provisionally called the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI).

Under the Qualifications Act, training providers are required to have quality assurance systems agreed with appropriate awards councils in place e.g. within the FET sector, any provider wishing to offer programmes leading to awards on the NFQ must meet a national standard which has been determined by FETAC. Quality assurance systems

include a focus on continuous improvement through internal and external monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Since 2008 FETAC have monitored approximately 20% FET providers registered with them and published the results annually (FETAC, 2011).

The remit of the NQAI was to develop and maintain a framework of qualifications to facilitate lifelong learning through the promotion of access, transfer and progression for all learners. It was also charged with establishing and promoting the maintenance and improvement of the standards of awards of the further and higher education and training sectors. The NFQ was launched in 2003. It is a ten level system stepping from the lowest level, 1 to the highest level, 10 (see Figure 1). Awards placed at each level are based on learning standards of knowledge, skills and competence (NQAI, 2003).

Figure 1. National Framework of Qualifications



Source: NQAI (2003, 8-9)

National Qualifications Frameworks are distinguished from other qualifications systems because qualifications are:

- *described in terms of a single set of criteria;*

- *ranked on a single hierarchy of levels*
- *classified in terms of a single set of occupational fields*
- *described in terms of learning outcomes (that are expressed independently of the site, institution and form of pedagogy or curriculum)*
- *defined in terms of elements (sometimes referred to as units or unit standards) and*
- *ascribed a volume in terms of credit expressed as notional learning hours or outcomes*

(Young, 2008, 128)

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI, 2003) describes FET in terms of awards made by the FETAC at Levels 1 to 6 on the NFQ. Within the school system the Junior Certificate is placed at Level 3 and the Leaving Certificate programmes are placed at Levels 4 and 5 of the NQF. The FET sector encompasses a wide range of knowledge, skills and competences typically focused on vocational skills and education spanning Levels 1-6 (see Table 1). This is reflected in wide ranging diversity of provision in the FET system through a diversity of programmes offered by a wide range of institutions (some of which were described briefly earlier in this chapter) to a broad cohort of learners who do not fit a prescribed profile (e.g. age, qualifications etc) (FETAC, 2005).

Prior to the establishment of the NFQ in Ireland, education and training had been differentiated from each other. This meant that Irish FET qualifications were difficult to reference to the established systems of certification and qualifications of schools and academic institutions, and hence were often viewed as 'inferior in status and esteem' (Granville, 2003). It also led to a lack of integration of progression routes, assessment and certification between the systems. The NFQ has been successful in providing a structure to establish equivalencies and pathways to transfer and progress between awards placed on the framework and to give equal respect to all learning, learners and institutions. Consequently, the NFQ has been a significant development in providing a mechanism to facilitate relating education and training awards to each other, and has

moved Ireland towards having a coherent qualifications system for all levels of education and training.

Table 1. NQF Levels 1-6

NFQ Level	*Description*	*Example of certificate*
Level 1	Comprises a number of components - often in basic literacy and numeracy	Certificate in Communications (major)
Level 2	Comprises a number of components, - often in basic literacy and numeracy	Certificate in General Learning (major)
Level 3	Enables learners to gain recognition for specific personal skills, practical skills, and knowledge	Certificate in Keyboard and Computer Skills (major)
Level 4	Enables learners to gain recognition for the achievement of vocational and personal skills. An award at this level may lead to progression to a programme leading to a Level 5 Certificate and employment at an introductory vocational level	Certificate in Pharmacy Sales (major)
Level 5	Enables learners to develop a broad range of skills, which are vocational specific and require a general understanding of the subject matter. The majority of certificate/module holders at Level 5 take up positions of employment. Holders of certificates at this level also meet the minimum entry requirements for a range of higher education programmes	Certificate in Restaurant Operations (major)
Level 6 (Advanced Certificate)	Enables development of a variety of skills which may be vocationally specific and /or of a general supervisory nature. The majority of Level 6 holders take up positions of employment. A Certificate holder at this level may also transfer to a programme leading to the next level of the framework	Advanced Certificate Craft-Electrical

Source: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (undated)

The introduction of NFQs brings a focus on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) which require practitioners to deliver their service to pre-determined standards. Quality assurance systems require monitoring, resulting in practitioners' work being subject to internal and external examination to ensure conformance to standards determined by FETAC. This impacts on the role of the FET practitioner and the skills

and competence practitioners need to develop, maintain and improve their practice (Harris et al, 2009).

Professionalisation of VET practitioners

A European agenda to modernise education and training systems has brought attention to teachers and trainers, and includes a focus on the 'professionalisation' of teachers and trainers (Cedefop, 2009, 1). In a Cedefop study, Parsons et al (2009) notes that there is no common standard of training for education and training practitioners in Europe. However, in some countries, requirements for the recruitment and professional development of practitioners have been strengthened (Tessaring and Wannan, 2004). Improving the professionalism and skills of VET practitioners is seen as key to enhancing the esteem and attractiveness of the teaching profession (Leney and Green, 2005). Despite this, Harris et al (2009) point out that professional development for VET practitioners is still voluntary in many countries.

There has been an increased focus on the professional status of teaching in the school sector in Ireland over the last few decades (Sexton, 2007). Promoting teaching as a profession is a key remit of the Teaching Council, which was established under the Teaching Council Act, 2001. Its work to date has involved regulation of entry to teaching through maintenance of a register of teachers and developing codes of professional conduct for teachers (Teaching Council, 2009). To teach in a recognised state primary or post-primary school, teachers must meet the Teaching Council registration requirements. Within the 'vocational education' sector 'teachers typically have to be registered with the

Teaching Council' with some exceptions including tutors delivering programmes in Youthreach (OECD, 2010, 44). A definition of profession or professional is not provided by the Act or the Teaching Council. However, its objectives and work to date reflect a focus on qualifications and standards. There is no equivalent body to the Teaching Council regulating the VET sector, although a White Paper on Adult Education (Department of Education and Science, 2000) recommended setting up a working group to explore the feasibility of developing a training programme leading to a recognised qualification for adult education practitioners. However, this group was not actually established.

In recent decades, a trend towards codifying professional knowledge of occupational groups has emerged, usually in the form of standards, outcomes and/or competences (Robson, 2006). According to Robson (2006), this facilitates accreditation, and is a strategy for protecting and enhancing the status of a professional group. A teaching or training qualification is not mandatory for entry to the VET sector in Ireland and is a key feature distinguishing VET from the school sector (Robson, 1998a, 1998b).

A study on the overall Human Resource Development (HRD) and training sector in Ireland was carried out by the Irish Institute of Training and Development (IITD) in 2009. Participants in the study were drawn from private companies (including specialist HRD/training companies, non-specialist HRD/training companies and sole traders) and trainers in the public sector (21% of the respondents). The study revealed that there was a lack of standardisation around entry routes to HRD and training, and diversity in practitioner qualifications held at entry and gained post-entry and that 96% of respondents held at least one educational qualification. Almost half of the respondents

held qualifications at Certificate or Diploma level, of whom only 20% held qualifications in the training/education area, and an additional 2% held training/education qualifications at degree level. The study focused on the broad HRD field and did not analyse information against sectors within this field. Therefore, for the purposes of studying the VET sector in Ireland, the study was limited as it did not provide information regarding qualifications held at entry and gained post-entry by VET practitioners.

An empirical study by McNamara et al (2005) investigated the FE sector in Ireland and involved coordinators of FE centres, including Youthreach centres. The study found that although almost three-quarters of FE coordinators felt that a teaching/training qualification should be required by FE staff, only two-thirds of full-time staff and less than half of part-time staff held such a qualification (McNamara et al, 2005). However, due to the limitation of this study, McNamara et al (2005) acknowledge that a number of key organisations including vocational training organisations such as FÁS were not included. A recent report by the OECD (2010) states that 'currently more than one third of FÁS instructors do not have a recognised pedagogical qualification'. The report states that this finding is based on information provided in a personal communication from FÁS in June 2009 and may be a general opinion as details of how the level of instructors with qualifications was determined is not outlined by the OECD and does not extend beyond FÁS instructors. There is a gap in the research in Ireland regarding the qualifications and experience of trainers in the VET sector. This study will begin to address this gap by providing a profile of VET practitioners in FÁS, Fáilte Ireland and Community Training Centres.

In the absence of a nationally agreed standard or regulation of the VET sector in Ireland, initiatives to promote the professional development of trainers have emerged from organisations with an interest in the area. Until November 2010, FÁS and Enterprise Ireland operated a national register of approved trainers whose expertise and subject matter and training/teaching qualifications met their standards. Competency models to promote the development of trainers have been developed by the IITD (2009) and the Trainers' Network (2009). A range of 'education and training' programmes for practitioners is available in Irish universities and private colleges with accreditation being available from certificate to doctorate level. A list of some of the programmes currently available in Ireland is shown in Table 2. Many of these programmes evolved with the support of training organisations providing VET, and are used by training organisations for in-service development (Department of Education and Science, 2000). Participation on such programmes is voluntary.

The UK is an interesting case study to consider, as regulation of teachers, trainers and assessors across the further education (FE) has been in place since 2008 following the introduction of legislation. Regulation of the further education and skill sector is overseen by the Institute for Learning (IFL) which aims to ensure that practitioners are recognised for 'excellent teaching and training for learners' (IFL, undated). The UK approach ensures that all practitioners are licensed to practice through a process of 'professional formation' and continuous professional development (Institute for Learning, undated). To be licensed to practice, new practitioners entering the FE sector are required to undertake and complete professional formation within 5 years of their appointment (which includes gaining formal qualifications). To retain their licence they are required to pursue continuous professional development. Like the Teaching Council in Ireland,

this approach views qualifications and standards as the key features underpinning professionalism, but recognises that VET is often a second career and allows a period of time for practitioners entering the sector from previous occupations to gain teaching qualifications in-service.

Table 2. Training and Education practitioner programmes available in Ireland

Programme	***Institution***
Certificate in Adult and Community Education	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Certificate in Training and Continuing Education	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Certificate in Training and Development	Irish Institute of Training and Development
Certificate in Training and Education	Griffith College
Certificate in Training and Education	National University of Ireland, Galway
Certificate in Training Practice	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Diploma in Training and Education	National University of Ireland, Galway
Foundation Diploma in Training and Education	National University of Ireland, Galway
Higher Certificate in Arts in Adult Education	Waterford Institute of Technology
Higher Certificate in Arts in Literacy Development	Waterford Institute of Technology
Higher Certificate in Community Education and Community Development	Waterford Institute of Technology
Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching	Athlone Institute of Technology
Degree in Adult Education	Waterford Institute of Technology
Degree in Community Education and Community Development	Waterford Institute of Technology
Degree in Education	Trinity College University of Limerick
Degree in Training and Education	Dublin City University National University of Ireland, Galway
Masters in Adult and Community Development	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Masters in Adult Learning and Development	National University of Ireland, Galway
Masters in Education	National University of Ireland, Maynooth University College, Cork University College, Dublin University of Limerick
Masters in Education and Training Management	Dublin City University
Masters in Education in Innovative Learning	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Masters in Learning and Development	University of Cork
Masters in Management in Education	Athlone Institute of Technology Waterford Institute of Technology
Postgraduate diploma/ Masters in Teaching and Learning in Further and Higher Education	Waterford Institute of Technology
Doctoral programmes	Dublin City University National University of Ireland, Maynooth Trinity College
PhD in Education	National University of Ireland, Maynooth University College, Cork University College, Dublin University of Limerick

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that significant changes are impacting on the VET sector in Ireland and that the environment in which VET is situated is a challenging one. In the current environment, where the need for economic competitiveness is more critical than ever, a key role is emerging for VET. Concepts such as knowledge-based economies and lifelong learning are driving a demand for new types of workers with different skills and capabilities. Emerging requirements are for VET providers to respond by providing the knowledge and new skills that are required for the changing labour market. In Ireland, as in many other countries, modernisation of VET is being driven by a requirement for quality assurance systems and the development of a qualifications framework to make VET more attractive. VET providers need to develop quality assured environments and a culture of monitoring, evaluating and continuous improvement. Reform of public services has increased the focus on accountability and performance. VET providers need to be organised to respond to the challenges of meeting targets which measure outcomes, outputs and achievements and show value for money. These challenges need to be faced in an economic environment where significant spending cuts are being made and VET providers are competing for scarcer resources.

Attempts to modernise VET will be influenced by the reform of the roles and capabilities of VET practitioners (Parsons et al, 2009). VET providers will need to ensure that their practitioners have the capacity to respond to the changing environment. Indeed, it is questionable whether VET can successfully reform and respond to the new requirements without a change for VET practitioners. Although the changes impacting on VET are documented, little research has been undertaken on the actual practices of teaching and

learning in VET institutions or the impact of VET reform on practitioners (Cedefop, 2009).

This chapter has identified a need for research to develop more understanding of the roles, capabilities, qualifications, experience and professional development needs emerging for practitioners entering and working in the VET sector. In particular, there is a gap in the research in Ireland regarding the qualifications and experience of trainers in the VET sector and research which explores how VET practitioners perceive and experience their role. The study will begin to address this gap by providing a profile of VET practitioners in FÁS, Fáilte Ireland and Community Training Centres.

The next chapter reviews literature relevant to these areas.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter findings drawn from academic literature related to professionalism, the nature of work and the workforce within the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Further Education and Training (FET) are reviewed to focus the study and to develop a conceptual framework. Little empirical research is available in these areas, particularly studies on FET in Ireland. An Irish study by McNamara et al (2005) and a study by Sexton (2007) are reviewed. Although Sexton's (2007) study is not drawn from the FET sector, as it studies how secondary school teachers view themselves as professionals it is relevant. Other literature is drawn from Further Education (FE) in the UK, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) research in Australia. It should be noted that FE in the UK refers to both academic and vocational opportunities for learning beyond secondary education, and can be perceived as a 'second chance route' to higher level education (Bathmaker, 2005). A more detailed description of FE in the UK was included in Chapter 2.

The chapter begins with an outline of theoretical concepts of professionalism including the notion of professionalism as a value system and professionalism as control and power. It discusses how changes in thinking have challenged the conditions of professional knowledge and how new thinking about the notion of public professionalism has led to a call for a new construction of professional knowledge which takes account of

performance requirements and professional practice. Relevant studies on professionalism are reviewed (i.e. Robson et al, 2004; Gleeson et al, 2005; Gleeson and James, 2007; Sexton, 2007). The chapter continues with a review of studies on the nature of work and emerging role for practitioners in FET (i.e. Attwell, 1999; Avis et al, 2001; Chappell and Johnson, 2003; Bathmaker, 2005; Harris et al, 2005; McNamara et al, 2005; Sanguinetti et al, 2005). This is followed by a review of studies on the FET workforce exploring new entrants' experiences beginning as practitioners in the sector (i.e. Robson 1998a; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Colley et al, 2007). VET practitioners often enter the sector without a qualification or experience in training or teaching. In many cases their professional development takes place within the VET organisation they join (Robson, 1998b). Literature relating to situated learning and workplace learning is also reviewed in this chapter, including studies of workplace learning of FE practitioners (i.e. Avis et al, 2003; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Fuller et al, 2004; Lucas and Unwin, 2009).

A conceptual framework for the study which builds on the literature reviewed is developed in the chapter. The chapter then concludes that there is a need for more research on the FET sector in Ireland.

Professionalism

Concepts of professionalism

The professional world is changing considerably under the pressure of social change. In recent decades professions and professionals in the public sector have faced increasing challenges, criticism and scrutiny from the media, politicians and the public. Many

professionals have experienced changes in their pay, contracts, and the nature of their work. Professionals have to respond to external requirements for greater accountability for achieving results and provision of services in audited or monitored environments. This is challenging the nature of professionalism and new concepts of professionalism within public life are emerging (e.g. Gleeson et al, 2005; Evetts, 2006; Gleeson and Knights, 2006). The concept of professionalism is being increasingly utilised by a wide range of organisations. Two of the training agencies participating in this study state in their organisational statements of strategy that professionalism is a 'key principle' (Fáilte Ireland, undated, 141) or a 'core value' (FÁS, undated, 3) underpinning their work. However, what it means to be professional is a 'deeply contested question' as is how professionalism is constructed in further education and training (Colley et al, 2007). Professions and professionalism have been studied by sociologists over a number of decades, and academic literature reveals diverse viewpoints on the concept and requirements of professions (e.g. Eraut, 1994; Bottery and Barnett, 1996; Robson, 2006). Gleeson and James (2007, 451) suggest that professionalism in FET is an 'elusive and paradoxical concept'. However, Robson (2006, 24) suggests that a

> *Discussion of professionalism and its meanings provides a way of thinking about teaching as an occupation, a framework for examining the myriad of contexts in which these groups of teachers work, and a strategy for comparing and contrasting their experiences.*

Models of professions were consolidated between 1945 and the early 1970s (Nixon et al, 1997, 6) mainly around the areas considered as key professions i.e. law and medicine. Professionalism was based on the notion of public service by 'professionals-as-experts' (Nixon et al, 1997, 7). This viewpoint embraced autonomy and self-regulation by occupational groups and perceived possession of 'specialist knowledge and expertise' as giving the occupation legitimacy to provide services to the public (Nixon et al, 1997, 7).

From this perspective, following Durkheim (1957), professions were viewed to be positive forces in social development playing a functional role in stabilising and helping maintain order within social systems, that is professionalism was perceived as a value system (Nixon et al, 1995; Evetts, 2005; Robson, 2006). Critical perspectives of professionalism began to emerge and were prominent during the 1970s and 1980s, and the notion of professionalism as a value system was dismissed as an 'ideology' (Johnson, 1972). Rather than stressing qualities of professionalism, theories emerged which focused on professionalism as control and power (Nixon et al, 1997). Professions were skeptically regarded as serving their own interests by utilising their professional knowledge to achieve 'closure' and justify a restricted market for their expertise, thereby ensuring status and financial rewards (Larson, 1977; Weber, 1978). However, while these opposing perspectives differ in their view of how professional knowledge is and should be controlled, both perspectives concur in that they regard possession of a body of professional knowledge as a key source of influence and power (Eraut, 1994).

Theories of traditional professions were mainly conceptualised around particular attributes and traits perceived to be the key characteristics required (Nixon et al, 1997; Robson, 2006). The characteristics most commonly associated with professions include: *expertise*, the possession of a body of professional knowledge by an occupational group which is often accredited through a third level qualification; *altruism*, an ethical concern for clients; and *autonomy*, 'the professional's need and right to exercise control over entry into, and subsequent practice within, that particular occupation' (Bottery and Barnett, 1996). Determining professionalism based on attributes has been criticised because the attributes associated with professions are drawn from the traditional and prestigious occupations, and those occupations easily meet them while other occupations will not

(Hoyle and John, 1995). Eraut (1994) argues that scholars often focus on characteristics and traits of professions as there are problems defining the boundaries of professions. He suggests that this has not solved the problem of definition as differing characteristics, some more culturally specific and significant that others, are adopted by different authors, reflecting their own views of the most significant characteristics of high-status professions (Eraut, 1994). Indeed, Bottery and Barnett (1996) claim that as many as seventeen different criteria have been used to describe the behaviour of professions. Dingwall (1976, 332) suggests that 'the logical outcome of this approach is that a profession is nothing more or less than what some sociologist says it is'. Gleeson and James (2007, 456) argue that determining professionalism based on attributes has little value as this approach focuses on attempting to understand why professions exist, but fails to provide ways of understanding 'the nature of professional knowledge and action'.

During the 1990s, the notion of professionalism was reassessed by researchers influenced by the post-modernity 'deconstruction of knowledge' which has led to different thinking about the nature of knowledge (Nixon et al, 1997, 10). The conditions of professional knowledge and the likelihood of professions attaining a coherent world-view were challenged (Nixon et al, 1997). Following Foucault (1972), Robson (2006, 9) argues that knowledge is 'historically and culturally specific' and emphasises professionalism as a collective symbol. She suggests understanding professionalism as discourse which facilitates a socially constructed and contextual concept. From this perspective professional knowledge is not viewed as absolute, but as constructed through experience. The nature of knowledge, therefore, depends on 'the cumulative acquisition, selection and interpretation of that experience' (Eraut, 1994, 20). More recent perspectives have emerged which view professionalism as a socially constructed, dynamic and contested

concept which represents judgements that are specific to times and contexts and reflects standpoints of different people and groups in society (McCulloch et al, 2000).

Evetts (2006) views the concept of professionalism as a discourse of change and control in organisations and occupational groups. She describes discourse as referring 'to the ways in which occupational and professional workers themselves are accepting, incorporating and accommodating to the concepts of "profession" and particularly "professionalism" in their work' (Evetts, 2006, 523). Evetts (2006) suggests that in this way professionalism is viewed as a highly desirable occupational value for workers, and reflects a shift from a focus on defining 'professions' towards analysing the appeal of 'professionalism' as a mechanism for influencing and motivating change. Evetts (2006) argues this focus on the discourse of professionalism is useful in offering some new directions for interpreting professionalism, as similarities between professional work and service- or knowledge-based work become apparent. According to Evetts (2005) two types of professionalism are emerging in knowledge-based and service-sector work: organisational professionalism and occupational professionalism. Organisational professionalism is a discourse of control used by managers to standardise work practices, procedures and controls relying on external regulation and accountability measure. By contrast, occupational professionalism is a discourse constructed within professional occupational groups in which practitioners are guided by codes of professional ethics and controls are operationalized by practitioners (Evetts, 2005).

Gleeson and Knights (2006) argue that two contrasting views have mainly underpinned the debate about professionalism in new, or in their view 'troubled' times: professionalism as structure and professionalism as agency. One view perceives

professionals as being subject to policy reform, external rules and constraints, denoting issues of structure. The other view perceives professionals as empowered agents of educational change who construct meaning and identity in their practice, focusing on agency (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). However, Gleeson and Knights (2006, 283) suggest that the nature of public service is changing to one which is focusing more on accountability and performance and therefore modernising agendas need to take account of how changing work conditions and practice impact on public sector professionals. They argue that there is a need to move away from a 'dualistic understanding of professional practice' and instead take account of the relationship between professionalism and the social context in which it is constructed (Gleeson and Knights, 2006, 282). In this way, rather than elevating the issues of either structure or agency, they are viewed as 'combined in a "co-production" of professionalism' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006, 283). According to Gleeson and Knights (2006) this connects the professional practitioner to external performance criteria and their practice, and enables the construction of professional knowledge, professional roles and identities through agreement making and working out tensions at different levels of experience.

In the context of FET, it is useful to link the concepts of professionalism espoused by Evetts (2005, 2006) and Gleeson and Knights (2006) with notions of 'good' teaching and 'successful' teaching suggested by Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005, 189). Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) link good teaching with the *task* of teaching that is teaching that reflects high standards in subject matter content and instructional practice. They suggest that successful teaching is linked to *achievement* that is teaching that yields the intended outcomes. The concepts of 'organisational professionalism' (Evetts, 2005) and 'professionalism as structure' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006) can be perceived as

achieving intended outcomes and in this way reflect the notion of 'successful teaching' (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005, 189). 'Occupational professionalism' (Evetts, 2005) and 'professionalism as agency' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006) can be perceived as the task of teaching to high standards, and reflect the notion of 'good teaching' (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005, 189). Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) suggest quality teaching consists of elements of both 'good' teaching and 'successful' teaching reflecting Gleeson and Knights argument that modern professionalism in public service needs to take account of professionalism as structure and professionalism as agency.

It has emerged from the literature that relating professionalism to the knowledge, skills and practice used in training/teaching rather than the attributes is the better strategy to adopt to enhance the professional status of training/teaching in FET. It has been suggested in the literature that modern professionalism within FET should take account of professionalism as structure and professionalism as agency (Gleeson and Knights, 2006) to inform quality training/teaching.

Studies of professionalism in education and training

Shortly after the Teaching Council was established in Ireland, Sexton (2007) completed a two-part study of Irish secondary school teachers to examine how they viewed themselves as professionals, and to offer suggestions to the Teaching Council on promoting teaching as a profession. One part of Sexton's (2007) study surveyed 72 teachers to ascertain how they viewed their professionalism by reference to attributes of classical professions. This was based on a questionnaire where teachers were asked to

indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with statements on pre-determined attributes of professionalism. The study did not explore what teachers understood by these attributes or how they applied them in their work. Sexton (2007) found that the teachers believe that teaching has a knowledge base which is comparable to that of other professions, although they recognise that it is not as defined as that of other professions, and it is mainly recognised as classroom-based and practical. The teachers consider themselves to be autonomous on an individual basis, exercising a high level of independency in their daily work, but are less confident of their autonomy as a group. They view teaching as altruistic, mainly perceiving teaching as an occupation concerned with service to society, and see responsibility as a key attribute.

In the FE sector in the UK, Robson et al (2004) found through an analysis of the discourse adopted by vocational teachers that FE teachers construct a professional discourse which reflects some attributes of traditional professions. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with 22 vocational teachers in 5 FE colleges in England. The teachers perceived professionalism as sharing their expertise and understanding of theory of good practice in their subject area. They also perceived professionalism as 'adding value' by going beyond the syllabus, as being responsible and caring for others, and as maintaining standards associated with the interests of quality within their previous industry. Robson et al (2004) viewed this as supporting a discourse of professionalism emphasising quality of work, in-depth knowledge and expertise and altruism. Unlike Sexton's (2007) study where teachers saw professional knowledge applying to teaching skills, Robson et al (2004) found that professional knowledge was seen as underpinning their subject-matter area reflecting their craft and industry they came from, rather than knowledge about teaching (Robson et al, 2004).

From Sexton's (2007) study and that of Robson et al (2004), it can be concluded that in broad terms teachers view themselves as professionals by reference to the attributes of traditional professions. However, Sexton (2007) cautions that 'asserting professional status on this basis is a flawed strategy' and is of little merit. Sexton (2007) concurs with other scholars (e.g. Dingwall, 1976; Eraut, 1994; Hoyle and John, 1995; Bottery and Barnett, 1996) that teaching is predestined not to meet the attributes commonly associated with professions adequately because the attributes are derived from, and reflect the requirements of, prestigious occupations.

A second part to Sexton's (2007) study examined how teachers viewed themselves as professionals against internal attributes of teaching, that is the skills, attitudes and practices of teaching. A survey of 57 teachers in three secondary schools was completed using a questionnaire which included 30 possible attributes of teacher professionalism. The attributes were identified through a review of literature and semi-structured interviews with 6 teachers. The study found that teachers perceived that attributes concerning pupil/teacher relationships, interaction with colleagues and classroom management were important in the construction of teacher professionalism. The teachers viewed personality as a determining factor of professionalism requiring a positive attitude and a person who 'gets in there' (Sexton, 2007). The findings reflect a practical view of professionalism linked to the daily requirements of teaching, but Sexton (2007) cautions that this pragmatic view of professionalism is favoured over a view reflecting wider educational and philosophical issues. Sexton (2007) advises that relating professionalism to the internal attributes of teaching rather than the attributes of traditional professions is a better strategy and recommends teachers should aim to achieve enhanced professional

status by adopting this approach. This approach reflects what Hoyle (1974) conceptualises as "professionality", emphasising practitioner professionalism through a focus on the knowledge, skills and practice used in teaching. Sexton (2007) suggests that

> *This approach enables teachers to assert their demand for increased status from a position of strength, standing on the battlements of their own castle rather than clambering up the ramparts of someone else's.*

In the UK Gleeson et al (2005) completed an exploratory study of how practitioners construct meaning on the nature of professionalism. They gathered data from semi-structured interviews with 16 FE tutors from 4 colleges, observations, meetings and tutors' reflective journals. They found that for many practitioners entry to the FE sector was opportunistic and that 'few FE practitioners can trace the roots of their professionalism to an established desire to teach in FE' (Gleeson et al, 2005, 449). They argue that practitioner development has remained a secondary concern, with many practitioners being left to draw on their subject knowledge and prior experience to inform their teaching practice. Their findings revealed that tensions exist for practitioners in incorporating external performance requirements into their practice. They conclude that there is a need for new theories of professionalism to guide pedagogy and practice, which position professionalism and public accountability requirements alongside each other (Gleeson et al, 2005).

A study by Gleeson and James (2007) revealed a diversity of tutors in FE in the UK and a diversity of ways of becoming a tutor. In many cases, former trade and occupational identities remained important and were called upon in a variety of ways. Although many FE practitioners had begun their careers in FE with no formal training or background in teaching, Gleeson and James (2007) found that practitioners saw themselves as

professionals and recognised and valued the obligations and responsibilities that went with that identity. A sense of autonomy was valued highly in their daily dealing with students. This study also concludes that new models of professionalism are needed which recognise the tensions in the current environment in which FE practitioners work.

Sexton's (2007) study has begun a process of understanding how teachers in Ireland view professionalism. However, as his study was limited to secondary school teachers, the views on professionalism of practitioners in other sectors, such as FET, are unknown. Sexton's (2007) methodology required teachers to examine how they viewed themselves as professionals against pre-determined attributes, and did not set out to explore the understanding and experiences of practitioners. Thus, a need emerges for a study to explore how FET practitioners in Ireland understand and construct professionalism.

Professionalism of the VET Workforce

Developing teaching/training skills

It emerged from research in the UK (Robson, 1998b, 2006) that a significant difference between school teaching and VET is that prior to entering VET many trainers and teachers have already become established as professionals in another occupation. Therefore, many practitioners acquire qualifications, knowledge, experience and credibility within their specialist subject first, and afterwards acquire the knowledge of how to teach or train in that area, resulting in a duality in professional knowledge.

It is recognised that beginning to teach and developing teaching skills is a 'particular and complex stage of teacher learning' (Avalos, 2011, 11). Fantilli and McDougall (2009, 814) suggest that beginning teachers assume the same responsibilities as veteran teachers almost instantly. They argue that the trend for socialising new teachers is to throw them in the deep end to sink or swim, with a result that generally the first year is the most difficult year in a teacher's career as new teachers spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to keep their heads above water.

A key stage in the professional development of teachers and trainers is induction to help them adjust successfully to their new role (Harrison, 1992). Reid et al (2004, 224) suggest that

> *the way in which new entrants are received into an organisation remains a critical factor informing their attitudes and ensuring that they reach the desired standard of performance as quickly as possible.*

Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) developed a model of skills acquisition which identifies five different stages in the development of expertise. They suggest that individuals move from *novice*, to *advanced beginner* to *competent* and some may progress to *proficient* and *expert* stages. This model was adapted by Berliner (2004) to inform acquisition of expertise in teaching as shown in Table 3. However, Berliner (2001, 466) cautions that 'although inexperience is equated perfectly with novice status in a field, the acquisition of experience does not automatically denote expertise'.

Table 3. Stages of acquisition of expertise in teaching

Stage	*Description*	*Professional knowledge developed*	*Characteristics*	*Timescale*
Novice	Deliberate	• Context free professional knowledge	• Practitioners are usually rational and relatively inflexible • Tend to conform to rules and procedures • Learning objective facts and features of situations • Gaining experience	Teachers in their first year often considered to be novices
Advanced Beginner	Insightful	• Practical knowledge • Development of conditional and strategic knowledge	• Starts to realise limitations of rules • Still has difficulty discriminating between what is important and unimportant • Building case knowledge through learning from incidents	Often teachers in their second and third year
Competent	Rational		• Makes conscious choices and decisions • Starts to recognise what is important and what is less important • Feel more personally in control of the events around them • Feel more responsibility for what happens	Teachers in their third or fourth year - not all advanced beginners reach this stage
Proficient	Intuitive	• Intuitive knowledge or know-how	• Develops a holistic way of viewing situations • Decision-making still analytic and deliberative	Some teachers may move to this stage after 5 years of experience – smaller sets of competent teachers move to this stage
Expert	Arational	• Knowledge-in-action • Tacit knowledge	• Perceives situations and finds solutions to more complex problems intuitively • Acts flexibly	

Adapted from Berliner, D (2004) Describing the Behavior and Documenting the Accomplishments of Expert Teachers, *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*, Vol. 24, No 3, pp. 205-207)

The literature has revealed that often practitioners entering the VET sector have already become established as professionals in other occupations and on entry to the sector have to acquire knowledge of how to train/teach and appropriate training/teaching qualifications. Unlike teachers in other areas of education, VET practitioners are generally not socialised into the sector through a professional training/education programme prior to their entry to the sector, although there are now many courses available. This suggests that in many cases socialisation into the VET sector occurs in the institution they join (Robson, 1998b).

It has emerged that adjusting to a second career can be a complex process, and beginning to train/teach and developing the skills to more towards competence, proficiency or expertise in training/teaching is also a complex process. Professional learning and development takes place in the workplace often accompanied by rapid immersion into the role of practitioner, thereby causing a tension between student development and the newly appointed practitioner's professional development.

Studies have revealed a tendency for newly appointed practitioners making the transition from a previous occupation to teacher/trainer to hold onto identities linked with their previous practice rather than embracing new identities in their new roles (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; McKeon and Harrison, 2010). According to Robson (1998b), VET practitioners retain a strong allegiance to their first occupational identity, perceiving their credibility linked to their industrial or commercial experience, and do not consistently see themselves as educators. In many cases this results in practitioners prioritising their subject matter knowledge and identities over their teaching and training role (Robson, 2006). There has been little focus on the experiences of those attempting to

make the transition to the role of VET practitioner from other occupations, and very little research is available on the experiences of beginning practitioners in VET (Robson, 1998). This study will address these gaps by exploring the induction and professional development experienced by trainers within the VET workplace.

Studies of beginning teachers

Robson (1998a) studied the experience of a trainee FE teacher in the UK and found that the trainee teacher was concerned about controlling and managing students, facilitating learning, administration and passing on her professional knowledge. However, the trainee teacher in the study eventually did not move into a FE teaching role and moved to teaching in a different sector which utilised her subject matter expertise to a greater extent. Robson (1998a) suggests that beginning teachers often need to adjust idealistic attitudes to more traditional attitudes found in FE and that potential recruits may be lost if the socialisation process into their FE role is experienced as a loss rather than a gain. This assumption was supported by Bathmaker and Avis's (2005) empirical investigation in the English Midlands. They found that trainee FE lecturers' idealistic professional identity and teaching practice did not match either the reality of the culture and practice they encountered on placements in FE colleges or their own experience of teaching. Bathmaker and Avis's (2005) study discovered that the trainee lecturers appeared to be marginalised and alienated during their placements. Bathmaker and Avis (2005) argue that changes in FE in the UK have left teachers demoralised, and that this may have impacted on the marginalisation of the trainee lecturers. This suggests that the prevailing culture has implications for those entering the FET profession and for transforming FET teaching and learning cultures (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

Orr and Simmons (2010) studied the experiences of in-service trainee teachers in two FE colleges in England to explore their dual roles of teacher and trainee teacher. The trainee teachers were in teaching roles whilst also undergoing an initial teacher training course. The study draws on interviews carried out with two human resources managers, four teacher educators and twenty trainee teachers. The study finds that there is a tension between the interaction of the two roles of teacher and trainee teacher which appears to impact on their professional development. Trainee teachers were expected to perform like other teachers and had to quickly integrate into the college. Orr and Simmons (2010) found that their identity as teacher overshadowed their identity as trainee and left little time for trainees to develop their practice and their concept of pedagogy.

Colley et al (2007) studied teacher professionalism by analysing assumptions about the dynamics of professional participation within an environment where academic and policy constructs of professionalism compete. They developed case studies of 2 tutors who had left the FE sector and collected data through semi-structured interviews. Colley et al (2007) identified a need for more understanding of the dynamics of professional existence and survival within FE. They concluded that 'inadequate models of professional trajectories support inadequate conceptions of teaching, learning and the issues pertaining to their improvement' (Colley et al, 2007, 188).

Within the field of education Langdon (2011, 242) argues that induction should present practitioners with 'a clear view of what constitutes expertise, or an expectation that they will become accomplished teachers'. A qualitative study of how beginning teachers in New Zealand experienced induction programmes was undertaken by Langdon (2011).

The study used a case-study approach and involved 35 participants across a range of different types of schools catering for students between 5 to 12 years of age in New Zealand. Langdon (2011) found that novice teachers were expected to manage student learning so that learners learned at a similar rate to that of learners of experienced trainers. This created a tension between managing the process of becoming a teacher and managing student learning. Langdon's (2011) study concluded that induction for beginning teachers should provide support for beginning teachers in classroom management and survival, and should raise early expectations that beginning teachers will focus on developing expertise to progress student learning. Langdon (2011) found that new teachers' development was enhanced or inhibited by the context and experiences of learning and the professional development opportunities provided. In particular, Langdon (2011) found that principals and mentors were perceived as key levers in supporting beginning teachers to focus on student-learning.

Studies of the experiences of the professional development and identity building of novice teacher educators in higher education institutions in England were also reviewed for this study as they involved teacher educators making a transition from a being a successful practitioner in a previous occupation (i.e. teachers) to teacher educators (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; McKeon and Harrison, 2010). A study by Boyd (2010) draws on data from institutional documents relating to recruitment and induction of new lecturers and from semi-structured interviews with 9 new lecturers in teacher education and their line managers. Boyd and Harris (2010) completed a study which draws on data from semi-structured interviews with 16 lecturers in teacher education and four line managers. The study also examined institutional documents including those relating to recruitment, induction and staff development policies and job descriptions and person

descriptions. McKeon and Harrison (2010) carried out a study used a longitudinal case-study approach and interviewed five beginning teachers three or four times over a two to three year period. All three studies found that the teacher educators were rapidly immersed into their work, and that this created a tension for the novice teacher educators between supporting their students and focusing on their own professional development for their new roles (McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Boyd, 2010; and Boyd and Harris, 2010). The studies revealed that the novice teacher educators felt thrown in at the deep end and experienced stress and coped with undertaking their new roles by seeking to gain credibility based on their previous roles and experiences. Boyd and Harris (2010, 13) found that the new teacher educators responded to their new roles by 'reconstructing pedagogy'. They described this as applying prior teaching experience, skill and understanding to their new role. McKeon and Harrison (2010) found that in relation to their new teaching role the beginning teacher educators in their study functioned as both novice and expert and high expectations existed within their new community based on their proficiency and previous experience. The study revealed that the beginning teacher educators' professional pedagogic learning was facilitated by:

> *effective induction programmes; formal and informal opportunities for in-depth, reflective, learning conversations with a designated mentor or other colleagues; and support to navigate the boundaries and practices of different communities (e.g. through their involvement with curriculum development or projects) in order to construct work-related identities that sustain their positive self-esteem* (McKeon and Harrison, 2010, 41).

Workplace learning

Research and theories about learning predominantly focus on learning as 'acquisition' or 'participation' (Sfard, 1998; Fuller and Unwin, 2004; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004a

2004b; Felstead et al, 2005; Fuller et al, 2007; Unwin et al, 2009). Learning as acquisition views knowledge as 'context-independent', and tends to focus on formal education where learning is a product leading to identifiable outcomes, often accompanied by certification (Fuller et al, 2007). Learning as acquisition was the more prominent approach in earlier academic debates on learning (Sfard, 1998). Following a challenge by Scribner and Cole (1973) to the dominance of learning as acquisition as the standard view of learning, many academics began to focus on learning as a social phenomenon (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004a). A broader notion of learning was emphasised with knowledge viewed as socially constructed through participation in a social setting (Lave and Wenger, 1991), and learning as participation gained a more dominant position (Sfard, 1998; Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Much of the research from the learning as participation perspective focused on the workplace (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004b).

Learning in the workplace may be perceived as acquisition, whereby learning is a 'linear, fixed-time activity' using 'qualifications as a proxy for job competence and skills' (Unwin et al, 2009). This facilitates confining learning tasks and/or related knowledge to a lesson or lessons (Unwin et al, 2007). Learning in the workplace can be structured to mirror formal education. This enables measurement of learning outputs and skills in the workplace, and the setting of standards for design of qualifications accrediting learning in the workplace (Unwin et al, 2009). From an organisational perspective, supporting learning of skills and knowledge needed for the workplace in an organised way, such as a course providing a 'front-end model of occupational preparation' (Beckett and Hager, 2002, 99), minimises disruption of productivity and may be efficient and cost-effective (Unwin et al, 2009). The learning as acquisition approach assumes that people will be

able to apply the learning to situations and problems in the workplace (Unwin et al, 2009).

However, learning in the workplace cannot always be accounted for through formal qualifications as it is ongoing and diverse, often arising out of everyday work activity (Felstead et al, 2005; Unwin et al, 2009). Much of the learning that occurs in the workplace is situated and occurs through social interaction conforming with the concept of learning as participation (Unwin et al, 2009). Felstead et al (2005) suggest that learning in the workplace is

> *a process in which learners improve their work performance by carrying out daily work activities which entail interacting with people, tools, material and ways of thinking as appropriate.*

Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed a situated learning theory, following a study on apprentice tailors. Their theory emphasises the situated nature of learning and the social and cultural processes that underpin learning. It focuses on the informal learning of 'newcomers' as they interact with 'old-timers' within a community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991, 29) conceptualise a journey from novice to expert where newcomers develop 'mastery of knowledge and skill' to enable full participation in the 'sociocultural' practices of a community of practice. Core concepts of situated learning theory are participation, practice, and identity (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Participation is a central concept of situated learning theory. Participation is an 'encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities

and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities' (Wenger, 1998, 4). Lave and Wenger (1991, 29) conceptualise a journey from novice to expert where newcomers develop 'mastery of knowledge and skill' to enable full participation in the 'sociocultural' practices of a community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991, 29) call this process 'legitimate peripheral participation', which they say:

> *provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice.*

Instruction or teaching is not necessarily provided by a qualified expert in the process of legitimate peripheral participation, but may be provided by co-workers (Felstead et al, 2005). Participation can be an 'empowering' or 'disempowering' experience depending on the dynamics of power within the community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, 36). As part of the legitimate peripheral process, the newcomer moves from participating on the periphery of the community towards full participation through interaction with old-timers. However, learning trajectories may not always lead to a full participation by novices. Full participation may be denied by powerful practitioners, particularly if old-timers, who have a vested interested in the knowledge and practices of the community, feel that this is threatened by newcomers (Handley et al, 2006). This may result in other forms of participation such as 'peripherality' or 'marginality' which involves participation and non-participation to varying degrees thus preventing full participation (Wenger, 1998, 165-166).

Practice is defined as 'undertaking or engaging fully in a task, job or profession' (Brown and Duguid, 2001, 203). From this perspective, practice is a 'social practice' of doing, and it is 'doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what

we do' (Wenger, 1998, 47). The concept of community underlies the notion of legitimate peripheral participation as it is the context in which an individual develops their practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991, 98) suggest that:

> *A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus, participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this practice, its power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning.*

Situated learning theory brings a focus on the issue of identity. Wenger (1998, 149) argues that there is a 'profound connection between identity and practice', and newcomers to the workplace undergo a process to construct their identities within a community of practice. Two main processes of identity construction are proposed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002). The first is *identity-regulation* which refers to regulation originating within the organisation (e.g. recruitment, induction and promotion policies) and the second is *identity-work* which involves negotiation between the organisation's identity-regulation and the employee's perception of self. Handley et al (2006) suggest that these identity-construction processes influence an individual's participation in a community of practice, and depend on how opportunities to participate resonate with individual's perceptions of self. More recently, Wenger (1998, 58) introduced the concept of 'reification' which he refers to as 'the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into "thingness"'. Communities of practice produce 'abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form' (Wenger, 59). Thus reification is both a process and a product. Wenger (1998) suggests that negotiation of meaning takes place

in the workplace when participation and reification take place in the act of carrying out tasks.

Studies on Workplace Learning

Avis et al (2003) drew on Lave and Wenger's notion of community of practice to examine the expectations of staff new to the FE sector in the UK. They used focus group interviews supported by a questionnaire to gather data. They found that new FE lecturers encountered problems. For some peripheral participation led to marginalisation and disempowerment, while for others the community of practice was very fragmentary leaving them at a loss as to how to participate.

Bathmaker and Avis (2005) used Lave and Wenger's concept of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice to consider how trainee FE teachers learned during teaching placements and to consider what it means to be a teacher in FE. They found that factors such as poor workplace conditions, lack of resources, perceived lack of management support, low morale and loss of commitment to students were affecting communities of practice within further education. They concluded that the concept of legitimate peripheral participation was helpful in raising issues about professional identity formation.

Fuller et al (2005) carried out two research projects to explore the usefulness of Lave and Wenger's theory and studied the nature of workplace learning using a case study of three companies in the steel industry in the UK. They used a range of methods including interviews, observations, learning logs and company

documentation to investigate the opportunities for, and barriers to, participation for apprentices. Their case study revealed that significant differences exist in the form and extent of legitimate peripheral participation available across the organisations. The differences were mainly due to different external pressures experienced by the companies and different internal factors such as management styles, organisation of work and distribution of skills (Fuller et al, 2005). Unwin et al (2007) argue that a range of external and internal factors impact on workplace learning and pedagogical practices: the nature of the product/services; the ownership, culture, viability and status of the organisation; the level of impact of forces (including regulation) on activities; and, the range and capabilities of staff who can be utilised for specific pedagogic roles. Fuller and Unwin (2004) suggest that these factors combine to create "expansive" or "restrictive" learning environments.

Lucas and Unwin (2009) completed a two-stage study of the experiences of trainee teachers in FE colleges in the UK using Fuller and Unwin's concept of an 'expansive-restrictive' framework of workplace learning. The first stage collected data through a questionnaire which surveyed in-service trainee teachers in the learning and skills sector in the UK. A total of 2,500 questionnaires were issued and 409 were completed. The second stage involved semi-structured telephone interviews with 21 trainee teachers in FE, and these teachers also kept learning logs which were submitted to the researchers. The study found that the trainee teachers were determined to complete their initial teacher education programmes (required for their professional formation) despite experiencing tensions and pressure in the workplace. Lucas and Unwin (2009) found that many of the FE colleges were characterised by restrictive features of job design and work

organisation. They also found that colleges did not provide support to the trainee teachers to facilitate their workplace learning by providing access to experienced colleagues or reduced teaching loads. Instead the trainee teachers were predominantly perceived as 'productive workers', rather than benefiting from the protected status of the dual identity of learner and worker (Lucas and Unwin, 2009, 428).

A conceptual framework

A conceptual framework for the study was developed to provide a 'theoretical overview of intended research' (Leshem and Trafford, 2007, 96). The purpose of the study is to develop understanding of how FET practitioners conceptualise and construct professionalism is the VET workplace. A number of assumptions emerged from the literature that influenced the development of the conceptual framework:

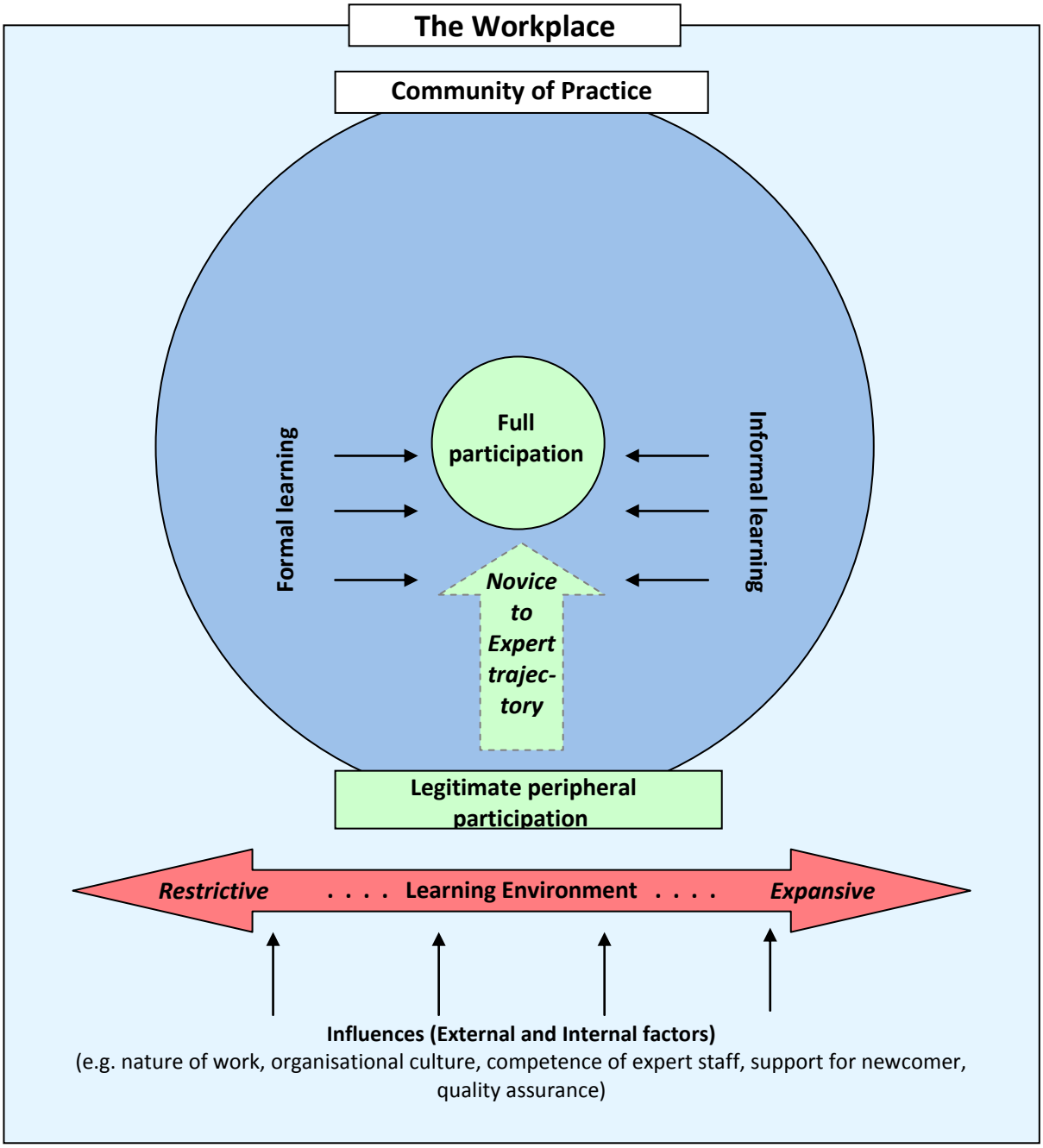
- Many practitioners have been established as professionals in other occupations prior to their entry to FET.
- In many cases, their professional development as FET practitioners takes place within the FET organisation they join.
- Developing as a professional practitioner is a complex process involving a trajectory from novice to competent, proficient or expert practitioner.
- Professional development of practitioners takes place through formal and informal workplace socialisation and learning following their entry to the sector.

For the purpose of the study developing understanding of individual practitioners' experiences of their professional development within the situated and contextual nature of

their workplaces is significant. A social theory of learning facilitates this understanding and studies from the UK have presented situated learning as a useful theory for analysing development within the workplace (e.g. Avis et al, 2003; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Fuller et al, 2005; Unwin et al, 2007; Lucas and Unwin, 2009)

Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory with its focus on communities of practice provides a useful theoretical lens for exploring how practitioners learn to engage in practice in the workplace (Loftus and Higgs, 2010). The significance of situational learning and development within a practice underpins Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory. Their theory recognises the social and cultural role of existing practitioners in supporting new practitioners to grow into a community of practice and develop from novices to competent or expert practitioners. Competence is understood as performance in the workplace and it develops in confrontation with actual tasks in the workplace (Rauner, 2004). It should be noted that the use of Lave and Wenger's theory does not suggest that professional development only occurs through legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice, rather it provides a basis for exploring professional development in the workplace. Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory focuses on informal learning only and does not take account of formal development or external and internal factors which influence workplace learning. Therefore formal professional development will also be considered in the study. Communities of practice may be strong or weak and may be affected positively or negatively by internal and external factors. They may provide differing opportunities for participation and create expansive or restrictive learning environments (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Therefore, Fuller and Unwin's (2004) concept of expansive or restrictive learning environments will also inform the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is shown as a model in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A conceptual framework for the study



Adapted from Lave and Wenger (1991) and Fuller and Unwin (2004)

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a scarcity of research on the experiences of practitioners in the FET workplace. There is also a scarcity of research on those who make a transition from other occupations to the role practitioner in the FET sector, and a scarcity of research on the experiences of beginning practitioners in FET (Robson, 1998a). More understanding of how practitioners develop and survive as professionals in FET is also required (Colley et al, 2007). The gaps in the literature confirm that there is a need for research to develop understanding of how FET practitioners conceptualise and construct professionalism in the sector.

The next chapter outlines the research design of the study.

Chapter 4: Research Design

Introduction

This study aims to contribute to developing an understanding of how professionalism is conceptualised and constructed by practitioners in the VET workplace. The topic of the study falls within the broad educational research area sector and this chapter includes a discussion on some of the philosophical and methodological assumptions underpinning educational research. To date educational research has been dominated by an apparent conflict between two traditions, Positivism and Interpretivism (Pring, 2000) and the chapter begins with an overview of both traditions and a discussion about methodological issues emerging in educational research. The chapter continues with an overview of mixed-methods research which is gaining interest as a research method in educational research and it concludes with a discussion outlining the rationale for the design of the research methodology for the study.

Issues in Educational Research

Paradigms of research represent beliefs researchers bring to research. There are a number of research paradigms and they differ according to their ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the relationship between the research and that being researched), axiology

(the role of values), rhetorical (the language of research) and methodological assumptions (the process of research) (Creswell, 2007). Two dominant paradigms providing different emphases and alternative approaches to research are positivism and interpretivism.

Within the positivist paradigm, scientists believe that our world exists as a single independent reality and that it can be accessed by researchers to acquire knowledge (Greenbank, 2003). Positivists believe that researchers can be objective in undertaking observations and aim for research that is value-free (Greenbank 2003). Researchers favouring positivism tend to test hypotheses using measurement instruments including questionnaires or rating scales to collect hard quantifiable data. Within social science, positivists aim to establish causal relationships between social phenomena to determine rules concerning human behaviour and thus make generalisations which describe reality objectively for the purpose of prediction and control (Bloomer and James, 2003). A criticism of quantitative research is that it 'can amount to a "quick fix", involving little or no contact with people or the "field"' (Silverman, 2000, 7).

Interpretivism is a term that is used broadly to describe a number of distinct approaches that concentrate on interpreting and understanding 'human actions and cultural products' (Benton and Craib, 2001 182). Interpretivism includes approaches such as 'phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, ethnography, life history and heuristic research' (Bloomer and James, 2003, 252). Interpretivists believe that the world is socially constructed and that social phenomena do not exist independently of our interpretation of them. The interpretivist tradition assumes that meaning is subjective and research is accepted as value-laden, resulting in multiple realities (Greenbank 2003). Within social science the purpose of research is to gain access to peoples' understanding

of their own situations (Bloomer and James, 2003). Researchers favouring the interpretivist approach tend to use qualitative methods. Qualitative research is considered by Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 2) as "a field of inquiry in its own right". Morse and Field (1996, p. 1) argue that it is the primary means of constructing and examining theoretical foundations within the social sciences. As qualitative researchers recognise multiple realities, and view them in context, most qualitative research is carried out in the natural setting. Qualitative research uses the "human instrument" as the primary instrument for collecting data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 39). Thus the researcher's "skill, experience, background, and knowledge as well as biases" are recognised and made explicit (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 26). "Inductive data analysis" is preferred, leading to theory emerging from the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 40). Silverman (2000, p. 11) points out that criticisms have been made about the reliability and validity of qualitative research. However, he argues that "doing 'qualitative' research should offer no protection from the rigorous, critical standards that should be applied to any enterprise concerned to sort 'fact' from 'fancy'" (Silverman, 2000, p. 12).

The dominant paradigm in educational research for the first half of the twentieth century was quantitative experimental research. At that time educational research was influenced by the disciplines of psychology and physiology and was positivist in its approach. Experimental research mainly involved measurement and was used to seek solutions to educational problems e.g. experiments on learning and memory (Nisbet, 2005). During the second half of the twentieth century challenges began to be made to the positivist approach to educational research and to the scientific-experimental methods used because of their failure to provide insights into the complexity of the education process (Nisbet, 2005). The challenges were influenced by sociological and philosophical theories and

new assumptions from the interpretivist position (Nisbet, 2005), including the argument that it was not possible to sustain the objective of value neutrality in educational research (Greenbank, 2003). Educational researchers contended that qualitative research was more appropriate as it aimed to understand and gain insight into the complexities of learning and behaviour, and that it was more appropriate to work in depth with relatively small numbers (Nisbet, 2005). The notion of reflective practice and the teacher as researcher began to become influential concepts, and influenced the emergence of qualitative research using case study, action research and postmodernism approaches to educational research (Nisbet, 2005). Educational research is commonly pursued in two contexts, policy-making and practice, and the norms of cultures of these two areas influence what and how research is undertaken and how it is perceived and used (Mortimore, 2000). Within education in the UK, although the interpretivist paradigm appears to be the dominant paradigm at practitioner level, positivistic approaches to research appear to be more dominant at government and policy level (Greenbank, 2003). This may be because research-funders and policy-makers value research that offers what they perceive as 'assurance of unambiguous and accurate knowledge of the world' (Crotty, 2006).

In recent years the quality and function of educational research has been criticised for its failure to be cumulative and develop wisdom by building on previous research, and for its failure to influence policy and professional practice effectively (Hargreaves, 1997, Pring, 2000a, 2000b, Oancea, 2005). Criticisms of educational research have focused on lack of scientific rigour and fragmentation of research into small-scale case studies extolling their own uniqueness (Pring, 2000a, 2000b). In a study which aimed to identify and understand criticisms of educational research Oancea (2005) revealed that many

criticisms of educational research revolved around philosophical criticisms of alternative views on the 'growth of knowledge' and the need for research to impact on policy and practice.

During this time, the rise of contemporary interest in evidence-based practice emerging in political culture and research stimulated debate within the educational research arena (Simons, 2003). Hargreaves (1997) promoted the notion of 'evidence-based practice' in education to link theory and practice and to make research more relevant and have more impact on the quality of professional practice, and argued that 'research should provide decisive and conclusive evidence that if teachers do X rather than Y in their professional practice, there will be a significant and enduring improvement in outcome'. However, the nature of evidence-based practice has been robustly criticised (Hammersley 1997, Hodkinson 2004, Pring, 2007, Simons 2003). The principal arguments are summarised as follows:

- The research method is perceived as the prime determinant of the quality of research. Evidence-based practice is perceived as a 'new orthodoxy' advocating positivist methods and one which is attempting to outlaw some research practices and to reassert 'objective truth and value-neutral facts' as the ideals to strive for (Hodkinson, 2004).
- Business-oriented models have influenced education, and education has adopted the language of the business world such as audits, performance indicators, inputs and outputs, effectiveness and productivity. This has led to a focus on performance management of schools, colleges and of teachers and a focus on 'value for money' (Pring, 2007).

- The call for a new orthodoxy is linked to the rise of 'the audit culture' in society, with its focus on 'effectiveness and efficiency', rather than 'purpose or values' (Hodkinson, 2004).
- There is a parallel with evidence-based practice in the medical profession, but medicine cannot be compared with education because 'the context is different and the variables impossible to control' (Simons, 2003)
- There are problems in producing 'causal patterns in social phenomena' centring around difficulties measuring social phenomena (Hammersley, 1997).

Simons (2003) draws from literature within medicine and a definition of evidence-based medicine by Sackett et al (1996) i.e. evidence-based medicine is

> *The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence-based means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research* (Sackett et al, 1996).

Simons (2003) suggests that this definition acknowledges the complexity of evidence-based practice and that it is also more closely aligned with how decisions are made in education. She argues that

> *Beyond the methodological debate, there are many other factors – social, personal, moral and political – that need to be integrated in coming to a professional judgement about the relevance, appropriateness and use of evidence to inform policy and practice in particular contexts* (Simons, 2003, 305)

Simons (2003, 304) concludes that 'evidence-based practice is no panacea for all contexts and practices'. Fox (2003) suggests that research and practice are often viewed in opposition to each other and that it is more useful to view them both as aspects of a 'continuum of human activity' which relate to each other (Fox, 2003, 97). He argues that evidence is contingent and that it needs to be contextualised and suggests that evidence-

based practice needs to be supplemented by 'practice-based evidence' (Fox, 2003, 84). According to Fox (2003, 97) 'research which is integral to practice' may lead to practice-based evidence.

Mixed methods

Creswell and Garrett (2008) suggest that educational researchers need a toolkit of research methods to address the increasingly complex problems facing them and that this toolkit includes skills in quantitative and qualitative research. They argue that bringing together quantitative and qualitative research in a mixed methods approach to research combines the strengths of both approaches and leads to a better understanding of research problems. Creswell and Garrett (2008) suggest that mixed methods have developed rapidly as a third methodological movement in research methodology over the last twenty years. Several researchers are emerging as authorities in mixed methods research (e.g. Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Mertens, 2005; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Bryman, 2008). The rising interest in mixed methods is reflected in the recent emergence of publications including academic journals, textbooks and chapters within research texts (e.g. Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Journal of Mixed Methods Research first published in 2007, Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Mixed methods have been used in further education studies in Ireland (McNamara et al, 2005) and in the UK (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

There are currently different stances on what constitutes mixed methods research with the main difference being emphasis on methods, the process of research, philosophical issues

and building on existing research designs (Creswell and Garrett, 2008). Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, 4) broadly define mixed methods as

> *research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a programme of inquiry.*

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, 14) argue that mixed methods research is 'a research paradigm whose time has come' and although they suggest mixed methods as a 'third research paradigm' in educational research mixed methods is still developing. In particular, there are unresolved issues relating to defining the nature of mixed methods research, methodology, how to conduct a study, and the philosophical assumptions and stances underpinning mixed methods (Greene, 2008; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). However, it is useful to consider Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) suggestion that educational research needs to move beyond quantitative *versus* qualitative arguments and recognise that *both* methods are useful and both methods have their strengths and weaknesses. They state that mixed methods research should use a method and philosophy that endeavours to draw the insights developed by quantitative and qualitative research into a workable solution. They advocate

> *consideration of the pragmatic method of the classical pragmatists (e.g. Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey) as a way for researchers to think about the traditional dualisms that have been debated by the purists. . . Pierce, James and Dewey were all interested in examining practical consequences and empirical findings to help in understanding the import of philosophical positions, and importantly, to help in deciding which action to take next as one attempts to better understand real-world phenomena (including psychological, social, and educational phenomena)* (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, 16 and 17).

Taking a pragmatic perspective allows mixing of research approaches to ensure the best opportunities to answer important and complex research questions and offers a 'practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry' (Johnson and Onweugbuzie, 2001, 17).

There are three characteristic features of a mixed-methods approach that set it apart from other strategies for social research. Firstly, a mixed-methods approach uses qualitative and quantitative approach with a single research project. Secondly, the link between both approaches is emphasized. Thirdly, a mixed-methods approach is 'problem-driven' and emphasises practical approaches to research problems (Denscombe, 2007, 108).

Research Design for the Study

The aim of the study is to develop understanding of how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and constructed by VET trainers in their workplace. Silverman (2000, 1) suggests that 'the choice between different research methods should depend upon what you are trying to find out'. The research questions for this were different and required different types of data to be answered, hence a single set of data would not be sufficient (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Primarily, I wished to explore how practitioners conceptualise professionalism, effective practice and key competences and how they experienced developing as professionals when they entered the VET workplace which required a qualitative approach. To provide a supportive role in the study and provide the current context I wished to analyse the nature of VET practice and practitioners to ascertain the qualifications and experience of current VET trainers which required a quantitative approach. Therefore, I needed to use 'a variety of methods to be

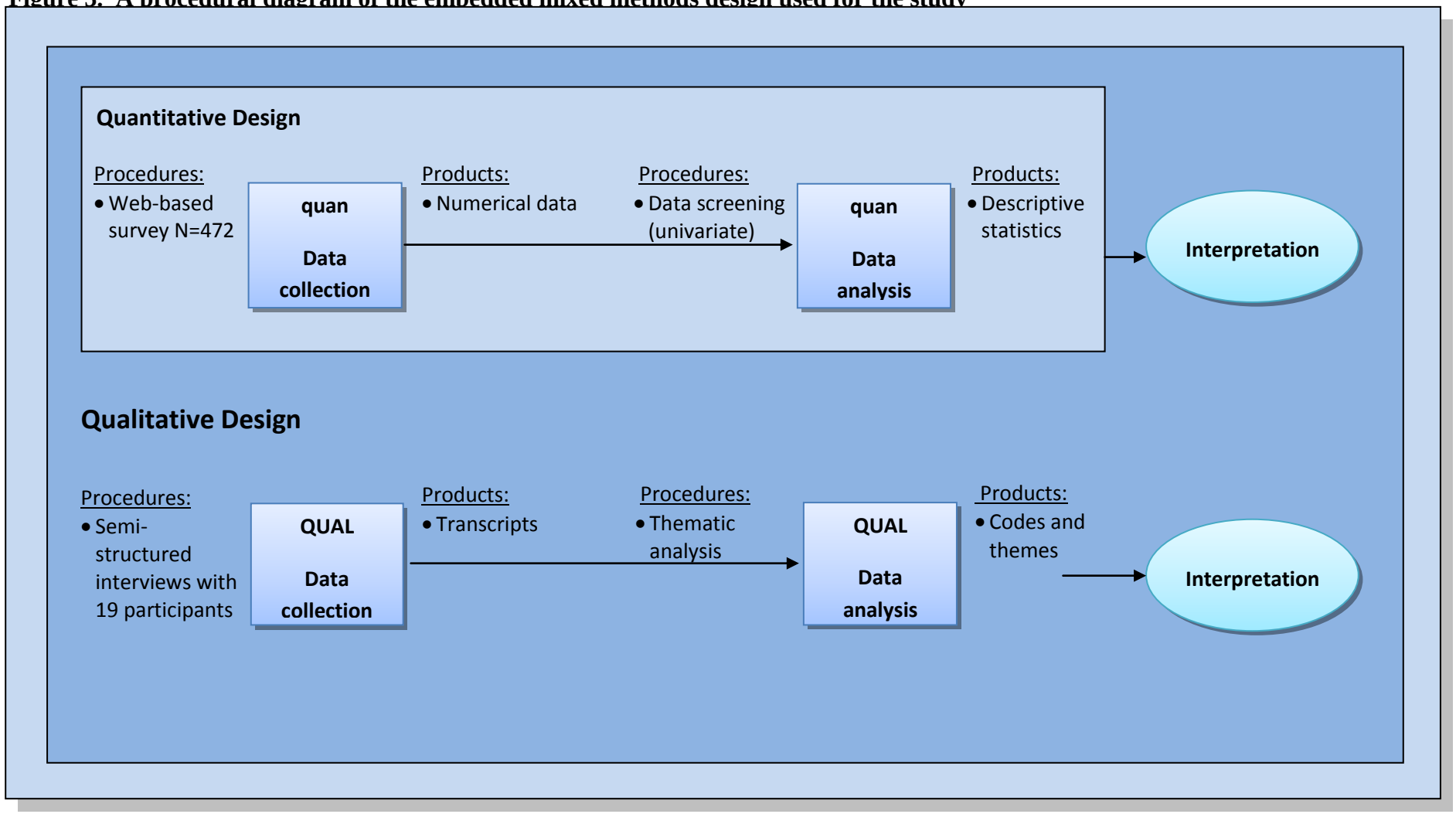
responsive to the nuances of particular empirical questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific stakeholder needs' (Patton, 2001, 585). A mixed methods approach design provided the best opportunity to provide a fuller and more complete picture of professionalism in the VET sector.

An 'embedded' design was used in which a quantitative stand was completed at the beginning of the study followed by a qualitative strand which was the major phase of the study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, 90). The quantitative strand was collected at the beginning of the study to enhance the qualitative aspect of the study and involved a survey of a large sample of VET trainers to identify trends and generate a national profile of current VET trainers, and the qualitative strand involved carrying out semi-structured interviews with a small sample of VET practitioners to develop detailed and in-depth understanding of how professionalism and professional development is perceived and experienced in the workplace. A 'procedural diagram' of the embedded mixed method design is shown as Figure 3 (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, 110). Unlike other mixed methods designs, the intent of the embedded design is not to merge two different data sets, therefore the results of each strand are kept separate and reported separately (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

Initial Exploration

The research design followed an initial exploration I had completed in 2008 examining the role and professional development of VET trainers using Community Training Centres (CTCs) as an 'instrumental case study' (Stake, 2003, 137). The case study was a qualitative study involving interviews with 5 trainers from 3 CTCs and participation in a

Figure 3. A procedural diagram of the embedded mixed methods design used for the study[2]



Adapted from Creswell, J and Plano Clark, V (2011) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed., Los Angeles, Sage, p70

[2] 'quan' stands for quantitative and 'QUAL' stands for qualitative. Capitals are used to denote the more dominant method

focus group by the manager and trainers of one other CTC. Five themes and relevant categories emerged from the initial study relating to the trainer, the practice, a learner-centred approach, influences on approach and emerging issues. This study identified a need for further research in the topic area. The 5 trainers who were participated in the initial exploration (see Table 4) agreed that the data gathered in their interviews would also be used for the current study and it was included in the data analysis.

Table 4. Interviews conducted during the initial exploration

Organisation	*Number of sites selected*	*Number of participants selected*	*Role of participants*	*Gender of participants*
CTCs	2 2 in Dublin 1 Midlands	5	5 x Trainers	3 x Females 2 x Males

Approval

As suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994, 71) 'key individuals or gatekeepers' were approached across the different organisation to gain support for the study. Approval to carry out the study was granted by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Approval to carry out the study and a pilot study was also given by the Assistant Director General over my division in FÁS following submission of a research proposal.

The study is focusing on vocational training organisations that assist learners to progress towards the labour-market, where eligible learners attract a training allowance and where practitioners are predominantly employed in a permanent and full-time capacity.

Permission was sought to include three predominant providers of vocational training in the study i.e. An Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FÁS), Fáilte Ireland, Community Training Centres. For FÁS and Fáilte Ireland this involved seeking permission to carry out the study in each organisation by sending a letter to a senior manager outlining the purpose of the study, the proposed methodology, how participants would be selected on a voluntary basis and how data would be treated confidentially. A copy of the letter issued is included as Appendix A. Permission to carry out the study was granted by both organisations and contact details for trainers in each organisation were supplied.

CTCs are all individual employers with their own boards of management and managers. In May 2009 I sent an email to the general managers of all CTCs outlining the study and sought their permission to include their centre in the study. Sixteen CTCs agreed to participate and provided details of the trainers in their centre. A copy of the email issued is included as Appendix B. This provided access to three different types of VET provider and a total 38 training centres catering for different categories of learners and offering varying VET programmes.

Sampling

As 38 training centres were participating in the study this gave me access to a population of 472 trainers. Two samples were drawn from the population for the quantitative strand and the qualitative strand.

Quantitative strand

Contact details were available for all trainers in the study population. Therefore I opted to include all trainers in an online survey. During April and May 2009, a total of 472 trainers were surveyed and 154 respondents completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 33%. Table 5 shows details relating to the sample.

Table 5. Sample for quantitative strand (online survey)

VET provider	*Number of centres participating in study*	*Number of trainers in study population*	*Number surveyed*	*Number of respondents*	*Response rate (%)*
FÁS	20	378	378	104	28%
CTCs	14	78	78	43	55%
Fáilte Ireland	4	16	16	7	44%
TOTAL	38	472	472	154	33%

Qualitative strand

The sample of participants selected for interviews were drawn from the 472 participants across 38 training centres that were accessible for the survey. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select sites and a fairly specific group of individuals for the study to gather detailed information about the research problem and purposefully inform the research problem (Creswell, 2007, Langdridge, 2007). I decided to select 5 centres in the Dublin area and 4 centres outside Dublin. I was not in a position to decide which practitioners in the centres would be most appropriate for the individual interviews. Therefore I opted for a 'secondary selection' sample of practitioners (Morse and Field,

1995, 65). I contacted the managers of the selected centres and informed them of my study and invited them to discuss the study with trainers who had been recruited to permanent positions within the previous five years and managers who had been involved in the induction and development of newly appointed trainers to ascertain if practitioners would agree to participate in the study. Four managers and 15 trainers agreed to participate. At that time, an embargo on recruitment in the public sector had been implemented and as recruitment of new trainers was being curtailed in some of the providers, the sample included two trainers who had been recruited within the previous 7 years. Details of the sample selected are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Sample for qualitative strand (interviews)

Organisation	*Number of sites selected*	*Number of participants selected*	*Role of participants*	*Gender of participants*
FÁS	3 2 in Dublin 1 South	7	2 x Managers	2 x Females
			5 x Trainers	3 x Males 2 x Females
Fáilte Ireland	2 1 Dublin 1 South	3	1 x Manager	1 x Female
			2 x Trainers	1 x Male 1 x Female
CTCs	3 2 Dublin 1 Midlands	4	1 x Manager	1 x Male
			3 x Trainers	2 x Male 1 x Female
TOTAL	8 5 in Dublin 2 South 2 Midlands	14	4 x Managers 10 x Trainers	7 x Males 7 x Females

Access

Quantitative strand

To complete the web-based survey, access to email addresses for VET practitioners was required. A copy of the survey instrument was presented to appropriate managers in FÁS

and Fáilte Ireland who provided email addresses for all their trainers and provided access to 20 and 4 centres respectively. In May 2009 I sent an email to the general managers of all CTCs attaching a copy of the survey instrument and seeking permission to carry out the study in their organisations, outlining the purpose of my study and seeking email addresses for their trainers (see Appendix B). Sixteen CTCs responded and email addresses were provided for trainers in those centres. Practitioners were then requested to complete the web-based questionnaire. This was done by issuing an email to all trainers where email addresses were available requesting their participation in the online survey (see Appendix C).

Qualitative strand

To obtain practitioners' permission to participate in interviews for the study and to ensure informed consent, I contacted potential participants by telephone and explained the aim, procedures, purpose and consequence of the study to them. I advised them of their rights to refuse to take part and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Participants all signed an informed consent form (copy of form included in Appendix D).

Data gathering

Quantitative strand – web-based questionnaire

I wished to generate a profile of current VET practitioners during the studies. This required wide coverage to generate standardised data from a predetermined set of questions from a large number of VET practitioners to develop a snapshot profile taken at

a specific point in time (Denscombe 2007). The research strategy for this purpose was a survey, and an internet survey was selected as it offered the advantages of being a fast and cheaper way to collect data. A web-based questionnaire was designed and was located on a host website. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix E. Nineteen closed multiple choice questions which prescribed a range of responses were designed to enable patterns to be identified, to assist comparisons and to facilitate quicker coding and analysis (Cohen et al, 2007). One open question was included at the end to enable participants to include a response in their own terms. To encourage participants to access the website and use the web-based questionnaire an email requesting participation in the survey and explaining the purpose of the research was drawn up which included a hyperlink to the website, so participants only needed to double click to open the questionnaire (see Appendix C). An online survey service was used to carry out a pilot survey of 10 VET practitioners to evaluate the effectiveness of the questionnaire and the ease of use of the online service. Following completion of the pilot the survey of 472 trainers was carried out in May and June of 2009 with a response rate of 33%.

Qualitative strand - interviews

Clifford (1997, 40) argues that 'interview techniques are widely used as a means of gathering data in qualitative research'. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data for the study as they provided the opportunity to hear the perceptions and experience of practitioners in VET in their workplaces, and to facilitate 'a constantly evolving, dynamic and co-created relational process to which both participant and research contribute' (Finlay, 2011, 24). Fourteen practitioners agreed to participate in interviews. One-to-one interviews in the participants' workplaces were arranged. An initial

interview schedule was drawn up (see Appendix F) and semi-structured interviews were held. The interview schedule was not strictly adhered to, but was used 'to respond flexibly to the interviewees whilst still keeping track of what has been covered and what remains to be considered' (Ribbins 2002, 210). With the participants' permission, all interviewed were recorded and transcribed in full. As discussed earlier, data gathered from interviews with 5 additional participants in an exploratory study was also used in this study.

Ethical factors

Gaining informed consent from every person participating in the study was carefully managed and my role as researcher was clarified. Interview participants were informed that extracts from their interviews were likely to be used in the final report, and to ensure confidentiality their names or their location will not be used. They were advised that transcripts of their interviews will be seen only by themselves, the researcher and if required by the research supervisor and examiners. They were informed that this data will be kept on my home computer which is password protected and which is only accessible by me, and that their names or their organisation will not be included in the transcripts or the filenames.

Insider research

As researcher, I was an 'insider' in one of the organisations studied (FÁS), and the organisation I worked in fund CTCs, a number of which participated in the study (Robson, 2002). Issues regarding my dual role as researcher and manager required

careful management. I aimed to ensure that my position did not unduly influence what participants had to say to me during the study. To avoid participants becoming aware of my stance on issues, I did not voice my opinions, and tried to conduct the research with the 'same focus, approach and tools' at each interview (Mercer, 2007).

During the data collection stage of the study I was working in Community Services division in the area of developing policy for a number of community training programmes funded by FÁS, including CTCs. My key contacts in this role were FÁS operational managers in the Community Services division who were directly involved in funding CTCs and my role involved little or no contact with CTC staff. Training Centres fell within the remit of the Training Services Division in FÁS, and during the data collection stage my role in FÁS did not involve any contact with either the practitioners or the Training Centres involved in the study. Therefore I was at least one step removed from all participants in the study. Prior to the study I had neither met nor worked with the practitioners who participated in the interviews. Interview participants were advised that the final report would be available to their organisations as it was my hope the study will inform development of policy and practice for FET organisations and practitioners.

Data analysis

Quantitative strand

The data collected from respondents to the questionnaire is summarised in Appendix G, and is shown by training provider in Appendices H, I and J. All data collected was transferred into an Excel spread sheet. Data emerging was limited to nominal, ordinal and continuous data and was analysed to produce basic 'descriptive' statistics

(Denscombe, 2007, 253). Responses to each question were organised to identify the frequency of responses to the pre-determined variables. This identified distribution of the data and the mode (the most common value) for each question. The data was transformed into tables and was displayed in graphic format to represent the frequencies and the modes in the clearest and most informative way.

Qualitative strand

Thematic analysis was used to identity, analyse and report patterns within data as it is not linked to any pre-existing framework, and 'therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks (although not all), and can be used to do different things within them' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 81). In the study, thematic analysis was used as an essentialist method which revealed 'experiences, meanings and the reality of participants', and as a constructionist method which examined 'the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 81). I completed thematic analysis of data following a guide provided by Braun and Clark (2006, 87) i.e.:

1. *Familiarizing yourself with your data*
2. *Generating initial codes*
3. *Searching for themes*
4. *Reviewing themes*
5. *Defining and naming themes*
6. *Producing the report*

As suggested by Braun and Clark (2006) for the first step I familiarised myself with the data which I did by transcribing data, reading and re-reading it in an 'active' way to search for meanings and patterns and noting down initial ideas (Braun and Clark, 2006, 87). During the second step I generated initial codes to organise my data into meaningful

groups. Thirdly, I analysed the codes to search for potential themes. Step four involved reviewing and refining the initial themes. The data was re-read and checked against the themes to ensure they were appropriate for the data and some data was re-coded. A thematic 'map' of the analysis was generated and this is included as Appendix K (Braun and Clark, 2006, 91). Step five involved further ongoing analysis to 'define and refine' the 'essence' of each theme (Braun and Clark, 2006, 92). The themes are shown in Appendix L. The final step involved a final analysis which related the themes to the research questions and literature, selecting extracts from the data and producing a report of the analysis.

Validity of study

Quantitative strand

The quantitative data analysis was checked to ensure that as far as possible that data was recorded accurately, the data are appropriate for the study and the explanations derived from the data are correct (Denscombe, 2007). To check the reliability of the data instrument, the dataset was split in half and findings were compared with the other half. Similar findings emerged. In addition, a colleague reviewed the data, the data analysis and the findings emerging and drew a similar conclusion.

Qualitative strand

Lincoln and Guba (1985, 301-327) suggest the following criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They suggest member checking is the most crucial technique to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 314). Interview participants were sent a copy of the data emerging from their interview. They were asked to confirm that the data represented what they had said on the day and what they wanted to say on the day. There were also asked if they wished to add anything else. No participant modified a transcript.

Mertens (1998, p. 193) describes transferability as the "qualitative parallel to external validity", and argues that the researcher needs to provide sufficient detail through "thick description" to enable readers to make judgements on the degree of similarity. This study is contextualised. However, I am confident that I have provided sufficient detail to enable readers judge the applicability of the study.

Dependability refers to whether findings would be consistent should the study be replicated using the same or similar subjects in the same or similar context (Morse and Field, 1996, p. 18). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 299) argue that replicability rests on an assumption that reality is unchanging, and that replicability of the research procedure will not necessarily yield consistent findings. They contend that an audit can be used to establish the dependability of qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 310). Throughout the study I have attempted to develop an audit trail by detailing each step of the process taken and documenting "decisions, choices and insights" (Morse and Field, 1996, p. 119).

Confirmability means that the study is free from bias in the research procedure and results (Morse and Field, 1996, p. 118). Qualitative research recognises biases held by the researcher and makes them explicit. Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) argue that confirmability of qualitative research should be focused on the data rather than the researcher. They point out that an audit can also be used to establish confirmability. A colleague reviewed the interview transcripts, the data analysis and the findings of this study. It was his view that the findings are supported by the data.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the reasons for selecting a mixed methods approach and how this was implemented. Mixed methods were selected as an approach for this study to respond to the different types of research questions required for the study as it was important to use an approach which facilitated generating a statistical profile of VET practitioners while facilitating access to their experiences of developing as professional practitioners when they entered the VET sector. The chapter has outlined how data was gathered through an embedded design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The research design incorporated an on-line survey and interviews to gather data and used basic statistical analysis and thematic analysis respectively to analyse the data. The chapter also outlined the processes used to ensure validity of the study.

The findings are presented in the next two chapters, with Chapter 5 presenting a profile of the VET sector and Chapter 6 presenting findings relating to practice and professionalism.

Chapter 5: Profiling the Vocational Education and Training Sector

Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and experienced by VET trainers in their workplace. This needs to be examined in the context of the national situation regarding trainers in VET i.e. the current profile (including qualifications and experience) of VET trainers. A review of literature revealed a gap in the research regarding information about trainers in the VET sector in Ireland including information about their qualifications and experience.

A web-based questionnaire (see Appendix E) was used to survey 472 trainers during April and May 2009. A total of 154 respondents completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 33%. Of the 154 respondents, 104 were respondents from FÁS Training Centres, 7 were respondents from Fáilte Ireland Training Centres and 43 were respondents from Community Training Centres.

This chapter presents the findings which emerged from the survey. Findings emerged following a basic statistical analysis of the data and are presented under the following categories: Profile of VET trainers; Experience of VET Trainers; Qualifications of VET Trainers; and Nature of VET Trainers Work. In most instances the findings are presented

as charts showing (a) a summary for all respondents and (b) a summary for each organisation type.

Profile of VET trainers

As seen in Figure 4, the gender breakdown of all respondents to the survey was 71% males and 28% females. The gender breakdown varies across the participating organisations and is shown in Figure 5. Males represented 6 (86%) of the respondents from Fáilte Ireland, 80 (77%) of the respondents from FÁS and 23 (53%) of respondents from Community Training Centres. Females represented 20 (47%) of the respondents from Community Training Centres, 23 (22%) of those from FÁS and 1 (14%) of the Fáilte Ireland respondents.

Figure 4. Gender of respondents

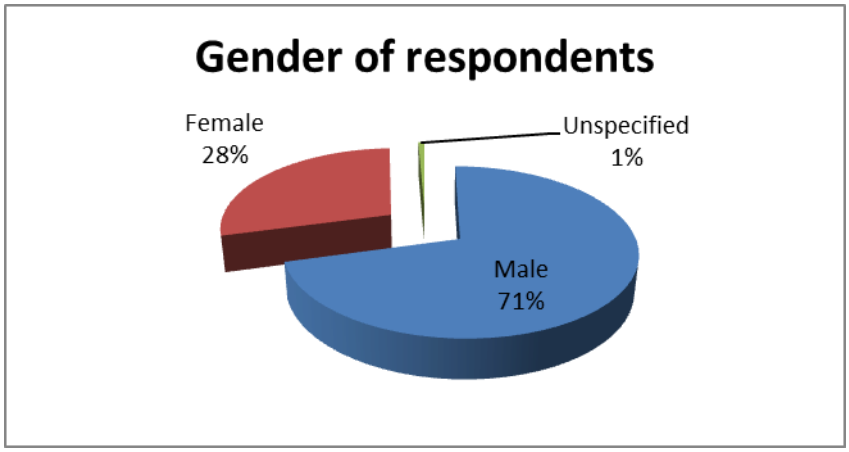


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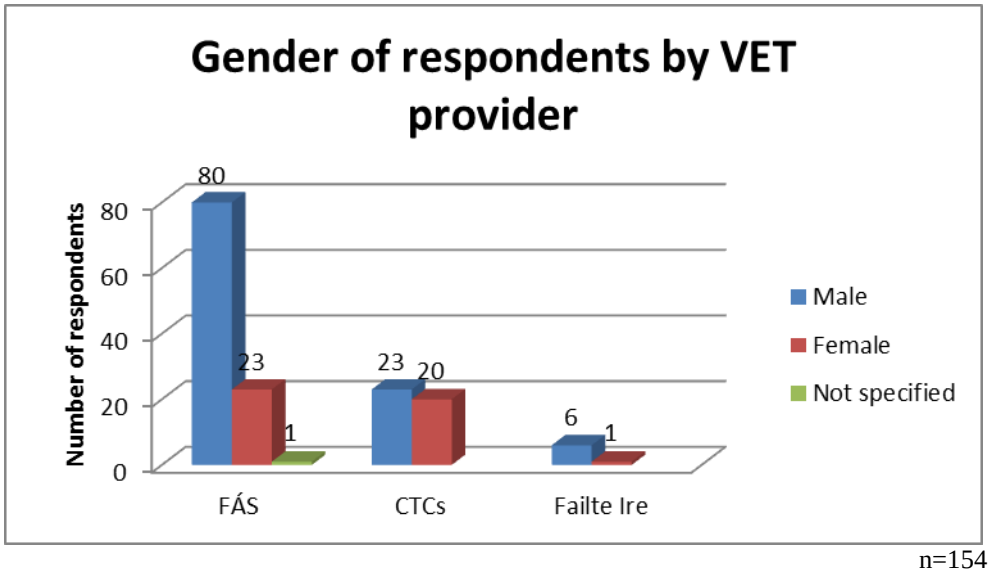
Figure 5. Gender of respondents by VET provider



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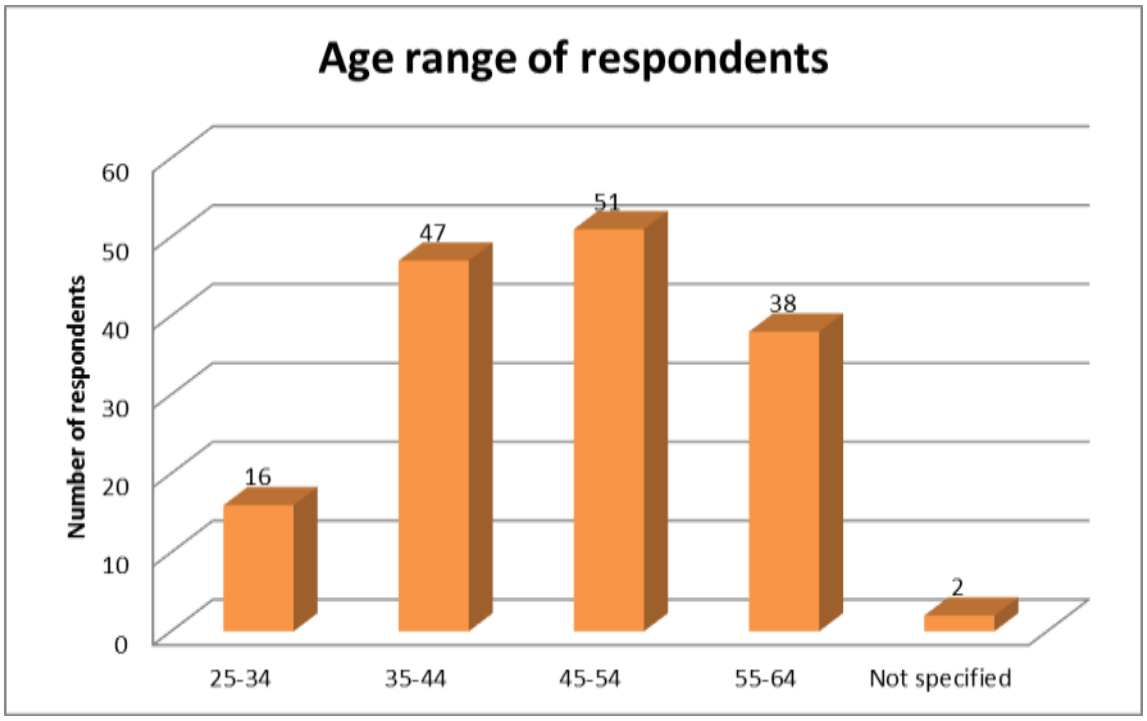
The age range of respondents is shown in Figure 6. It can be seen from this that 64% of respondents were between 35 and 54 with the highest proportion of respondents (33%) in the age range of 45 to 54.

Figure 6. Age range of respondents



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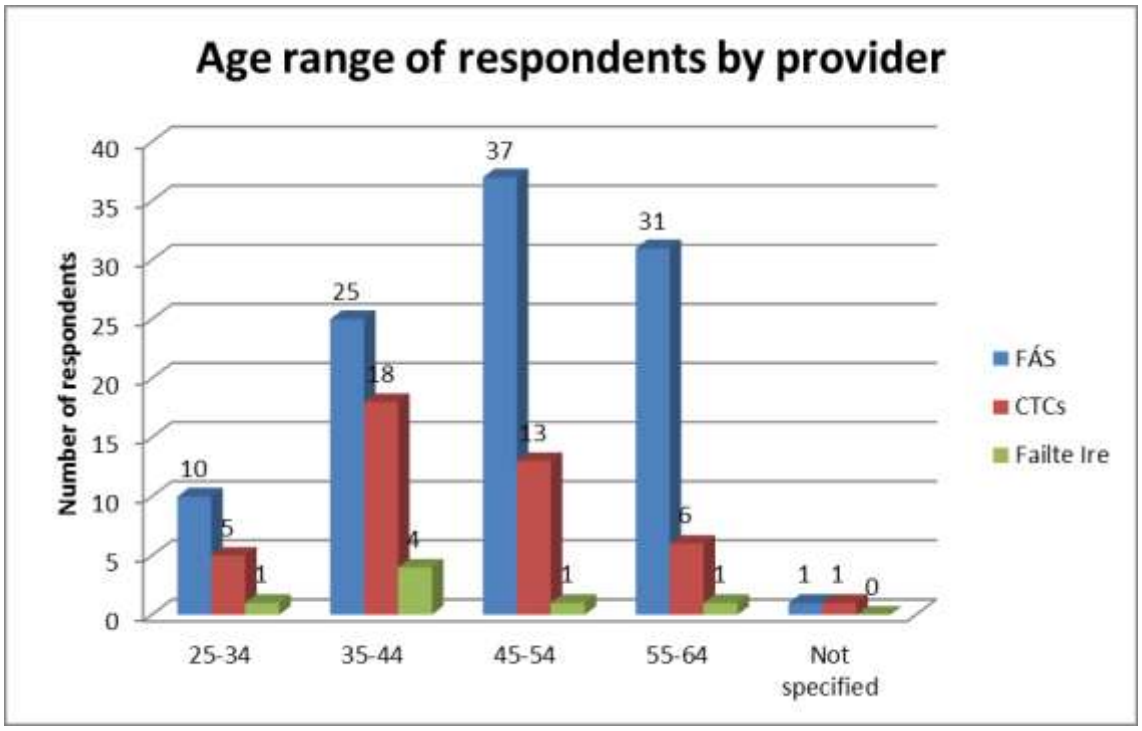
The age range distribution varies across the organisations as shown in Figure 7. CTCs and Fáilte Ireland have a higher proportion of respondents aged between 35-54 years of age, i.e. 31 of respondents from CTCs (72%) and 5 respondents from Fáilte Ireland (71%). Whereas 62 (60%) of FÁS respondents were aged between 35 and 54, a higher proportion of FÁS respondents were aged between 45 and 64 i.e. 68 respondents (65%).

Figure 7. Age range of respondents by VET provider



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The findings show that 138 (90%) of the respondents were employed in a permanent full-time capacity. This is shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9. The majority of respondents, 126 (82%), were employed with the job title of Instructor.

Figure 8. Employment status of respondents

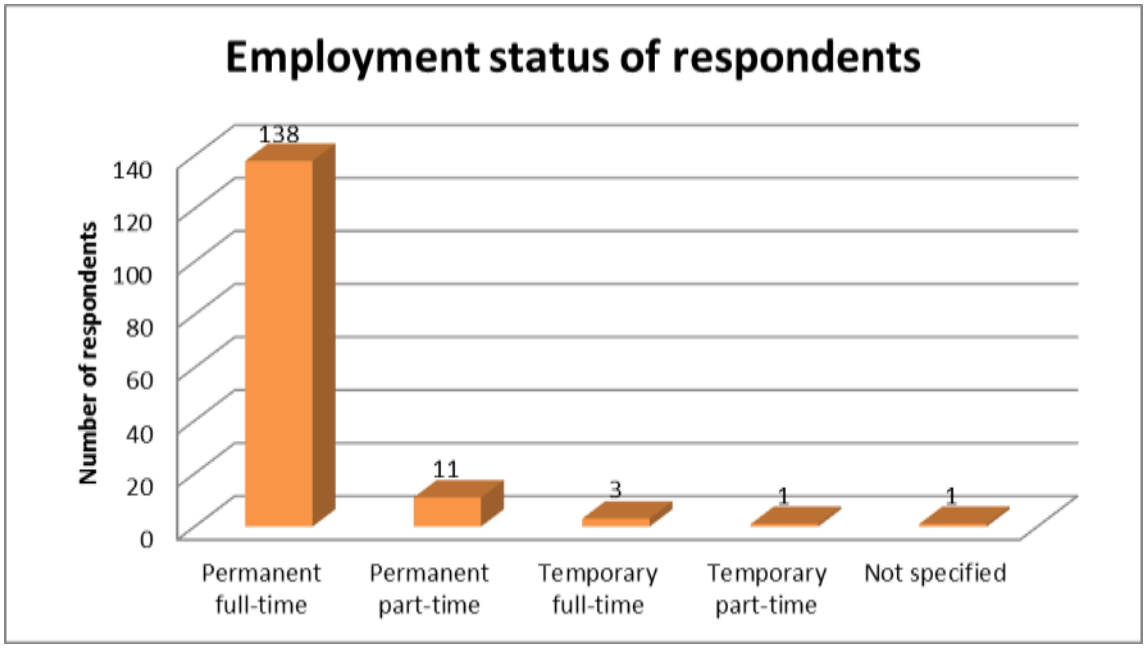

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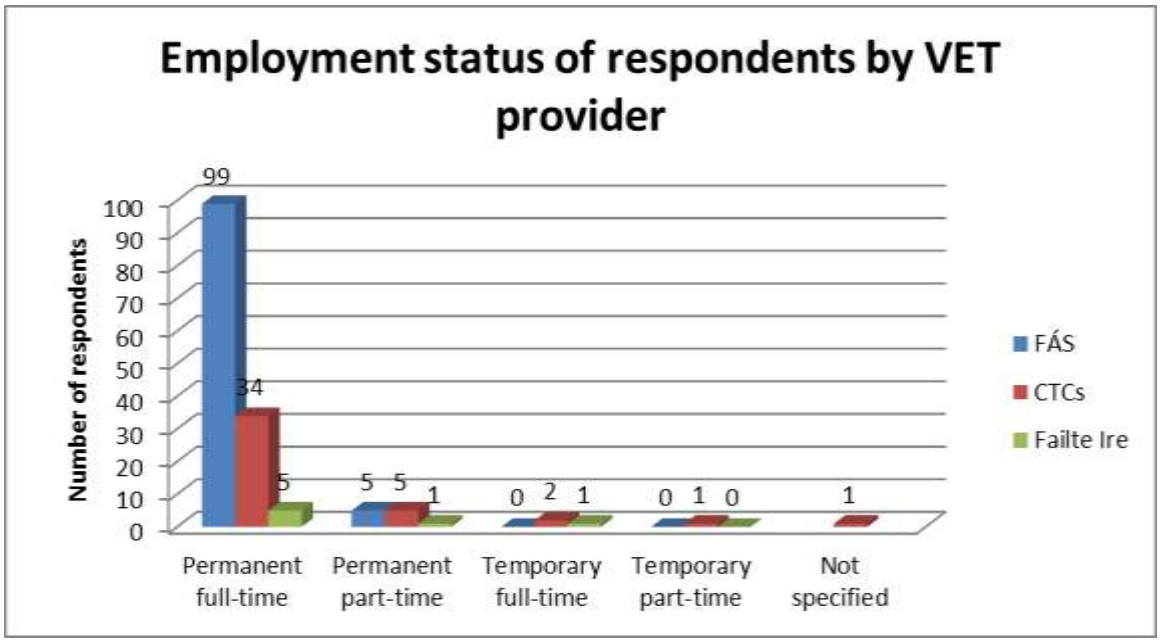
Figure 9. Employment status of respondents by VET provider



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The respondents' field of work is shown in Figure 10. The most common fields of work were apprenticeship (38% of respondents) and vocational skills development (37%). Males represented 56 (96%) of the 58 instructors involved in running apprenticeship

programmes reflecting the gendered nature of apprenticeship around the world (Fuller et al, 2005). As shown in Figure 11, all but three of the respondents working in the apprenticeship area work in FÁS.

Figure 10. Respondents' area of work in VET

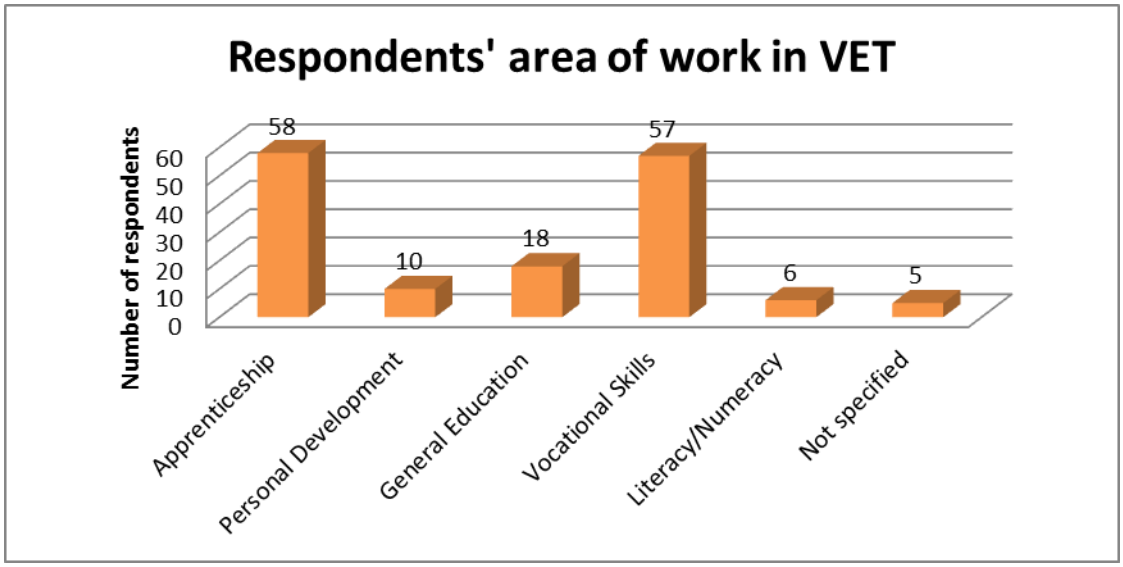

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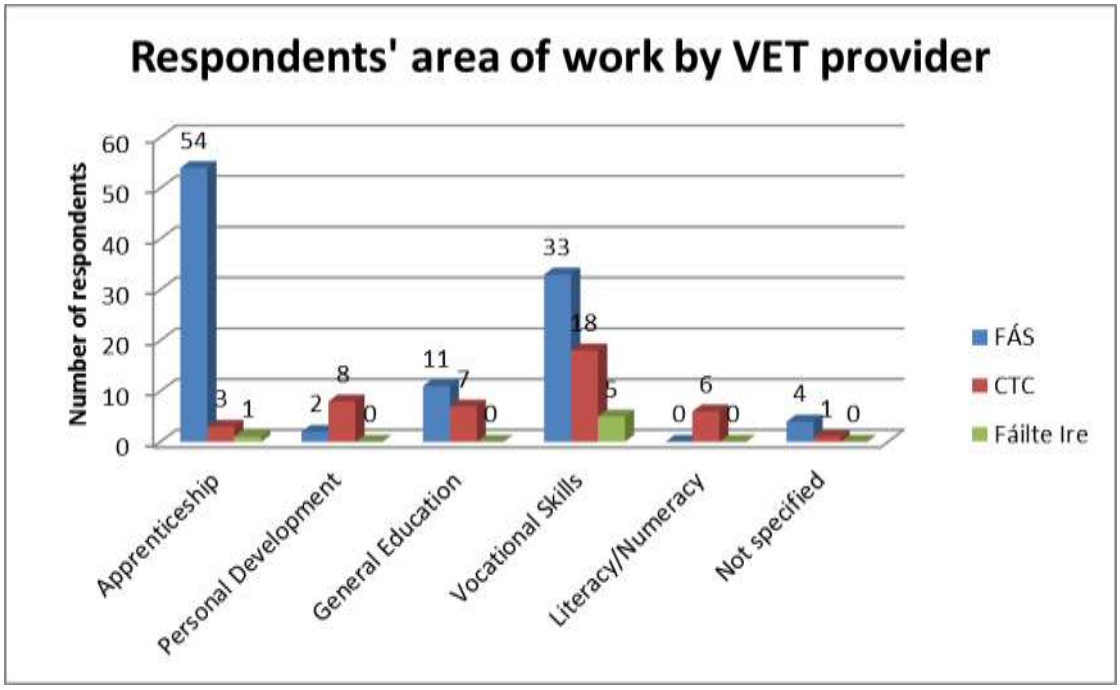
Figure 11. Respondents' area of work in VET by VET provider



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Experience of VET Trainers

As shown in Figure 12 and Figure 13, respondents' service as a VET trainer varied from less than 5 years to more than 30 years of service with 79 (52%) of respondents having between 5-20 years of service.

Figure 12. Respondents' years of service as VET trainer

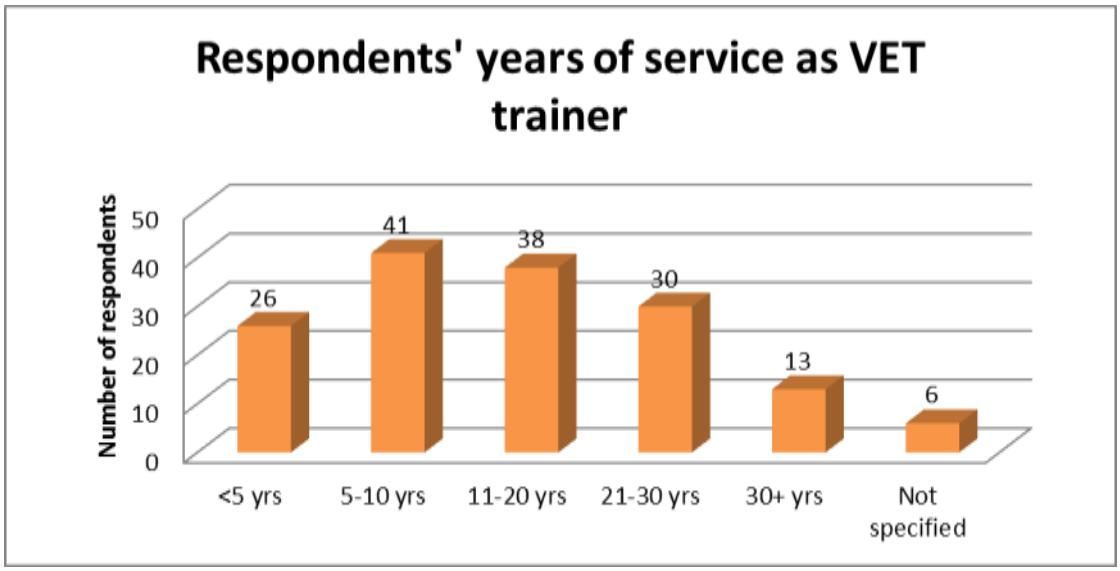

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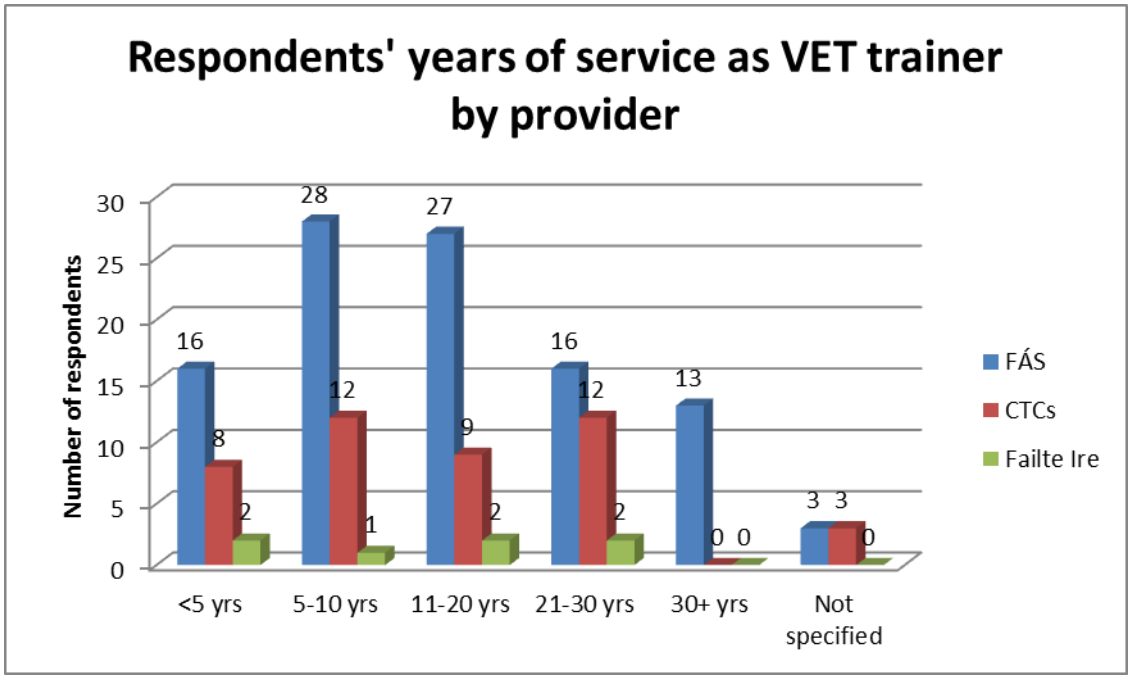
Figure 13. Respondents' years of service as VET trainer by provider



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A breakdown of respondents' industrial or business experience (non-training/non-teaching) prior to their entry to the VET sector is shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15. This varied from having no previous experience to more than 10 years, with the majority of the respondents, 119 (77%), having more than 5 years previous experience. It was revealed during interviews with practitioners that *experience in industry* is a determining factor in the recruitment of practitioners to VET. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Figure 14. Respondents' previous industrial or business experience prior to entry to VET

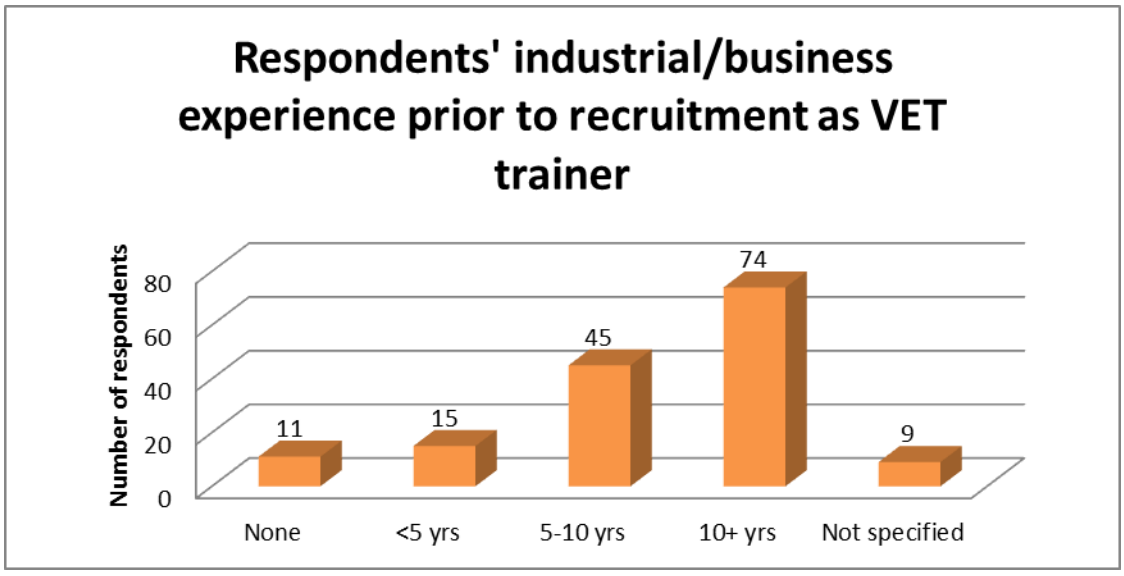

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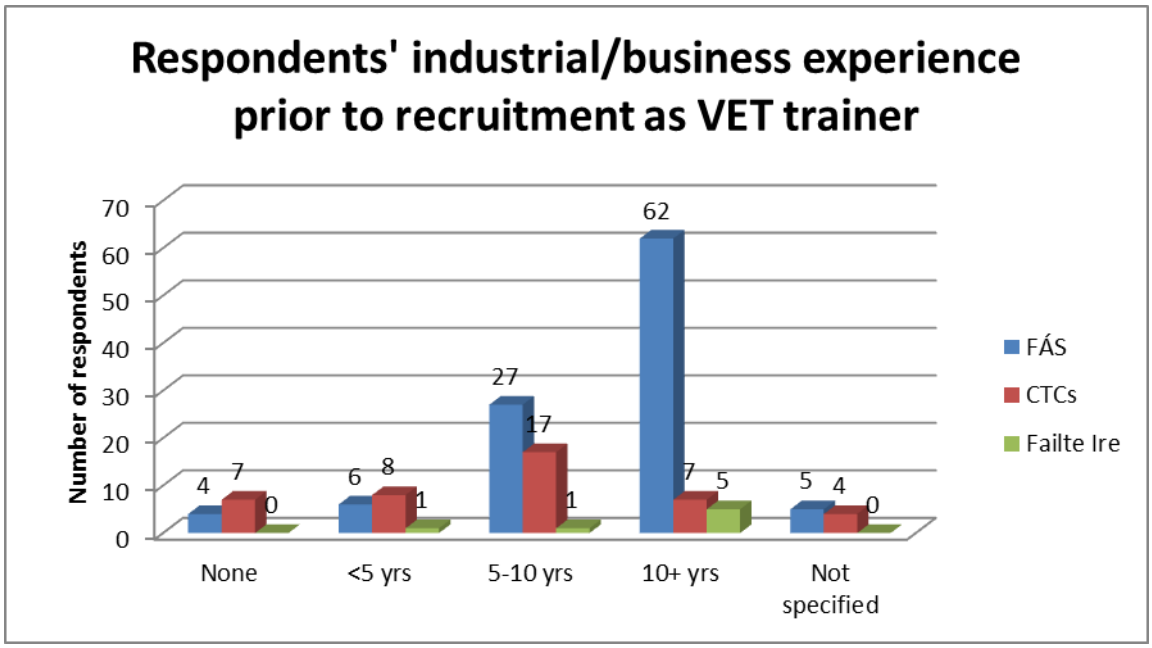
Figure 15. Respondents' previous industrial/business experience prior to recruitment to VET by provider



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A breakdown of respondents' training or teaching experience prior to their entry to the VET sector is shown in Figure 16 and Figure 17. As can be seen from Figure 18, prior to their entry to VET 82 (53%) of respondents had previous teaching/training experience, either full-time or part-time.

A study of VET practitioners in Australia by Chappell and Johnson (2003) found that a common entry route to VET was through part-time training/teaching. The findings of this study are similar and reveal that 52 (34%) of respondents had part-time teaching experience prior to entering VET.

Figure 16. Respondents' previous training/teaching experience prior to entry to VET

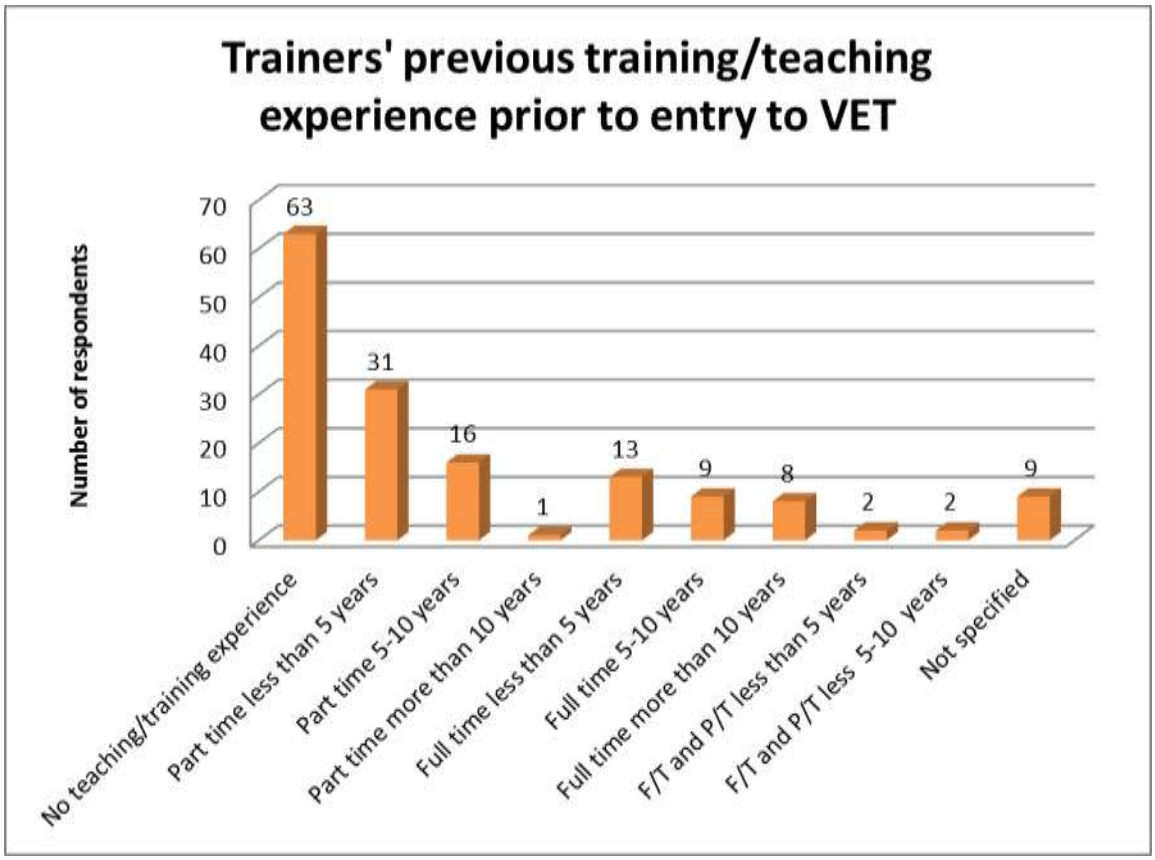

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Figure 17. Respondents' previous training/teaching experience prior to entry to VET by provider

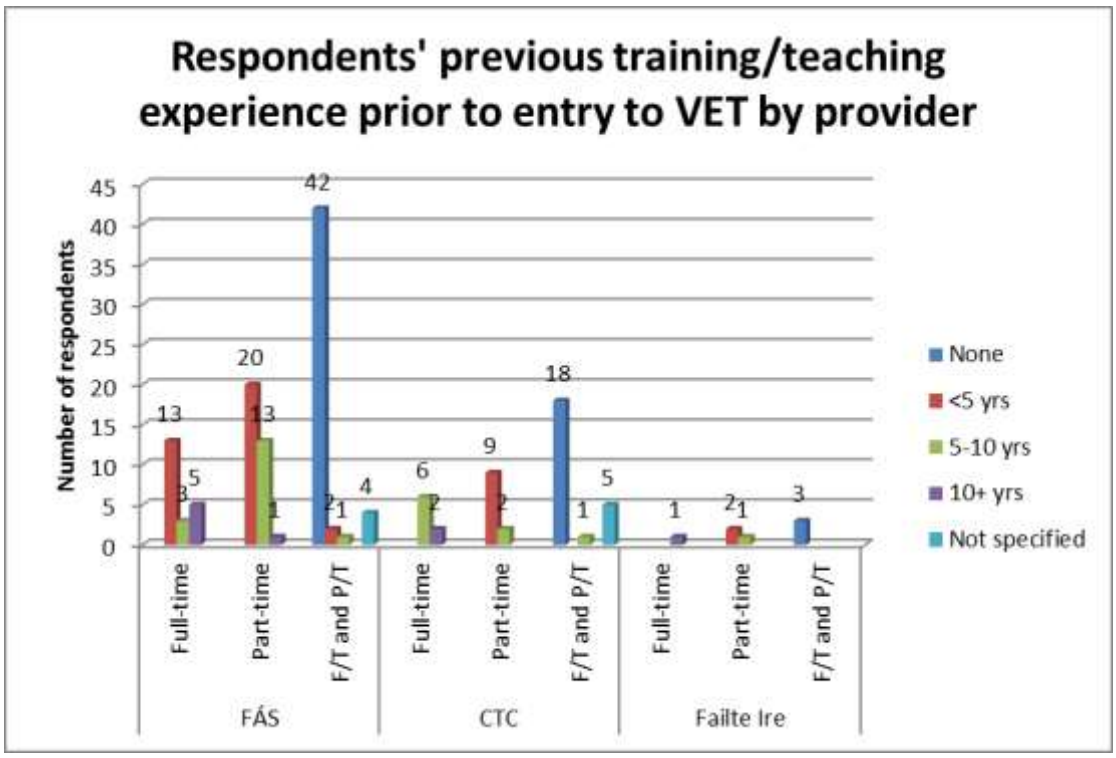

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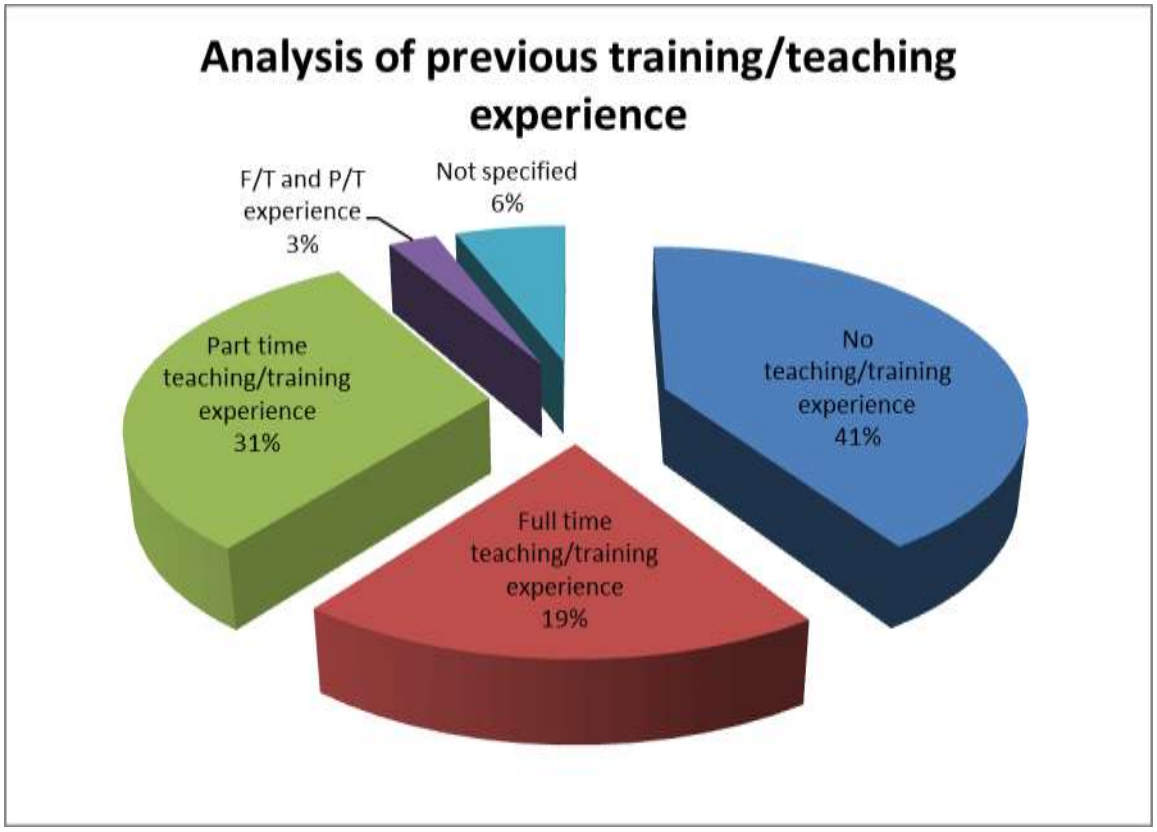
Figure 18. Analysis of respondents' previous training/teaching experience



Qualifications of VET Trainers

Respondents were surveyed regarding their vocational/technical (non-teaching) qualifications at the time of their entry to VET. A breakdown of the highest level of vocational/technical qualifications held by trainers on their entry to VET is shown in Figures 19 and 20. It emerged from participants in interviews that trainers entering VET required a qualification in their subject matter area at a minimum of certificate or diploma level. As seen in Figure 21 a certificate or a diploma in a craft or vocational area was held by 74 (48%) of respondents. However, third level qualifications were held by 66 (43%) of respondents with 30 (19%) respondents holding an undergraduate or masters level degree which revealed that a significant amount of trainers entered the sector with qualifications that exceeded the entry level requirement.

Figure 19. Vocational/technical qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET

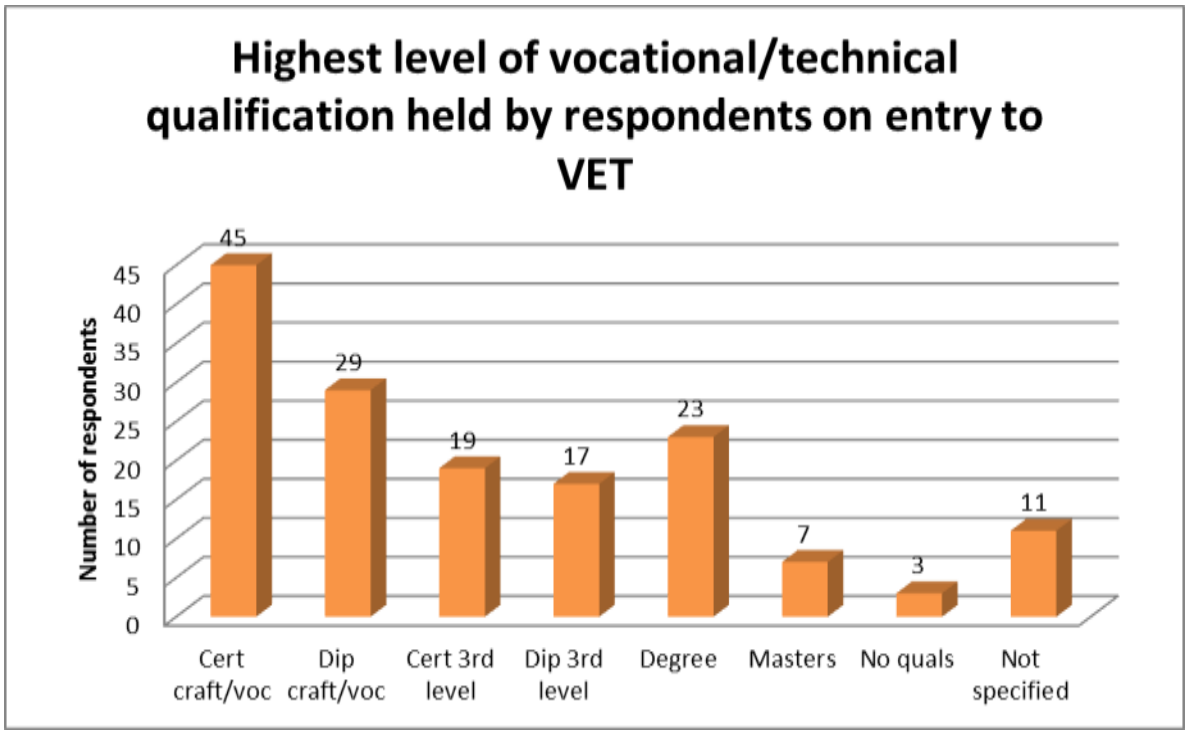


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Figure 20. Highest level of vocational/technical qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET by provider

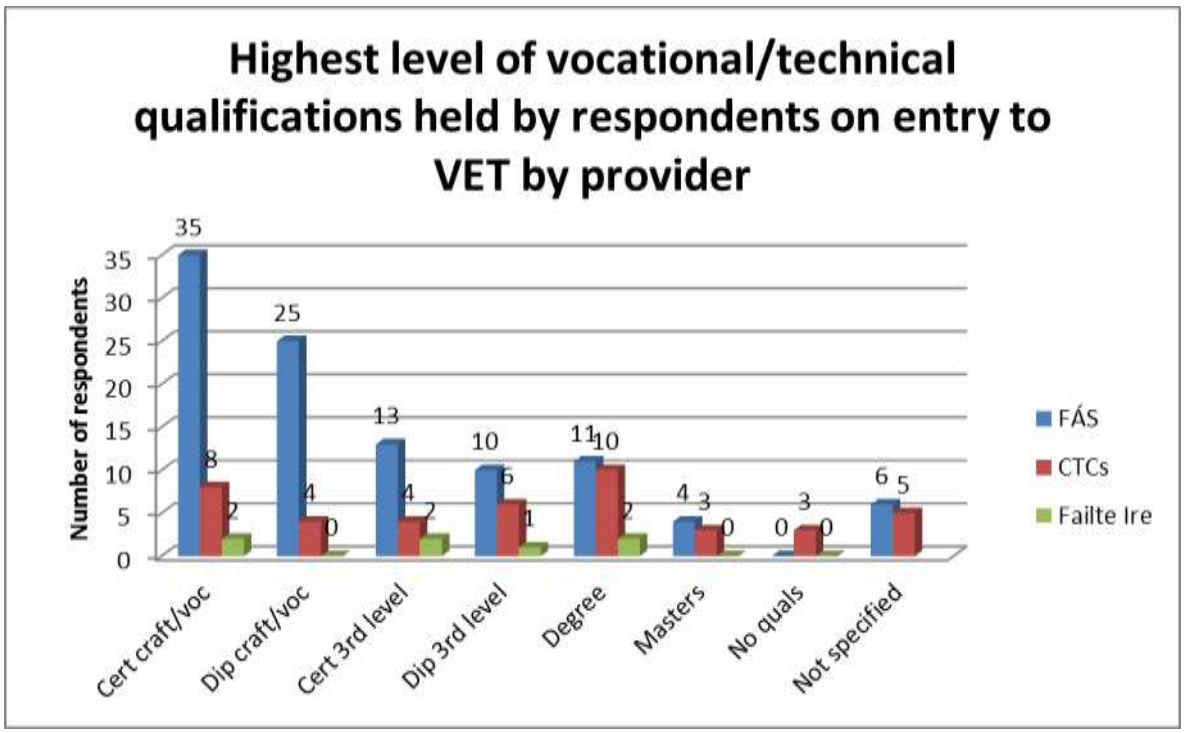

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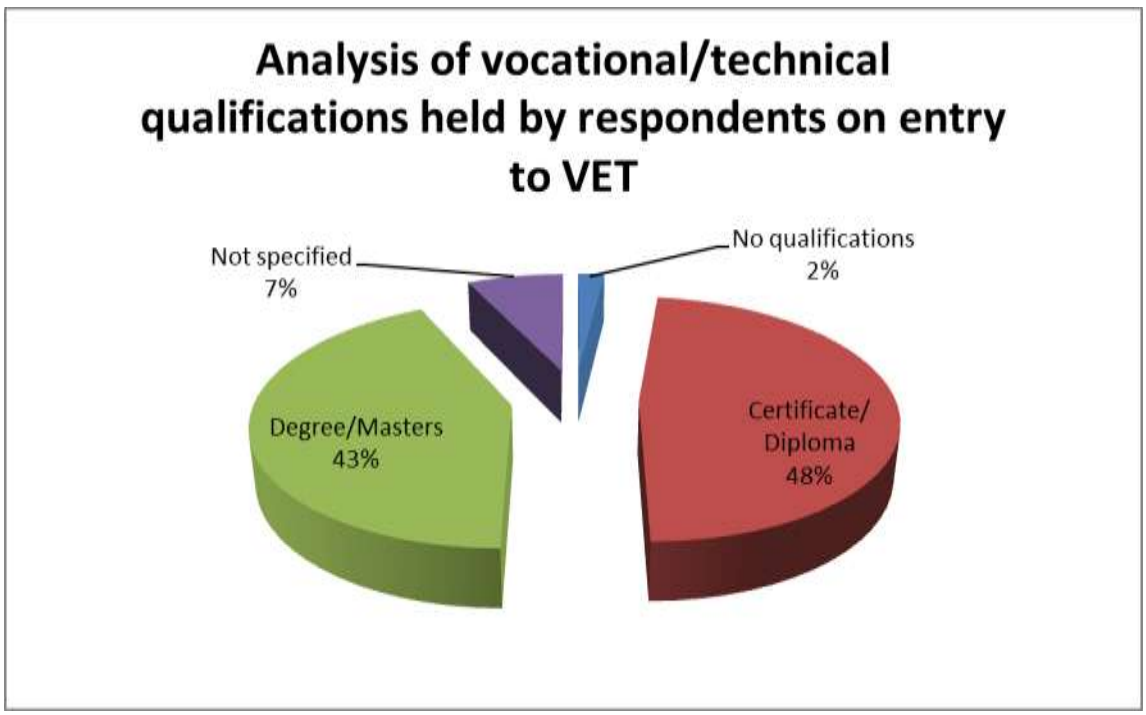
Figure 21. Analysis of vocational/technical qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET



Respondents were surveyed regarding the training/teaching qualifications they held at the time of their entry to VET. A breakdown of the highest level of training/teaching qualifications held by trainers on their entry to VET is shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23.

Figure 22. Highest level of training/teaching qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET

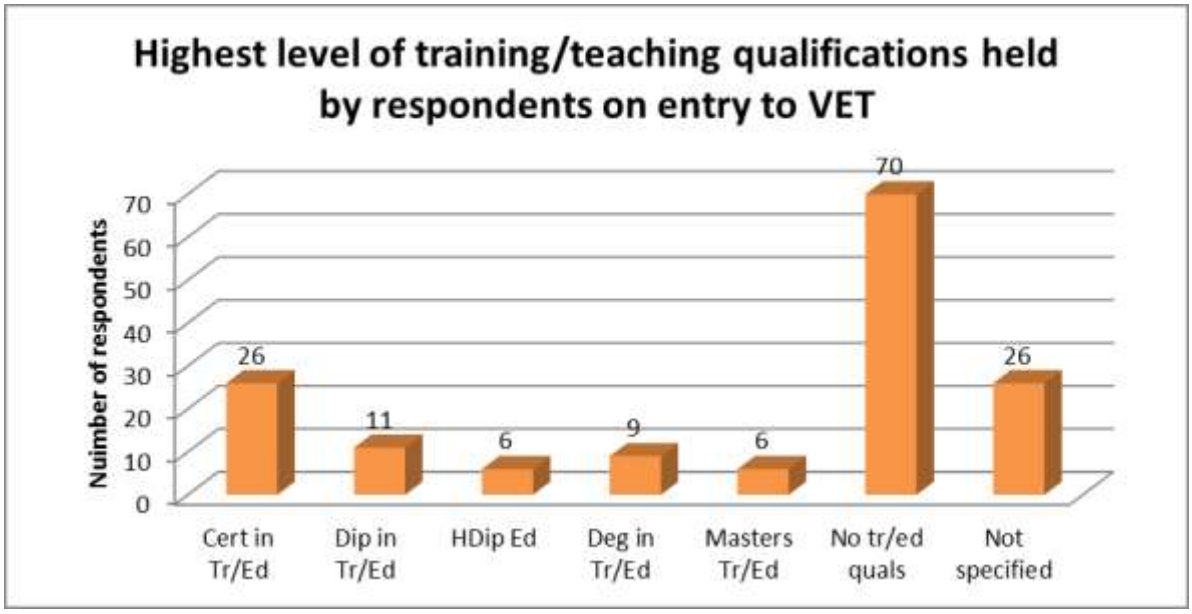


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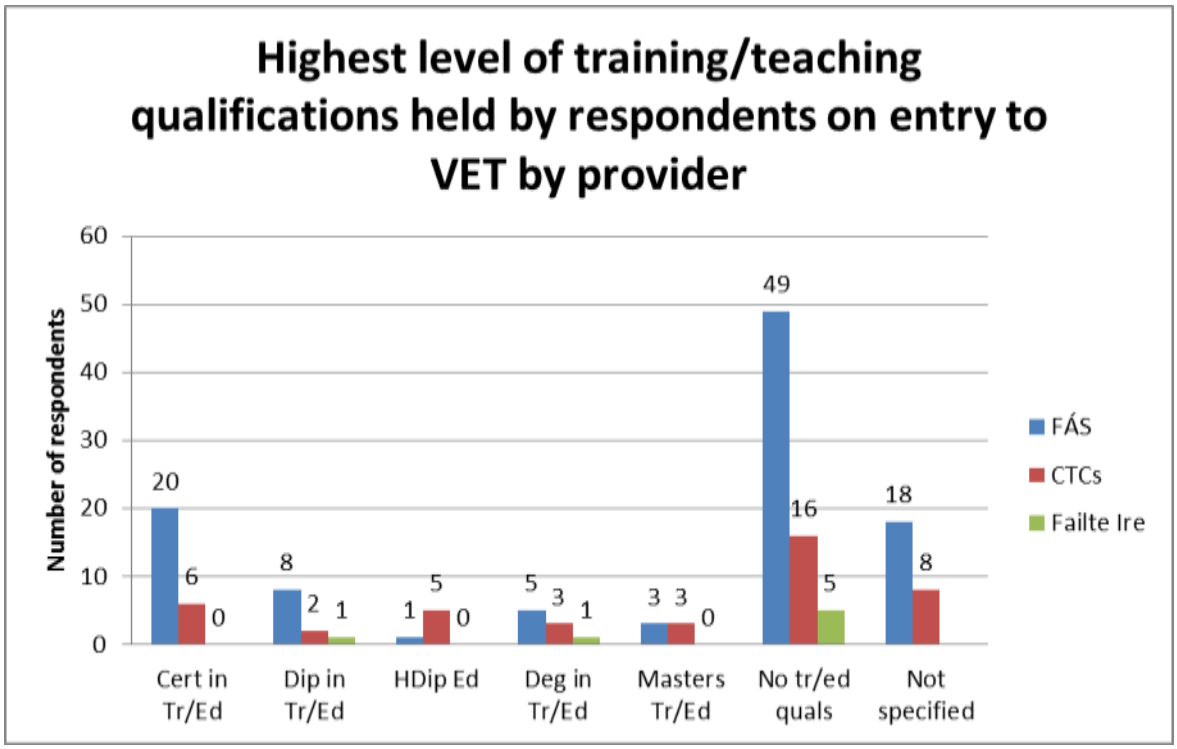
Figure 23. Highest level of training/teaching qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET by provider



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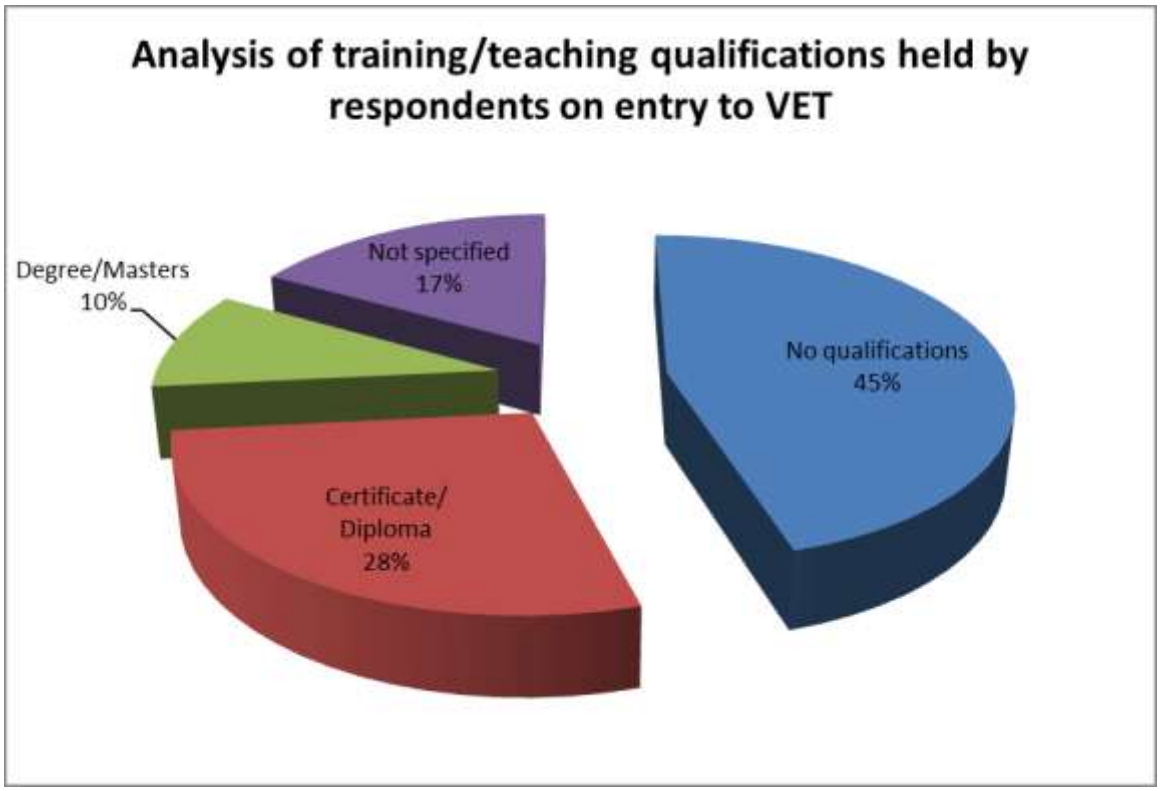
As shown in Figure 24 training/teaching qualifications were held by 58 (38%) of respondents on their entry to VET, with 43 (28%) respondents holding qualifications at certificate or diploma level and 15 (10%) holding qualifications at degree or masters level. Of the 82 respondents who had previous teaching experience 52 (63%) of those held a training/teaching qualification prior to entry to VET.

It is interesting to note that training/teaching qualifications were held by 38% of respondents as a training/teaching qualification is not mandatory for entry to VET. This may reflect a former requirement by FÁS and Enterprise Ireland that trainers running courses grant-aided by FÁS had to be approved on a national register of trainers, had to have suitable experience, and had to hold suitable subject-matter and training/education

qualifications. It may also reflect an increase in the availability and range of accredited professional development programmes for trainers at third level in universities and private colleges over the last two decades.

Figure 24. Analysis of training/teaching qualifications held by respondents on entry to VET



Respondents were also surveyed regarding their current training/teaching qualifications. The survey revealed that 110 (71%) of respondents currently hold training/teaching qualifications and the highest level of training/teaching qualifications held is shown in Figure 25 and Figure 26.

Figure 25. Highest level of training/teaching qualifications currently held by respondents

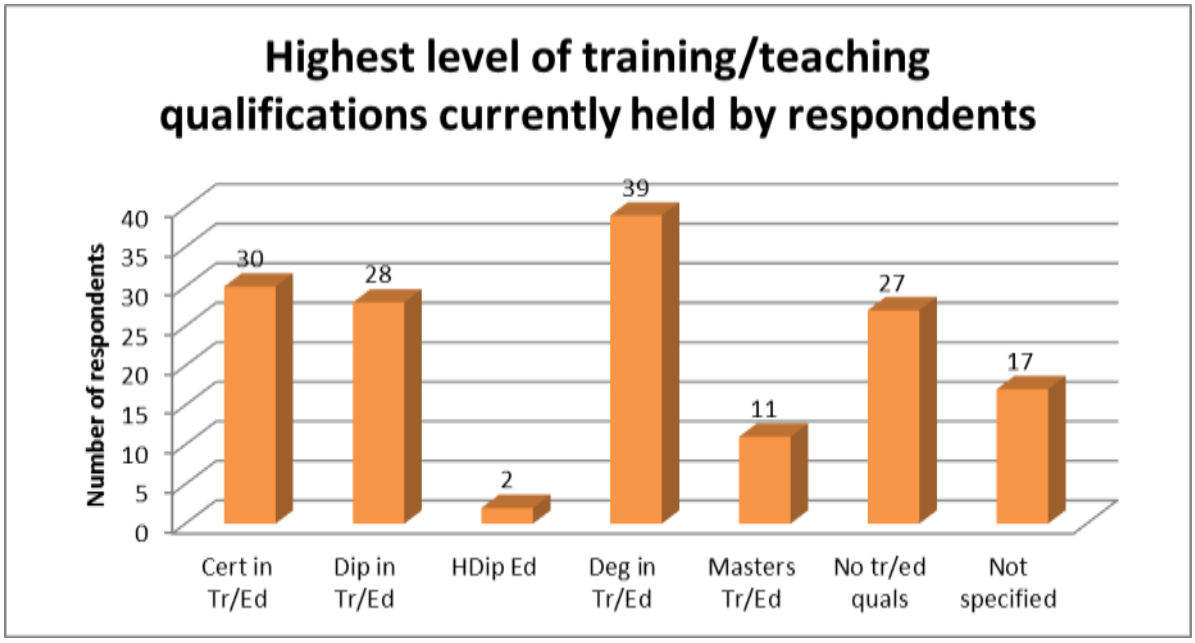


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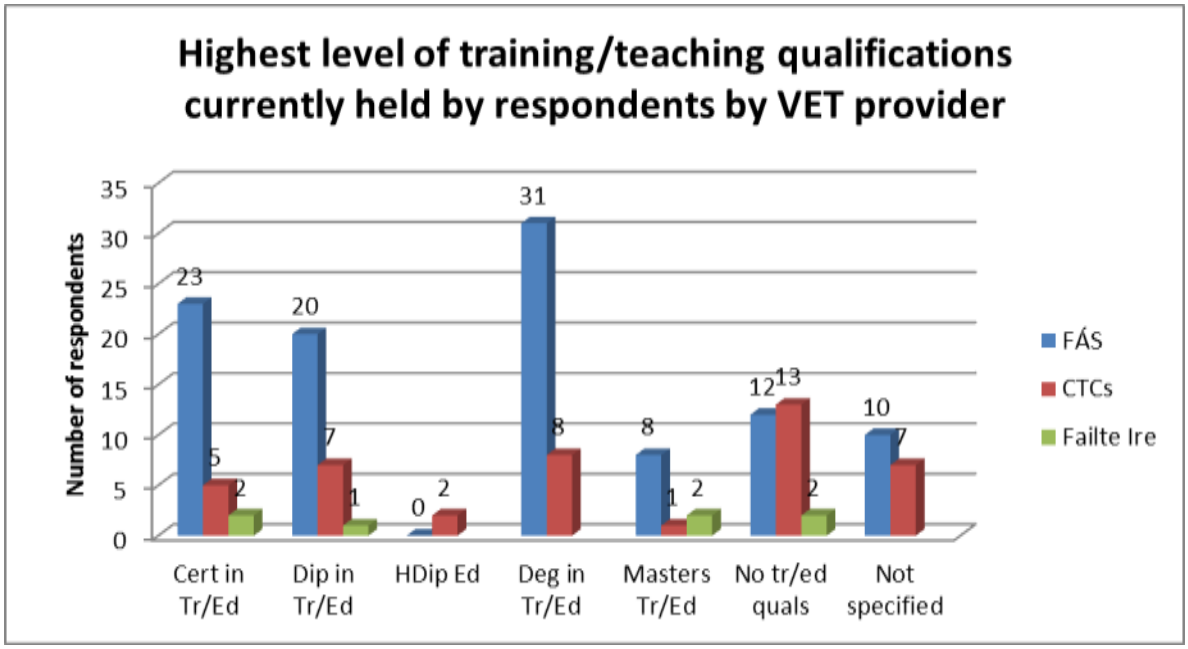
Figure 26. Highest level of training/teaching qualifications currently held by respondents by VET provider



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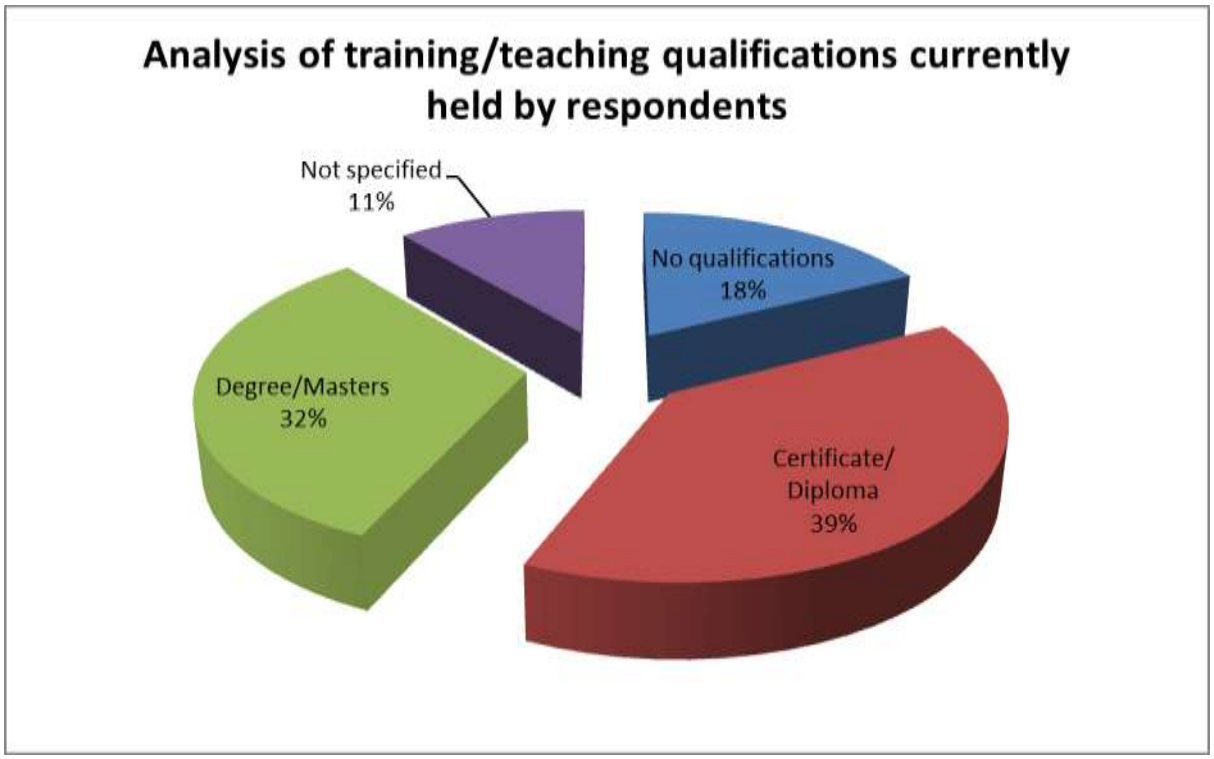
As shown in Figure 27 certificate and diploma level qualifications were held by 60 (39%) of respondents, and degrees at undergraduate and masters level were held by 50 (32%) of respondents. The remaining 44 (29%) respondents either had no training/teaching qualification or had not specified any qualifications. Of those 44 respondents, 12 (27% of those with no training/teaching qualifications) have less than 5 years of service with their organisations and may not yet have undertaken a programme leading to a training/teaching qualification. Ten (23%) of the 44 respondents are between 55-64 years of age and as they are approaching retirement may not pursue training/teaching qualifications.

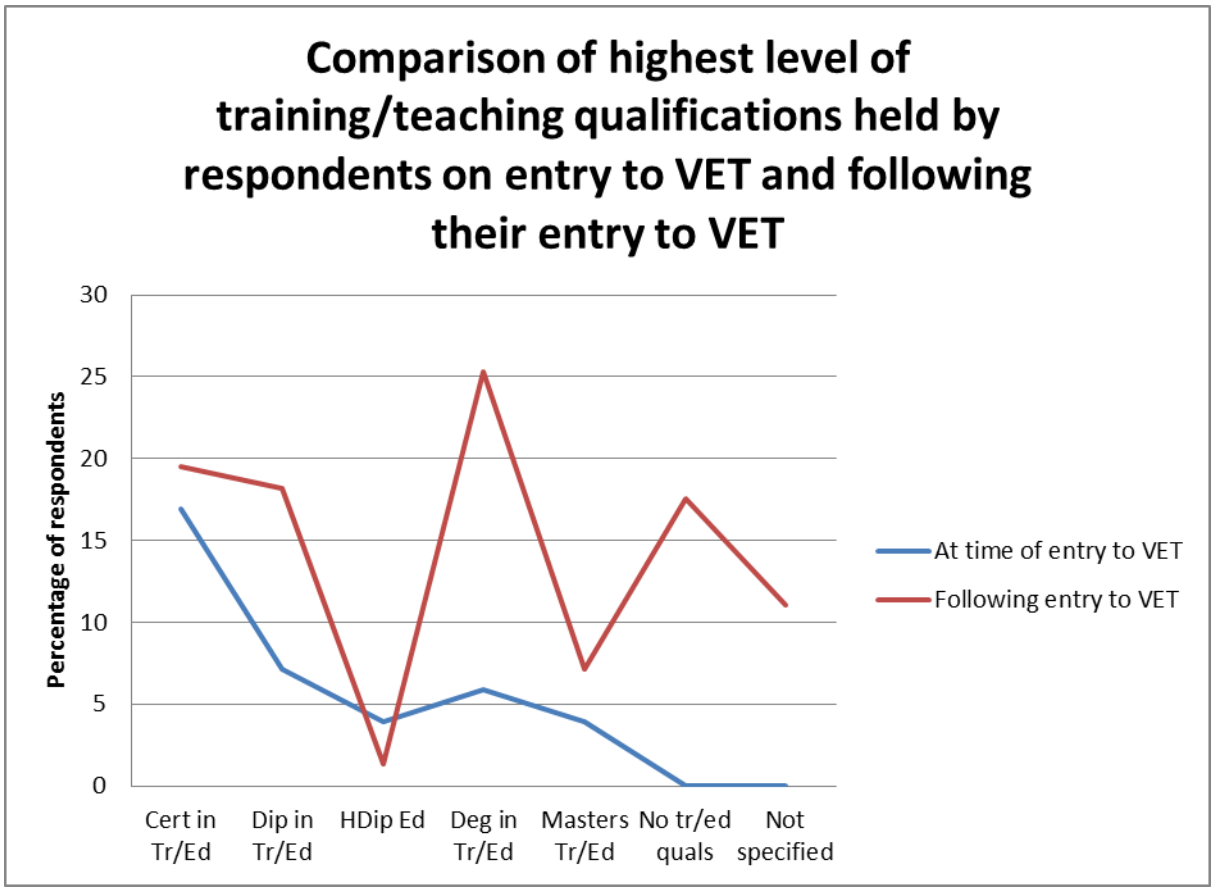
Figure 27. Analysis of training/teaching qualifications currently held by respondents



It is notable that the number of respondents holding training/teaching qualifications increased from 38% at time of entry to VET to 71% following their entry. It is also

notable that the level of the training/teaching qualification held by respondents rose to higher levels with a significant increase in the number of respondents attaining qualifications at degree and masters level. This can be seen from a comparison, on a percentage basis, between the highest level of training/education qualifications held by trainers on their entry to VET and the highest level of qualifications held since their entry to VET shown in Figure 28. This indicates that trainers undergo significant professional development on their entry to VET, both to gain certification in the training/teaching area and to increase the level of training/teaching certification they hold.

Figure 28. Comparison of highest level of training/education qualifications held by trainers on entry to VET and qualifications attained since entry to VET

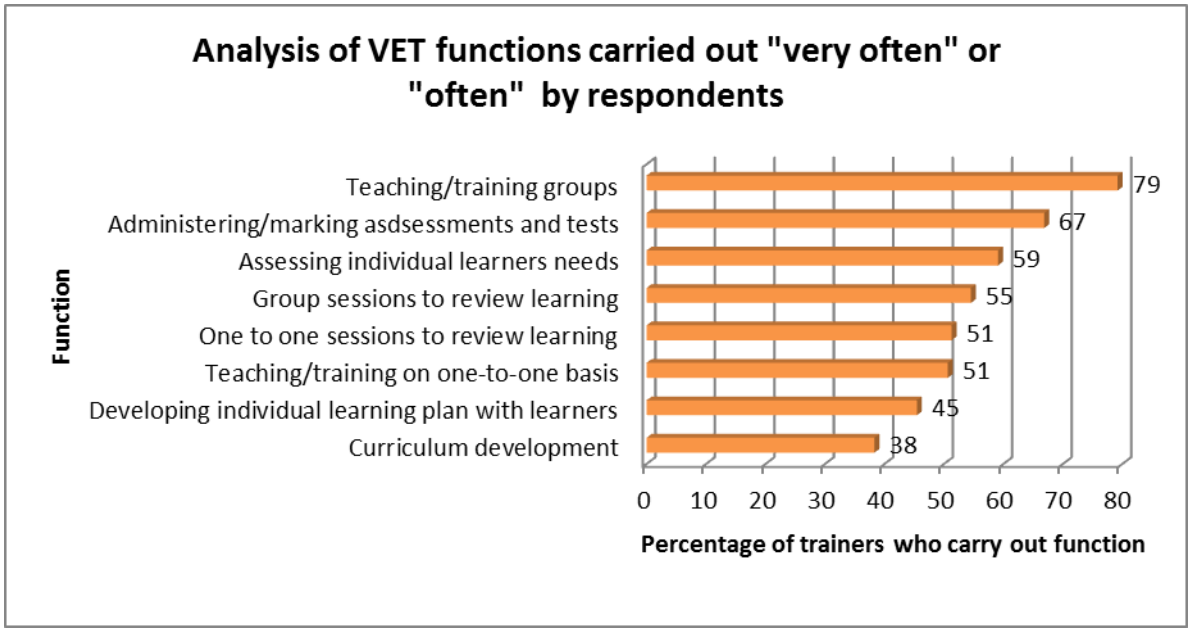


Nature of VET Trainers Work

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they carried out a list of eight functions associated with VET trainers work by selecting *very often*, *often*, *not often* or *never*. The functions which respondents indicated were carried out *very often* and *often* are shown in Figure 29. Respondents indicated that work involving *training/teaching groups* was most prevalent and was carried out *very often*/*often* by 79% of respondents. This reflects findings in a study of FE lecturers in the UK by Avis et al (2001) and a study of VET practitioners in Australia by Chappell and Johnson (2003) indicating that training and teaching groups remains a significant part of VET trainers' work. However, *administering and marking assessments* is also a predominant function and is carried out *very often*/*often* by 67% of respondents. It was revealed during interviews with participants that as VET trainers deliver training courses leading to certification, in most cases they are also responsible for conducting and marking the relevant assessments. In some cases this was at the end of a module or at the end of a course and in some cases it was continuous assessment.

More than half of the respondents carried out 6 of the 8 functions *very often*/*often* which appears to indicate that the working lives of practitioners is quite varied and diverse as found in studies by Avis et al (2001), Chappell and Johnson (2003) and McNamara et al (2005).

Figure 29. VET functions carried out by respondents (very often or often)



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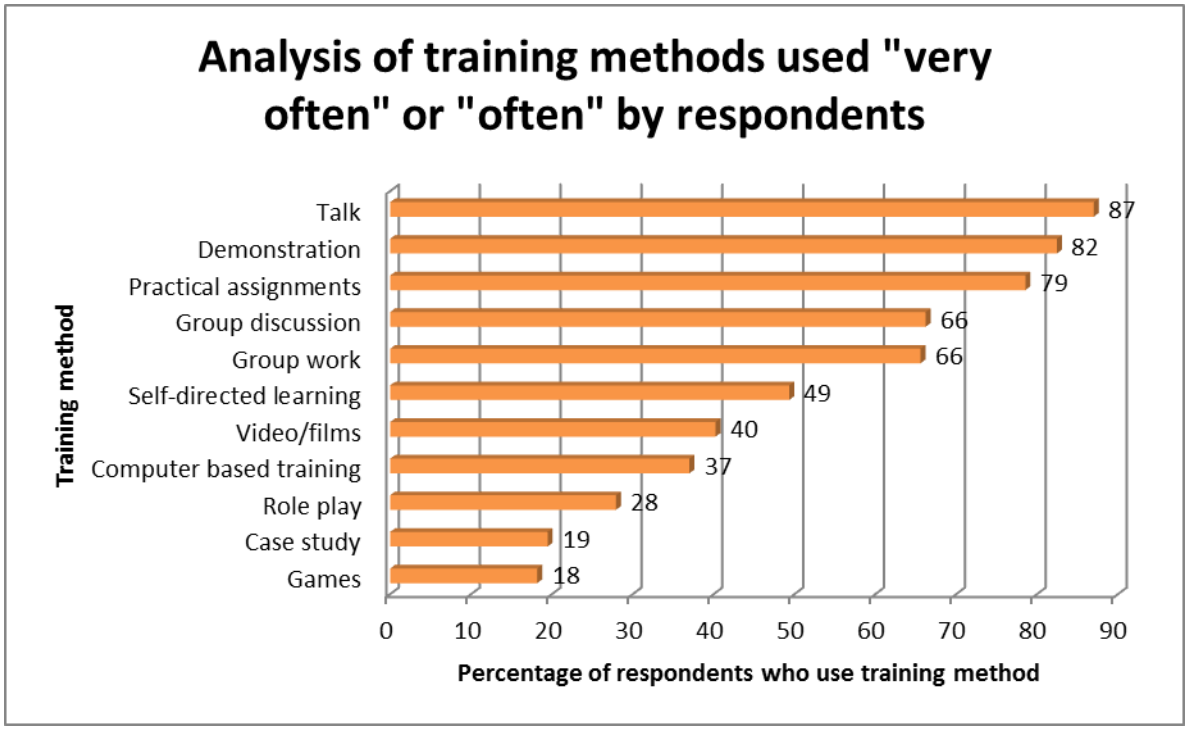
Respondents were also asked to indicate their most commonly used teaching/training methods by selecting *very often*, *often*, *not often* or *never* against a list of 11 methods. As seen in Figure 30, respondents indicated that their most frequently used teaching/training methods were *talk* which was used *very often*/*often* by 87% of respondents, *demonstration* which was used *very often*/*often* by 82% of respondents and *practical assignments* which were used *very often*/*often* by 79% of respondents.

Figure 30. Teaching/training methods used by respondents (very often or often)



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Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a profile of trainers in VET in Ireland generated by the study. The profile is a snapshot profile of trainers currently working in the VET sector and was produced using basic descriptive statistics. The profile reveals the following key issues:

- There are a higher proportion of males employed than females. This is particularly so in the case in the area of apprenticeship where 96% of the trainers are male. This reflects the gendered nature of apprenticeship in countries around the world (Fuller et al, 2005).
- The most common fields VET trainers work in are apprenticeship (38%) and vocational skills development (37%).

- The majority of trainers (77%) had previous industrial or business experience in a non-training/non-teaching environment prior to their entry to VET. This suggests that socialisation into the VET sector occurs in the VET institution they join (Robson, 1998b).

- A significant proportion of trainers (53%) have previous training or teaching experience when they are recruited to the VET sector. Of those with previous experience, 63% gained it through part-time work.

- As found in a study on the broader HRD and training sector in Ireland by the IITD (2009) and a study of the FE sector in the UK (Gleeson and James, 2007), there was diversity in the qualifications held by trainers on their entry to the VET sector, 91% of trainers held vocational/technical qualifications and 38% held training/teaching qualifications on their recruitment to VET. Qualifications in both areas varied from certificate to degree level.

- Following their entry to VET the volume and level of training/teaching qualifications held by trainers increased from 38% to 71% with a significant increase in the percentage of trainers holding qualifications at degree/masters level i.e. an increase from 10% to 32%.

It can be concluded from the profile emerging that trainers undergo significant professional development on their entry to the VET workplace. The next chapter presents findings from the qualitative strand of the study which explored how trainers conceptualised and experienced professionalism and professional development in the workplace.

Chapter 6: Practice and Professionalism in the Vocational Education and Training sector

Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings of the qualitative strand of the study. All findings are drawn from data emerging from semi-structured interviews with 19 practitioners who participated in the study. Two themes which relate to the research questions emerged from analysis of the data, and the themes and associated categories are shown in Table 1. Details of data within each of the themes and categories are included as Appendix K. It is recognised that some findings relate to more than one theme.

This chapter commences with a brief profile of the participants in the study and then presents findings under the emerging themes. Theme 1 – Practitioners' perceptions of the nature of their practice - outlines managers' and trainers' perceptions of the role of a trainer in VET and the competence required to carry it out effectively, and their conceptualisation of professionalism. Theme 2 - Professional development - deals with trainers' experiences of their professional formation, including their entry and induction to VET and their development from novice to competent trainers. Extracts from interviews are included in italics.

Table 7. Themes and categories emerging from data

Themes	*Categories*	*Research question*
Practitioners' perceptions of VET practice	Role	How do VET practitioners perceive the role of trainer? How do VET practitioners conceptualise effective VET practice and what do they perceive as key competences required in the role of trainer? How do practitioners conceptualise professionalism in VET?
	Competence	
	Professionalism	
Professional development	Entry to VET	How and why did VET practitioners enter the sector and what prior work experience did they have? How have trainers developed professionally within VET?
	Induction	
	Beginning to train	
	Pedagogic Qualifications	
	Developing competence	

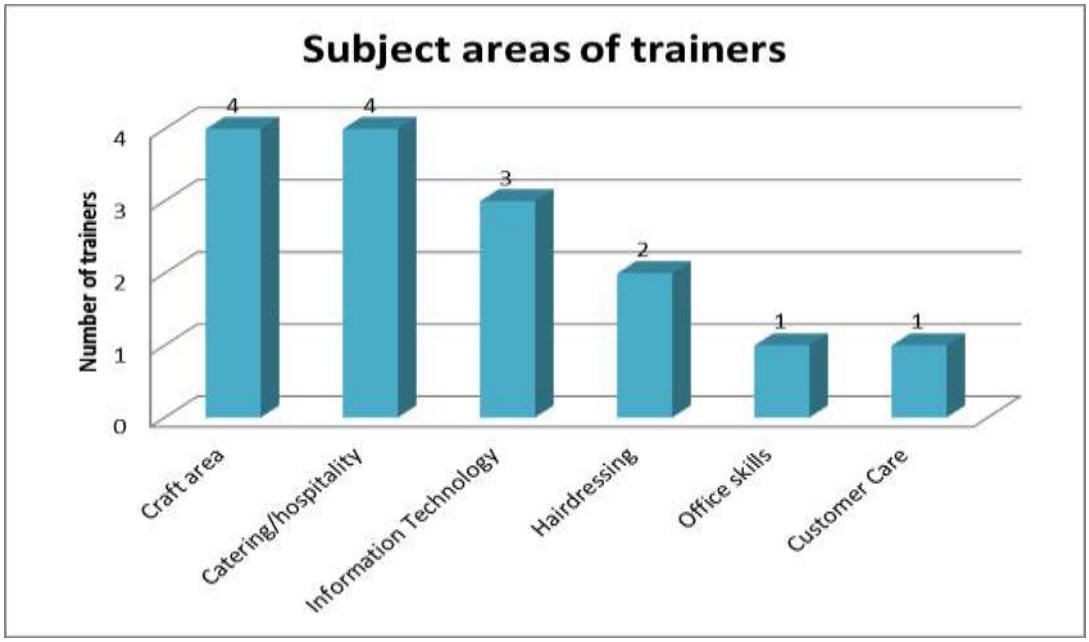
Profile of practitioners participating in the study

Nineteen permanent VET practitioners participated in the study and represented a sample of practitioners holding permanent positions in the VET workforce. Four of the practitioners were involved in managing trainers and although they had job titles such as *Manager, General Manager,* and *Assistant Manager* and they will be referred to as managers in this chapter. Three of the managers were female and one was male. The four managers were appointed to their management positions in VET between 2 to 15 years ago.

Fifteen of the practitioners were involved in training and teaching VET programmes and will be referred to as trainers in this chapter. Eight of the trainers were male and seven were female. All of the trainers held the post of *Instructor* which was the title in their contract of employment. The fifteen instructors had responsibility for one full-time course. Each course had an allocated number of learners, had a prescribed curriculum and was of a fixed duration. Eleven of the instructors were responsible for running specific skills courses in areas such as Information Technology, Customer Care, Hairdressing and Catering/Hospitality. Four of the instructors ran courses linked to craft areas, including apprenticeship programmes, preparation for apprenticeship and upskilling for craftspersons.

The fifteen trainers participating in the interviews had secured their permanent positions in VET organisations between 1 to 8 years ago. A breakdown of the subject areas of the trainers participating in the interviews is shown in Figure 31.

Figure 31. Subject area of trainers



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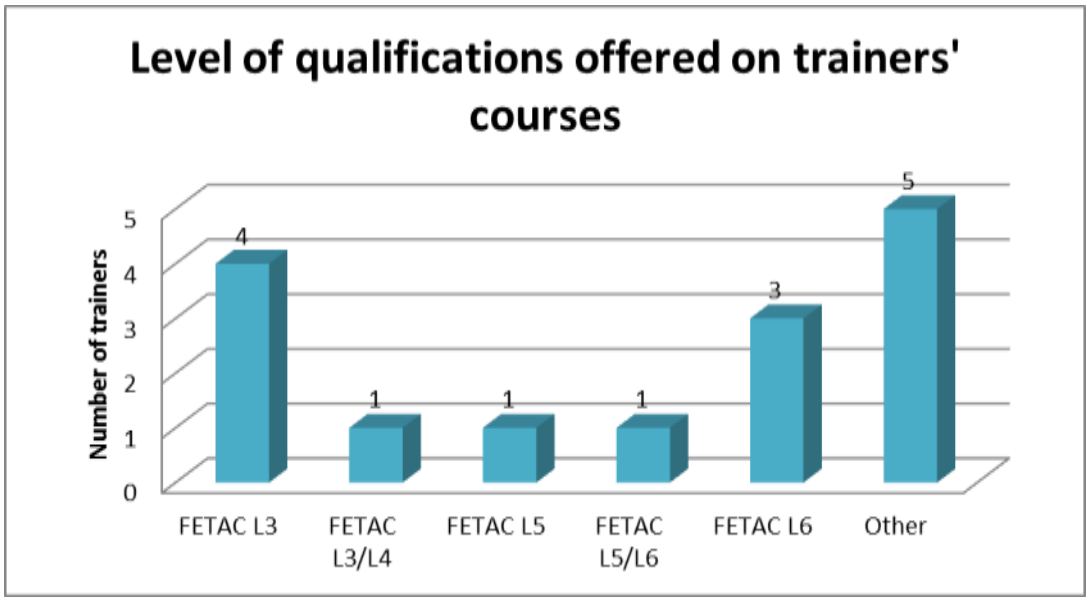
The trainers' courses varied and offered qualifications from Level 3 to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and included other qualifications such as Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), shown in Figure 32.

Figure 32. Level of qualifications offered on trainers' courses



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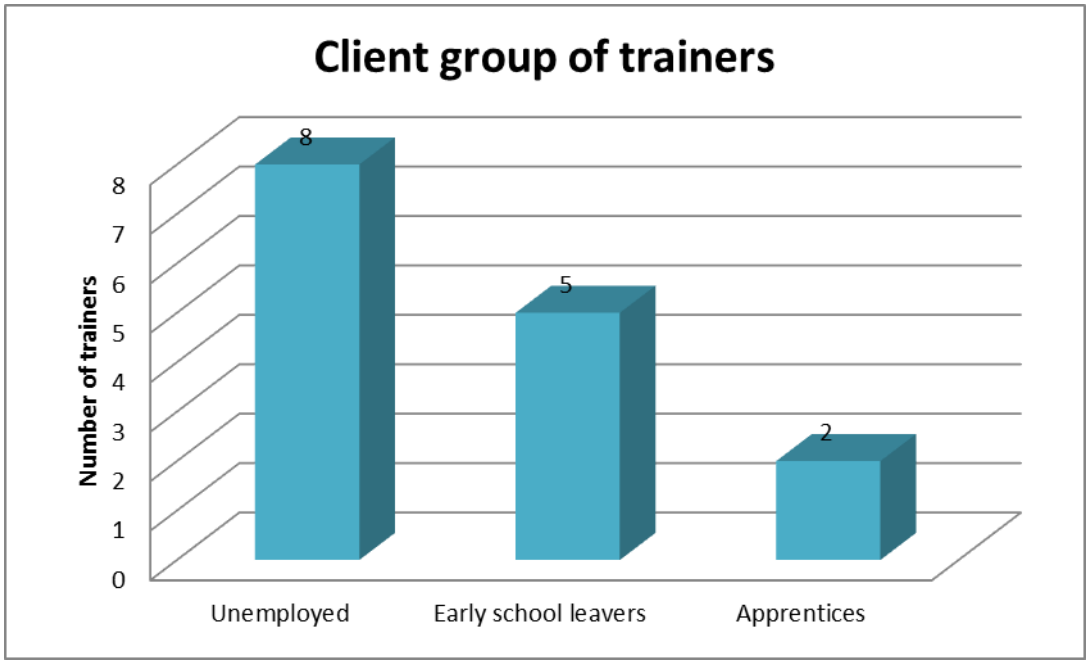
Some trainers' courses offer qualifications at more than one level to offer learners more flexibility in what they can achieve on their VET programme. The trainers had responsibility for a variety of client groups including unemployed learners, early school leavers, apprentices and travellers. Figure 33 shows a breakdown of the client group of the trainers participating in the study. The client groups had attained differing educational and qualification levels prior to commencing their VET programmes.

Figure 33. Client group of trainers



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The variety of courses offered by the trainers in the study, the range of qualifications offered and the nature of learners catered for reflects the diversity of the sector suggested by FETAC (2005).

Theme 1: Practitioners' perception of the nature of VET practice

This section outlines findings which emerged regarding the trainers' perception of VET practice. The findings include practitioners' perception of the role of trainer, their perception of the key competences required to carry out that role and how practitioners conceptualise professionalism.

Role

Trainers mainly perceived their role in terms of their training function and in terms of building supportive relationships with learners. They stressed that their role was mainly to provide training to help individuals progress towards the labour market and described their role in a number of similar ways e.g. as being '*to train people for work', 'to help people get that job'* or '*to train people, both employed people and unemployed people, and upskill them to try and get a better job at the end of the day'.* Trainers valued their role as a subject matter area expert and perceived their function was about *passing on . . . our skill and our knowledge to other people.* Trainers saw achievement of certification as an important mechanism to assist their learners' entry to the labour market and perceived delivering courses leading to certification (in most cases FETAC certification) as a crucial part of their role. Delivering certified training involved many of the trainers in assessing learning and marking tests. Much of the certification provided was related to the subject area of the course. In many cases, achievement of certification by learners was considered a key performance indicator for the trainers with success being measured by the volume of certification achieved, reflecting a focus on performativity (Ball, 2003; Avis, 2005). As found in a study of the VET workforce in Australia by Chappell and Johnson (2003), this study suggests that all trainers placed great importance on their role of training learners. However, while Chappell and Johnson's (2003) study found that practitioners in their study emphasized underlying educational norms and values, the underlying values of the trainers in this study appeared to be more focused on achieving outcomes to support progression to the labour market.

Some trainers referred to the importance of job seeking and employability skills and included training in these areas in the delivery of their courses. However, little or no

mention was made of the generic or softer skills which have been identified in the literature as a requirement to support moving towards a knowledge economy (e.g. Avis et al, 2002a; Chappell and Johnson, 2003; Béduwé et al, 2009; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, 2007). It would appear that espoused policies to prepare workers to participate in the knowledge economy by emphasising acquisition of 'softer skills' in addition to 'technical knowledge' have not yet made a significant impact on the role of trainers in this study (Béduwé et al, 2009, 28).

Building supportive relationships was seen as an important step in supporting learners. One trainer explained: *we have to build a relationship with them first before we really get to achieve anything meaningful.* The support needed for learners was perceived in a number of ways including support to overcome learning difficulties, support to build learners' confidence, support to motivate learners and in some cases support to help learners resolve personal issues. For trainers working on specific skills courses support provided was mainly focused on supporting learners to prepare to undertake assessments in their subject-area. Support for people with learning and/or literacy difficulties was frequently mentioned. One trainer described support he had provided for a learner with learning difficulties:

> *I had one particular young lad who when he started everything was fine, but when we started to get into the theory side of it he sort of shied into the background. He didn't want to talk about it and he went off home this day, and the next day his father came in and said that he had huge learning difficulties . . . we came up with a thing that, the chap didn't want to tell the class, we would give him a handout of each lesson so he could study it at home with his father, and coming up to an exam I'd get him to stay back with me on a one-to-one and we would do up some practice exercises.*

This trainer found that providing support in this case was a positive experience for him and stated that *it was very fulfilling at the end when he was able to get through his exams*.

By contrast, another trainer who delivered a specific skills courses expressed ambivalence about becoming involved in dealing with learners' personal problems:

> *Sometimes dealing with other peoples' problems, it's not really something I want to go into . . . people have problems at home, or problems where they're staying. This sounds selfish, but sometimes I feel so wrecked, I don't want to deal with it, but you will, you'll try to help. But I don't want to get involved with peoples' outside lives.*

Supporting learners was seen as particularly important by the trainers who worked with early school leavers. This mainly involved providing support to overcome learning difficulties, but also involved helping learners to deal with personal problems which were perceived as creating barriers to their participation on their courses. One of these trainers explained it was because many of the early school leavers presenting for training had *personal issues.* This required trainers to *do more,* and provide *a lot of personal care.* Some trainers working with early school leavers perceived their role as that of a caring adult. One trainer described how she took on a caring role:

> *I meet with my group every morning and I check and make sure that everybody is in. . . if they're not there by 10.00 then I'd ring just in case something may have happened on the way in. I'm there really as a support to them, if there is anything happening with them, just things that are going on that would prevent them from attending here, or maybe they're not their bright bubby self and they are not applying themselves as much. So I watch out for all of that, and then if they're there, they would come to me in confidence . . . they would kind of see me as the person to come to when there would be any problems.*

The findings in this section revealed that, as part of their role, the trainers placed importance in achieving outcomes to assist their learners to access employment, and were highly committed to building supportive relationships to help their learners succeed. The high level of commitment of the trainers to helping learners was also found in studies of FE in Ireland (McNamara et al, 2005), the UK (Bathmaker, 2005) and Australia

(Sanguinetti et al, 2005). In many cases the support provided by trainers compensated for shortcomings in learners' earlier educational experiences and difficulties in their personal lives and was in addition to delivering training in their subject area. These findings suggest that the trainers aspired to construct a learning culture by establishing supportive relationships with learners to help them flourish and achieve successful outcomes such as certification and progression towards the labour market (Avis and Bathmaker, 2009).

Competence required

Managers and trainers perceived that the ability to deliver individual courses was perceived as the overarching competence required and trainers considered that this required subject matter expertise, skills to train in their subject matter area, interpersonal skills and the ability to be able to adapt and apply appropriate competences in new and different situations. The emerging competences may have been informed by practitioners' perception of their role as the competences which emerged are linked to supporting learners to achieve outcomes to assist progression to the labour market.

Subject matter expertise was perceived by trainers as a key competence e.g. *being a subject matter expert on whatever subject they're teaching*. One trainer stated that what was important was *giving the students confidence that what is being delivered is being delivered by an expert*. Practitioners perceived that subject matter expertise required knowledge of the related industry, previous experience in that industry and ongoing links with industry to keep up to date with changes. One manager described it as follows:

> *It has to do with their experience in industry . . . They have to be updated and keep themselves in touch . . . that they have an understanding of what's happening in the industry. . . I need to know that they have that understanding and that they can get that information across to the students . . . that they can relay their own experiences within the industry as part of the training.*

Having skills to train in their subject-area was also considered a key competence and this was perceived as having sufficient technical skills and training skills. Technical skills were perceived as important, particularly by trainers in the craft skills area, one of whom stressed that *practical skills are essential for the trade*. One manager who focused on the importance of *technical skills* described competence as the ability to *do good demonstration work* so that learners *can replicate what they've been taught.*

Understanding the needs of learners was also perceived as a required competence. This was described as seeing *what their training needs are* so trainers could *identify what way they need to be trained* and also involved *seeing if somebody is struggling, and if they are, how you can go about helping them, getting them up to speed . . . how much time you need to spend with people*. Some trainers explained that they facilitated learning of people at different levels of ability within their programme which required *being able to deal with different individuals in different ways*. One of the trainers stated that:

> *you're dealing with people at different levels, and also in this centre you're dealing with people working on different stuff, so you may have nine people in the morning and they all are working on something else, it's your skills in facilitating all that*.

All trainers perceived a need for good interpersonal skills. Communication skills were perceived as important *in order to deliver*. One trainer surmised that this required *good people skills . . so you know how to handle people*. Issues relating to classroom management and discipline were also identified as an area where competence is required

including competence for *dealing with aggressive behaviour in a classroom, conflict etc*. Skills to build relationships to support and motivate learners to build their confidence and skills were perceived as a necessary competence by the majority of trainers as were skills for working collaboratively with colleagues. Administrative skills were also perceived as important *because you need to keep records of everything.*

Managers and trainers in the study perceived a need for trainers to be adaptable and to be able to apply appropriate competences in a different situations or contexts to respond to different learners' need and different group situations. Comments mainly related to being able *to tailor* their training programmes *to the needs of the group.* This reflects one of the four essential areas of competence for VET professionals identified by Attwell (1999, 196) i.e. 'occupational subject matter expertise and the ability to apply occupational knowledge in different contexts'.

The findings for this section revealed that overall the perceived competences for the role of trainer in VET prioritised subject-matter expertise rather than training skills and appear to be aligned with subject-based expertise rather than a learner-centred pedagogy. This finding contrasts with the emerging needs suggested by Avis et al (2002b) to respond to the changing world of work. There are currently no national standards or competences for the VET sector in Ireland and, as will be discussed under Theme 2, the role of trainer in VET is generally at least a second career for most practitioners. Therefore, it is possible that trainers' concepts of key competences and pedagogic practice may be influenced by their own biographies including their work experience and how they were trained for their former occupation, and their educational and personal experiences (Avis and Bathmaker, 2009).

Professionalism

The emerging findings relating to practitioners' perceptions of professionalism mainly related to professional knowledge, conduct and identity.

As discussed previously, practitioners in the study primarily viewed their role as supporting learners to progress towards the labour market and perceived subject matter expertise as a key competence to achieve this. It is not surprising, therefore, that the study found that a key perception of professionalism was based on their subject-matter knowledge and the ability to maintain and develop that knowledge to keep abreast of developments in industry and business. One practitioner claimed that: *they should know their subject matter inside out. They should be constantly learning what's being changed in their subject. They should be constantly updating their material.* As found in studies of FE in the UK (Robson et al, 2004; Colley et al, 2007) the practitioners' perception of professional knowledge underpinned their subject-matter area and the industry they came from: e.g. *trying to teach to the best of your ability, but to best practice within the business as well.* It can be concluded that the nature of professional knowledge in VET in Ireland is fragmentary and reflects the diversity of subjects on offer.

Some trainers also perceived professionalism in terms of what Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) describe as 'successful' teaching and professionalism as 'structure' as suggested by Gleeson and Knights (2006), in that they saw professionalism as being about achievement of targets and outcomes. Almost all participants in the study also conceptualised professionalism in terms of conduct as trainers e.g. *being on time, being prepared, being organised* and treating *each of the trainees with respect.* Professionalism

was also perceived in terms of behaviour e.g. *'appearance', 'tidiness', 'neatness', 'role-model'* and *'timekeeping,* and personal traits e.g. *good people person* and *someone who takes pride in their job, someone who has a passion for what they do, someone who is willing to go the extra mile.* These perceptions of professionalism appear to support a practical view of professionalism linked to the daily requirements of training (Sexton, 2007).

A key feature that distinguished the VET trainers in the study from their colleagues in industry 'was that they passed on their specialised occupational knowledge and skills in public education institutions away from the workplace' (Chappell, 1999). Globalisation of national economies has resulted in trends in the market place focusing on reforming educational and training systems to contribute to economic requirements through provision of a skilled and capable workforce. This emphasis has been labelled 'new vocationalism' by some scholars (e.g. Grubb, 1996, Ball, 1994). Chappell (1999) suggests that new vocationalism complements how trainers construct their identity in VET, in which they build their identity based on their industrial expertise, experience and knowledge. This then leads trainers to encompass standards predominantly associated with 'practical' knowledge which ultimately is judged on 'its performativity in the workplace' (Chappell, 1999).

This trend seems to be reflected in the findings of this study as it emerged that trainers perceive their role as preparing their learners to be competent in the workplace and it emerged that some trainers in the study maintained a strong identity with their former occupational area. One trainer said: *It's the love for the trade that's utmost.* Another trained explained: *I love hairdressing, I live for hairdressing and passing on what I know.*

Trainers felt responsible for passing on standards associated with quality within their previous industry (Robson et al, 2004). One trainer explained that: *the trade is our product. If the trade is happy with the job I'm doing, I have to feel I'm doing the job right.* Another trainer surmised: *I would be trained so well as a hairdresser I wouldn't want any less for them.* Trainers' identity with their former trade also appeared to influence how they viewed themselves professionally with a number of trainers identifying with their prior role rather than their training role. One instructor stated: *if somebody asked me "what do you do?" I'm still a plumber. But then I'm only in it here 2½ years. It might be different in another 10 years.* Another instructor explained: *It's starting to swing towards instructor, but primarily for the moment and for years past the motor trade. . . It's my history, the way I see it is it's my trade.*

It can be concluded that the findings for this section revealed that some elements of attributes associated with the traditional professions underpinned notions of professionalism held by the practitioners participating in the study. Practitioners perceived a need for in-depth professional knowledge and expertise in their subject matter area. Practitioners' perception of the role of VET trainer and key competences required, discussed previously, emphasised elements of altruism in their commitment to create a supportive learning environment to assist learners to succeed. Practitioners appeared to have associated professionalism with 'successful' teaching over and above 'good' or 'quality' teaching (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005). This indicated a construction of professionalism which prioritised 'structure' over 'agency' (Gleeson and Knights, 2006).

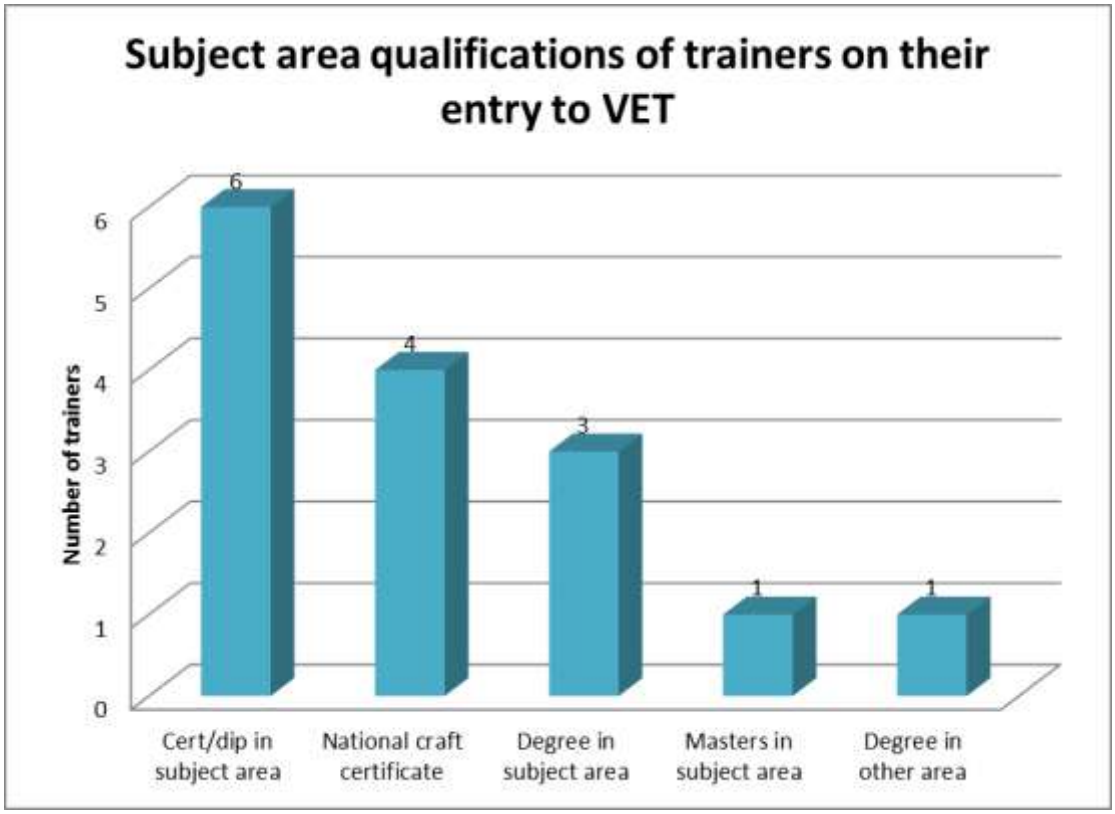
Theme 2: Professional Development

Entry to Vocational Education and Training

Three of the trainers in the study held a training qualification on their entry to VET. The nature and level of these qualifications included a City and Guilds certificate in adult education (held by two trainers) and a higher diploma in education (held by one trainer). Twelve of the trainers entered the sector with no formal training qualifications, but as will be discussed later in this chapter, undertook formal programmes and attained accreditation as trainers following their entry to VET.

Similarly to a study of the FE sector in the UK by Gleeson and James (2007), this study found that former trade and occupational experience was recognised and valued in the recruitment of VET trainers. Qualifications, experience and vocational skills in the trainers' former industrial or business occupations was a main determinant in their recruitment. One manager said that her organisation carried out a *stringent trade test* to ensure technical capability of trainers in craft skills areas. Managers looked for a qualification in the trainer's subject area at a minimum of certificate or diploma level and for substantial work experience in that area. All of the trainers held qualifications related to their subject matter area and a number of trainers exceeded the entry level required in this area. The qualifications varied from certificates to degrees spanning Level 6 to Level 9 of the NFQ and revealed diversity in the educational background of trainers in their area of expertise. A breakdown of the nature of the trainers' subject area qualifications on their entry to VET is shown in Figure 34.

Figure 34. Subject area qualifications of trainers on their entry to VET



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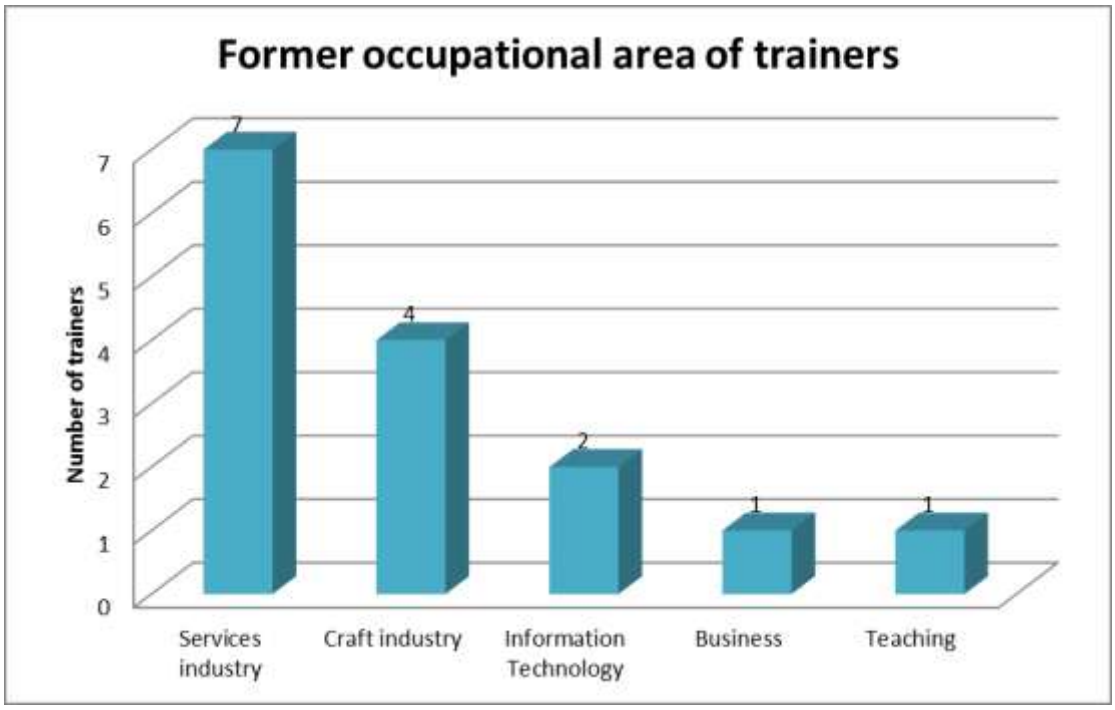
All the managers stated that previous industrial/business experience in an occupation related to the trainers' subject area was an essential requirement. Industrial or commercial experience was prioritised over training qualifications. As one manager explained: *the biggest thing is that they have experience within the industry.* Entering VET as a trainer/teacher was at least a second career for all the trainers in the study and fourteen of the instructors had been socialised as professionals in a former occupation prior to their recruitment to VET. The remaining instructor had previously worked as a teacher in general education before entering VET. Categories of their previous occupational areas are shown in Figure 35. Supervisory experience in a previous occupation was considered essential by managers, and experience training apprentices in their former job(s) was seen as particularly important for trainers being recruited to the craft areas. As one manager stated: *if anyone has worked in the trades they should have*

some experience of working with apprentices. All instructors who were recruited to run apprenticeship programmes had previous experience of training apprentices on-the-job.

Figure 35. Former occupational area of trainers



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Twelve of the fifteen trainers had secured their full-time positions by responding to an advertisement. Some of the trainers had already established links with VET providers. Of the fifteen trainers in the study, nine had done temporary or part-time work in the sector prior to gaining a permanent full-time position. The type of work included full-time training for fixed-term periods of employment, short periods of employment covering for trainers during absences and part-time training. Therefore, the majority of participants in the study had some experience of training on a part-time basis before securing permanent positions. For participants in this study, as found by Chappell and Johnson (2003) in a study of VET in Australia, a common entry route to the VET sector was through part-time training/teaching.

Trainers applied for positions in the VET sector for a variety of reasons. Three trainers had developed an interest in entering VET following encouragement from others. Another trainer had applied to an advertisement following redundancy when his former employer moved to a different location. Most of the trainers perceived that employment in the VET sector was more attractive than employment in their previous occupations and they had been attracted to employment in the VET sector by terms and conditions such as "*security"," a good salary", "local work", five days a week and weekends off* etc. Two trainers had specifically targeted instructing/teaching as a career option. One of these trainers had previously worked as a teacher before entering VET. The other trainer completed a part-time course to gain a training qualification and explained: *I always wanted to train in some form or other . . . I decided to get a qualification in training.* This trainer worked in the sector in temporary positions for twelve years before securing a permanent full-time position. He described his persistence in securing a position: *I came about it through sheer determination, I wrote letters to head office, reminding them between contracts who I was and what I had to offer.*

As found by Gleeson et al (2005, 449) in the FE sector in the UK, this study found that for most of the trainers entry to the sector was opportunistic rather than an 'established desire to teach'. However for many of the trainers the significance of their entry to VET was the opportunity to progress their careers in an area related to their former occupational area e.g. *I liked the idea of progressing myself slightly further in what I was doing, in a slightly different direction.*

In summary, the findings for this section revealed that the skills, qualifications and experiences of the trainers on their entry VET sector were multifarious. This diversity contributes to the heterogeneous nature of VET. Qualifications, skills and experience in the trainers' former occupational area were the main consideration in their recruitment. Many of the trainers entered VET without a training/teaching qualification. The majority of trainers in the study had some experience of training on a part-time basis and their entry to VET was mainly opportunistic. It can be concluded that the new trainers entering VET were joining a complex community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It can also be concluded that as novices they had individual challenges and needs to develop expertise as trainers.

Induction

The managers perceived that induction was an important part of preparing novice trainers for their new role as trainers in the VET sector. Managers indicated that provision of a short orientation type induction within the first few days of a trainer starting was the norm. The content of the induction mainly related to organisational policies and procedures and the induction occurred in the workplace. The managers were generally involved in providing the organisational information required. None of the managers referred to establishing a planned approach to support on-the-job pedagogic development of the trainers in the workplace but, as will be discussed later (under Pedagogic Qualifications) they were involved in organising pedagogic development through formal training/education programmes provided by external organisations. Some managers set up opportunities for the new trainers to link with experienced trainers as part of their induction. One manager explained that this facilitated new trainers *to work with their*

colleagues. . . to learn where all the materials were, how the curriculum was set up. To achieve this, the manager gave new trainers *some time to shadow an instructor . . . and . . . some time to prepare . . . between two to four weeks.*

The managers' perception of provision of induction was not reflected in the experiences of the trainers. Just over half (8) of the trainers said they had received an induction when they joined their organisations. Their experiences of induction varied, and ranged from a few hours on the first day to regular inputs over the first few weeks, and were mainly of an orientation type induction. Induction inputs were provided in the workplace by managers or a designated colleague who introduced the novice trainers to their organisations' *"policies"* and "*procedures"*, provided *"a tour of the building",* and ensured the novice trainers were *"introduced to the other members of staff".* However, just under half (7) of the trainers stated that they had received little or nothing in the way of an induction process when they joined their organisations and made comments which indicated frustration at this. It appeared that a substantial part of these trainers' learning at induction stage was unsupported and took place on an ad hoc basis.

Trainers revealed that, apart from the opportunities offered by their organisations to gain formal qualifications in training/education through participation in programmes run by external organisations, little or no workplace induction to develop their pedagogic skills as beginning trainers had been planned within their own organisations. This was a concern for some trainers, particular three trainers who were given a full class to take on the day they started, with no time for preparation. One trainer explained: *I came in, I'd never done it before. I wasn't shown how to do it. I was just told "here is your room" and "all the best".* Another trainer described her experience: *I found it difficult. I wasn't*

really sure of the boundaries and what my role was. Seven of the trainers had been linked with experienced trainers for short periods for a form of mentoring and support over the first days or weeks while preparing to begin training. Where mentoring or support was provided, it appears to have been informal and involved observation and familiarisation of experienced colleagues' work rather than part of a formal workplace development programme. This had mainly involved sitting in on classes with experienced trainers *"to learn . . . what to do in class, how to conduct exams* and *"learning the dos and don'ts".* This support was valued by the trainers and seen as a positive intervention and from the experience of induction described by one trainer may have provided opportunities for the newcomers to engage in participation and reification (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998):

> *When I came in . . . the Assistant Manager here . . . took me under his wing for the first five or six weeks here. He spent an hour a day with me doing bits and pieces on how the system worked and what* [organisation] *was about and how the centre ran and that type of thing. Then he gave me an interesting project to do which was to collate the apprentices that were referrals. So that involved writing letters to these people to come in. That involved co-ordinating with instructors to get these people back to re-sit their tests which meant liaising with Curriculum re the different versions of the test. So I very quickly got to know the system, how it all operated, and I found it was very good. Then I was put with an instructor . . . for a couple of weeks to learn the role of what to do in class, how to conduct exams, all that sort of stuff.*

Many of the trainers appear to have experienced some degree of anxiety during their time as newly appointed trainers and felt that a formal and structured induction, particularly in relation to their new role and training skills would have been useful. This was summed up by one trainer who stated that *it would be good to have a little more induction . . . a few hours going through a bit of class planning, or things like that, the basics.* It appears that the potential of induction activities and processes to help novice trainers to develop as expert trainers was not fully exploited and opportunities to present trainers 'with a

clear view of what constitutes expertise, or an expectation that they will become accomplished' were missed (Langdon, 2011, 242). In many cases, as new entrants, the trainers remained unclear about their new role and performance expectations and lacked practical information which would have supported them in undertaking their new role. One of the trainers suggested that it would have been helpful:

> *to know about the safety of the trainees. I had no health and safety training, that would have been very necessary. And just the general running, what was okay, what you could and could not do, because I wasn't really sure. And the main function as regards assessment and recording attendance.*

It can be concluded from the findings in the section that for the new trainers most of their learning at induction stage took place in the workplace and was 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In many cases the situated learning was unstructured and unplanned and where there was a lack of planned and structured opportunities at induction stage this caused some of the trainers to experience feelings of anxiety. By contrast positive experiences of induction occurred where a planned programme was provided, where opportunities were provided to observe experienced colleagues and where a mentoring/support relationship was established to develop pedagogic skills. There is clearly potential to improve induction processes and activities to support the professional development of novice trainers entering VET. Induction should be planned to respond to the individual requirements of novice trainers and should include opportunities to observe experienced trainers modelling required pedagogic skills, opportunities for pedagogic dialogue with peers, and formal and informal mentoring and support. This would help to create a more 'expansive' learning environment in the VET workplace (Fuller and Unwin, 2004).

Beginning to train

The findings revealed that the trainers had been given responsibility for training their own class very soon after starting in their training organisations and, as found in a number of related studies, rapidly became immersed into their new role (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Orr and Simmons, 2010). This required a rapid transition from their former occupation to their new role as trainers. In most cases, the VET organisations were unable to provide practical support, such as reduced workloads, to the novice trainers. As a consequence the trainers were under daily pressures to deliver their courses and achieve their targets and successful outcomes while developing their own training skills. Once they commenced training, they had full responsibility for all elements of their course, including delivering training, carrying out and marking assessments and supporting and managing learners.

All but one of the trainers commenced their training duties and began to train their first class within one to two weeks of starting in their organisations. One trainer was not allocated his own class until two months after he started, and as stated earlier, three trainers were required to commence training on their first day. Almost all of the trainers recalled feeling nervous on their first day of training. For one trainer this was experienced as *natural nerves . . . I was looking forward to it* but for another trainer it was a *nerve-wracking* experience leaving the trainer feeling *scared to death.* Many of the trainers recalled feeling concerned about starting to train because of their limited pedagogic skills. As one trainer explained: *you know your stuff but it's how to get it across.* Another trainer stated: *I was very insecure about delivering . . . I didn't have the teaching skills.* One trainer explained that her lack of training experience made her feel

like the class were kind of testing me and I just didn't have the confidence. One trainer explained how she had tried to replicate positive aspects of learning experiences she had encountered: *the lady that taught me had a fantastic way of delivering the programme, and I have to say I mimicked a lot of her things.* The trainers also distanced themselves from what they perceived as poor practice. One trainer explained that he focused on *remembering the things that I found negative when I was being taught . . . and putting my own take on it.*

Trainers were confident of their knowledge and skills in their subject area when they started to train. One trainer explained: *I knew I was good . . . I'm top of the game from the technical point of view*. As found in FE in the UK by Gleeson et al (2005), trainers in this study drew on their subject knowledge and prior experience when they started training/teaching. As found in studies of practitioners making transitions from former occupations to new roles as teachers or trainers, for many of the trainers in this study, their former occupational identities remained important (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; Gleeson and James, 2007; McKeon and Harrison, 2010; Robson, 1998b, 2006). Many of the trainers actively sought to immediately establish credibility with their learners predominantly based on their former occupational experience. This appeared to be a strategy to compensate for their limited pedagogic skills as it provided them with a professional knowledge base they could present to learners and it gave them sufficient confidence to begin training. One trainer explained that it was important to him that he was: *giving the students confidence that what is being delivered is being delivered by an expert, so my knowledge would give me that competence and my experience has given me competence to stand in front of a group and deliver.* However, the trainers' focus on

maintaining credibility as a craftsperson or subject matter expert may have inadvertently inhibited them from fully developing new expertise as a trainer.

Most of the trainers had planned what they were going to do on their first day of training. Some of their plans worked out well e.g. *I had planned out what we were going to start with so I got them into a group and explained exactly what we were going to do. . . I was comfortable enough, I was comfortable with doing the task that I had prepared.* But for others it did not work out as expected. One trainer described his experience: *at the start I thought I had a day's work set up and I got through it in 40 minutes.* Many trainers had to use their *own initiative to find resources and materials* and *to try and find things out*. In many cases this involved asking for help from colleagues or external contacts e.g. *if you were having an issue with a student on a particular thing you could go to someone and ask how would they do it.*

All the trainers in the study initially had concerns about working with their learners. Some of the trainers had concerns that they *wouldn't be able to manage the class.* This was particularly experienced by one trainer working with early school leavers. He explained: *I remember going home the first say saying "what have I got myself into here? This is challenging now, this is difficult."* Some trainers felt anxious about learners who were older than they were. One trainer explained: *I'll never forget walking in and there were these fifteen bodies looking at me and I noticed some of them were older than me.* Another trainer noticed that not only were some learners older than him, but some learners were former schoolmates of his. However, this ended up being a positive support for him: *I was quite young, there were lads in the class that were older than me. In the first two groups, there were two chaps who were in the same year in school as me .*

. . but I have to say, they really pulled the two groups tight for me. Practitioners also experienced some anxiety taking over courses that had already commenced, mainly because they thought the learners knew they system better than they did. One trainer recalled that *the class was in 10 weeks, they were well in, they knew the rules, they knew what they were allowed to do and what they weren't allowed to.*

Some trainers were supported by colleagues in their workplace. As found by Langdon (2011) in a study of beginning teachers in New Zealand, the support of supervisors and mentors was found to be significant where it was provided. Mostly this support was sought by trainers. As one trainer explained: *I asked a lot of questions . . . I asked all the instructors here, they're all very helpful, because I was full of questions. There was one or two I always chose, because they were always giving me straight answers and helping me with things.* One trainer in particular received support from his manager which he valued:

> *He encouraged me all the way along and took me under his wing. He'd come into me at the end of a class and ask how I was getting on, asking did I need anything or suggest to try to do this in this way, or tell me something he did that might help me. He wouldn't give you an answer but he'd give you an idea that you developed in your own way and I found that great.*

However, this type of support was not commonly experienced by the trainers. Because of the nature of their work which included full responsibility for delivering their courses, the novice trainers were relatively isolated in their classrooms and opportunities to learn from peers may have been limited. The trainers' experiences of beginning to train appeared to have been a rather solitary and individual endeavour. In general, trainers described a situation of *figuring it out* for themselves and learning to cope through daily work experiences. Most trainers perceived that *trial and error* played a significant part when

they were beginning to train/teach to find out *what would have worked and what didn't.* One trainer explained how although he needed to learn from his mistakes in private, he didn't wish to make mistakes in front of his manager:

> *Give me a chance to make mistakes . . . in the classroom . . . Supposing my manager came down in the early days and I was doing something on the board, I'd feel under pressure. You'd have to stop and get rid of the manager first, and then go back at it. Because you'd be afraid you'd make mistakes.*

As discussed earlier, the findings revealed that trainers were rapidly immersed into the new roles which included full responsibility for all aspects of their course. Thus novice trainers may have experienced little opportunities to participate in low risk activities on the periphery as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991), rather they had to move quickly to full participation in their training role. As novices the trainers assumed the same responsibilities as experienced trainers almost immediately after they started in their organisations (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009). In this regard, as found by Lucas and Unwin (2009, 428) in a study examining the in-service development of teacher expertise in FE in the UK, because of the total immersion in their new role, the dominant identity of the novice trainers was that of 'productive worker' rather than that of a learning worker. The novice trainers responded to this by drawing on their own experiences as professionals in their former occupation to establish their credibility and transferring what they had experienced as good training practice as learners themselves to their new role. In doing so, as novice trainers they appear to have compensated for their limited pedagogic skills through a process described by Boyd (2010) and Boyd and Harris (2010) as 'reconstructing pedagogy'.

In summary, it can be concluded that in responding to the pressure to participate fully in their new role, the need to perform as a 'productive worker' may have overshadowed the fact that the trainers were still learning when they began their training tasks (Lucas and Unwin, 2009). It can also be concluded that this left little opportunity for novice trainers to learn from and reflect on their practice with experienced colleagues. The workplace context experienced by new trainers appeared to have inadvertently encouraged them to hold onto former occupational identities focusing on their subject-matter expertise rather than building new ones as trainers developing pedagogic skills (Orr and Simmons, 2010).

Pedagogic qualifications

Formal "train the trainer" courses including programmes provided by private companies and third level institutions leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees were regarded by managers as a valuable element in the professional formation and development of novice trainers' pedagogic knowledge and skills. Managers in the study had encouraged new entrants to participate in formal programmes as early as possible. Time off-the-job was given to attend training sessions, and courses were funded by the trainers' organisations. One manager described her recent experience of inducting new entrants using external courses:

> *We got them to do the IITD[3] course as well, the four day instructor training. We got them to do that with a mixed group of people quite quickly. That was more to develop their confidence. That would have involved learning all the terminology, seeing themselves on video, all that kind of stuff. They would have done that probably within the first six months, pretty soon. Then I encouraged them to start the NUIG[4] programme immediately after that. So they've done the Foundation and the Certificate. At this stage, they're starting into the Diploma.*

[3] Irish Institute of Training and Development - Trainer Skills Certificate
[4] National University of Ireland Galway - Certificate in Training and Education

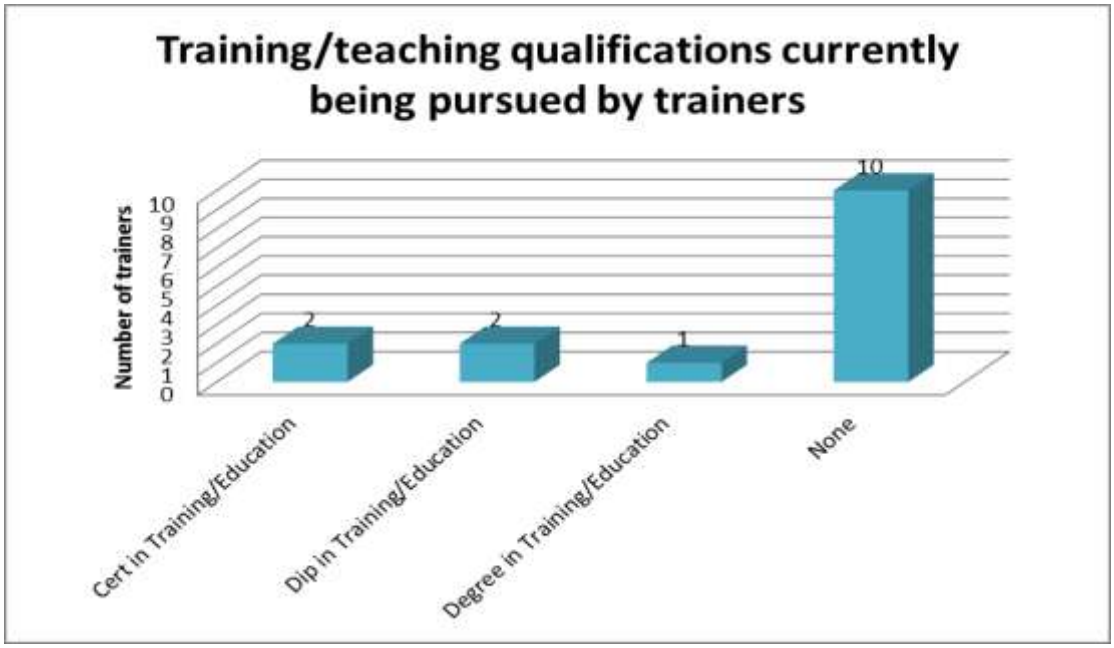
Twelve of the trainers had entered the VET sector without holding training qualifications. However, all twelve trainers had subsequently been supported by their organisations and had achieved some form of training qualification since their entry to VET. All the "train the trainer" programmes attended by the trainers were provided by external organisations, the majority by third level institutions. The highest level of qualification achieved to date by the 15 trainers in the study is shown in Figure 36.

Figure 36. Training qualifications achieved in-service

n=15

Five of the trainers were pursuing courses or progressing to the next level of training qualifications at the time they were interviewed for the study. A breakdown of the qualifications they are pursuing is shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37. Training/teaching qualifications currently being pursued by trainers



n=15

The trainers in the study generally found the "train the trainer" courses they attended helpful. As one trainer explained: *the training . . . is a huge benefit to anyone coming in from the outside world into a training organisation in both motivation and in the learning itself of how to conduct a class or how to conduct yourself in front of a class.* Most instructors valued the input on basic training skills provided, particularly where shorter courses (i.e. 4-5 days) were arranged soon after trainers started in VET, and many trainers commented that they felt more confident about training afterwards. One trainer who completed a "Trainers in Industry" course shortly after she started in VET explained:

> *After I did that course I came back and I felt I could take on the world. I felt more confident. I could even remember my shoulders going back, I felt better walking as if I had full control. . . I think it was the technique we were taught: Tell them the title of the thing, ask them a few questions, have they ever come across it, tell them what they're going to learn, have your textbook, have your notes, your bits and pieces so you're not running in and out like a yoyo, have everything. Tell them you don't know everything. If you don't know something tell them you'll find out and tell them the next day. . . After doing the course I felt great. I felt more comfortable about being able to stand up in front of a class.*

The timing of the course appeared to be important as some instructors who already had a few years' experience as trainers seemed to view the course as validating their skills rather than teaching them new ones. As one instructor explained: *I want to be as good on paper as I actually am in real life when it comes to being an instructor*.

Some trainers also valued incidental learning which arose when they attended external courses and the opportunities for *networking with other trainers*. One instructor explained that she had benefited from the course:

> *By talking to other instructors . . . who maybe came across a situation that you mightn't necessarily have come across before, that you can actually talk through it, and they can give you their advice on how they did it, or vice versa.*

However, some of the trainers admitted that they found elements of external courses difficult, particularly completing assignments. As one trainer explained: *I do find it quite difficult, and if I had a choice I mightn't be doing it.*

It can be concluded that in the absence of sufficient structured development in the workplace to prepare novice trainers for their training role, there appeared to be a dependence on external academic programmes for pedagogic development of trainers. Trainers found the programmes made a positive contribution to their professional development. It can be concluded, therefore, that professional development provided by external organisations leading to training/teaching qualifications was an 'expansive' feature in the VET workplace (Lucas and Unwin, 2004).

Developing competence

As previously discussed, trainers were rapidly immersed into their new roles and were required to make a rapid transition from their former occupation to productive trainers, in some cases with insufficient induction to their new role. Learning at the induction stage and when beginning to undertake training tasks occurred in the workplace and in external organisations. Workplace learning was situated and, as it often lacked planning and structure, it was predominantly on an ad hoc basis. Novice trainers coped with beginning to undertake training duties through 'reconstructing pedagogy' by drawing on their experiences as learners and their former occupational experience to establish credibility with their learners (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010).

At the time they were interviewed for the study, all the trainers in the study felt they were now doing a good job and that they were competent. They indicated that to get to their current stage of competence varied and took from *2 years* to *5 years*. Trainers described their current competence in different ways, but mainly indicated that 'they are more personally in control of the events around them' which is a feature Berliner (2004) associates with the competent stage of his skills acquisition model. Trainers acknowledged that it took time to develop the pedagogic skills they needed to deliver their programme e.g. *as a novice coming . . . into instructing, it did take a while.* Once they commenced their training duties, the trainers' experience of getting on top of their job and beginning to feel in control varied from *6-8 months* to *at least a year, a little bit more even.* Almost all the trainers in the study have delivered the same course since they started which allowed trainers build their experience of running the course and finding

out what worked for them. Trained described beginning to feel more *competent and comfortable* from the second time they delivered their course. As one trainer explained:

> *If you take a twenty week course, obviously you're following a set programme for twenty weeks. It's only when you get into the second time of delivering it that you start to say now I know where I'm going.*

As found by Fantilli and McDougall (2009), this study revealed that the first year of the trainers' career was difficult and required a substantial amount of time spent trying to keep their heads above water. In many cases, the trainers experienced considerable stress during their first year (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009; Boyd and Harris, 2010). Some trainers in the study described how they needed to learn quickly and put in extra hours to survive. One trainer explained that: *You have to really learn quickly, really quickly, and you will do an awful lot of work at home, reading up and stuff like that.* Another trainer described her experience: *I'd say for the first year to two years I was writing notes every night at home after work and literally being half an hour ahead of the class . . . I was glad to have the job, so even though I was tired and it was a bit stressful at times I didn't really dwell on it.*

Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning incorporates the concept of legitimate peripheral participation where newcomers are gradually introduced to the activities that constitute their new role by being given opportunities to undertake activities on the periphery of the community of practice. This is not what emerged in this study. Rather, it was revealed that as trainers were rapidly required to participate fully in their training role, relatively few opportunities to engage in low risk tasks were experienced by trainers. Trainers also experienced limited opportunities to learn the ropes and gain confidence and expertise in training tasks with the support of an

experienced trainer. Similarly to their experience when they began to train, apart from the formal development provided through undertaking external courses, their progress from beginning trainer to developing competence was also a solitary and individual experience. As one trainer surmised: *Everything I actually know now, apart from doing* [train the trainer] *course, I figured out for myself.*

There are no national standards of competence for trainers in VET in Ireland and this study has revealed that little or no clarity about what constitutes expertise was provided to the trainers (Langdon, 2001). This raised questions about how trainers and their managers knew if they were performing competently. It was revealed earlier in this study that the trainers prioritised subject-matter expertise over pedagogic skills. This was reflected in how they assessed their own competence, often with less certainty being expressed about their pedagogic competence as illustrated by one trainer who was confident of her competence in her subject-matter area:

> *I'm up to the standard in terms of really knowing what I'm talking about, I feel very confident about that because I also do it as well as teach it. . . as regards being good at imparting the knowledge, I like to think I am, but I don't know if I am or not.*

Learners were regarded as the main audience by the trainers, and as such seeing them learn and progress was seen as a vital component by trainers in assessing their own competence as trainers. One instructor commented on the this:

> *For the quality of my performance as an instructor, it would be the feedback from the people that I deal with on a daily basis. A manager can't give you feedback on you as an instructor because you're not their instructor. If you're no good as an instructor, you're not going to get the results from the people that you are dealing with. . . you judge from seeing people grow in your class and getting proficient in what they have to do and being able to go off and get a job and have the tools they need to get it.*

All the trainers perceived that the achievement of certification by learners was a significant indicator of their competence. One trainer stated: *I think I am a competent teacher because I get work done, I see certificates at the end of a certain timeframe . . . I am delivering and completing and reaching targets.* In many cases trainers perceived test results as confirmation that they were good trainers. As one trainer explained: *the fact that they all did quite well I knew I was doing something right.*

Some trainers valued feedback from colleagues and from industry. One apprenticeship trainer explained the significance of feedback from industry for him:

> *I'd have employers on the phone during the class and after the class and if they'd a bad word to say about you, if you weren't doing your job right, by god you'd hear back. That's why I make it my job to do my job here. If I go into get spare parts, or meet them on a night out, if I'm doing my job badly, it'll show through the apprentice, he'll go back worse than he came in, I'll hear about it.*

Building a track record of success was seen as evidence of competence by one trainer who stated: *the fact that I have now trained so many people and seen them be successful, hearing how they're getting on. . . knowing what I'm delivering is relevant to the industry, and the skills that I'm imparting to the students, that they're able to use them.*

In many cases, competence was assessed in terms of being *comfortable* and being *confident*. One trainer explained that his view of being competent was: *that you're comfortable, that you're happy doing that role. . . Because you know you do it with ease. If you're doing a certain task, you do it with ease, and you know exactly what has to be done and it's done correctly.*

Another trainer judged her competence in terms of skills and being comfortable enough to adapt to a variety of situations:

> *I would say I'm a very highly skilled instructor in both practical and theory. I'd have no problem just coming into it, like taking over a . . . course for one or two days if the instructors were out. I feel comfortable because I would adapt to it. I wouldn't know everything in it, but I would adapt.*

For the managers in the study the key indicators used to assess trainers' competence related to the achievement of outcomes, particularly attainment of certification by learners. One manager commented that *the mark is the certification.* Another manager explained: *We regularly talk about how the apprentices are performing, so that really is an indication. If we're having a lot of apprentices who aren't performing, well then the instructor isn't performing either.* Some managers also judged how trainers handled problems and issues emerging in the class. This was mainly determined through observation and regular communication with trainers e.g.

> *I would try and get around, informally, it's not something that's formal, to talk to them every week so you get a feel for what the profile is like in the class, what sort of issues are coming up, who's causing trouble, and you get a good feeling for how they're handling the problems and issues in the class that come up.*

Another manager explained that she also judged trainers competence by how they dealt with paperwork: *I tend to observe a lot. . . In the first year or so, I tend to spend an awful lot of time looking at the paperwork that's coming back, spending time in the class, walking in, talking to the students.* One manager gauged trainers' competence by how well they managed their group and their training areas:

> *When we've got a competent instructor working with the group, they're engaged with each other, they're staying in their workshop, you can see the work around and there's a work focus, the workrooms are tidy, they're well laid out, it doesn't look like a bomb site.*

End of course feedback sheets were also used by both managers and trainers to assess trainers' competence. One instructor explained how feedback helped her feel she was competent:

> *you know when the students finish and they do up the survey, and they're writing down "is an excellent teacher", "if I had any queries* [trainer] *would always help", the students just kept saying "thanks very much" and to hear other students saying "she's brilliant".*

The findings in this section revealed that trainers felt it took between two to five years to become fully competent in their role, and that for some trainers their first year on the job was stressful involving additional work in their own time. Development of their competence was facilitated through attendance at external courses to gain professional qualifications as trainers and through situated learning in the workplace. Much of the situated learning was unplanned and unstructured and was individual rather than collaborative. This ad hoc approach appeared to overlook the fact that trainers were undertaking significant learning when they began their training role, and were under pressure to perform as a productive trainer (Lucan and Unwin, 2009). It can be concluded that it required significant commitment and goodwill by the trainers to undertake the challenge to develop their own expertise despite the often restrictive nature of the workplace (Fuller and Unwin, 2004).

However, given that no national or organisational standards of competence exists and that the trainers' perceptions of competence, which were discussed earlier under Theme 1, prioritised subject-matter expertise over pedagogic skills, this raises the question of what level of competence has been attained by the trainers. It was beyond the scope of this

study to ascertain this. However, the emerging perceptions of self-competence revealed by trainers focused on training that has achieved the intended outcomes, and as such are linked to the notions of successful teaching suggested by Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005).

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed how VET trainers in Ireland perceive their practice and professionalism and how they experienced being developed as professional practitioners in the VET workplace. The study found that trainers participating in the study perceived their role as having a labour market focus. The trainers aspired to construct a learning culture by building supportive relationships to help their learners gain successful outcomes from their training courses. Studies of FE in Ireland, Australia and the UK have also found a high level of commitment to learners by practitioners (McNamara et al, 2005; Bathmaker, 2005; Sanguinetti et al, 2005; Avis and Bathmaker, 2009). The focus on achieving successful outcomes may have influenced trainers in associating professionalism with successful teaching rather than good or quality teaching (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005), indicating a construction of professionalism prioritising structure over agency (Gleeson and Knights, 2006).

The trainers perceived subject-matter expertise as a key competence for their role involving in-depth knowledge and practical skills in their occupational area. Prioritising subject-matter expertise was reflected in recruitment practices to VET with qualifications and experience in the occupational area associated with the subject being valued over

pedagogic skills. The qualifications and experience of trainers on their recruitment to VET varied and some of the trainers entered the sector with a training/teaching qualification and some former experience of training or teaching. The trainers in the study were rapidly immersed into their new role as novices, and quickly assumed the same responsibilities as experienced workers (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009). This resulted in their dominant identity being that of productive worker rather than that of learner (Lucas and Unwin, 2009). As novices, the trainers pedagogic skills were mainly developed through formal programmes provided by external organisations and through 'situated learning' in the workplace, but most of the learning in the workplace appeared to be unstructured and unplanned (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As novice trainers had assumed the same responsibilities as experienced trainers, there appeared to be little opportunity to learn from and reflect on their practice with their colleagues in the workplace and in many cases when the trainers were required to start training, they compensated for their lack of pedagogic skills by building credibility as subject-matter experts and 'reconstructing pedagogy' (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010). It appears that in many cases the VET workplace was a 'restrictive' learning environment (Lucas and Unwin, 2004) which may have inadvertently encouraged the trainers to focus on their identity as a subject-matter expert rather than focusing on building pedagogic skills (Robson, 2006).

There are a number of issues emerging from these findings which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

The overarching aim of the study was to explore how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and experienced by trainers in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) workplace in Ireland. Using a mixed-methods approach the study used vocational training providers (An Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FÁS), Fáilte Ireland and Community Training Centres) as a case study to examine the nature of VET practice and its practitioners, to generate a profile of VET trainers and to explore how practitioners conceptualised professionalism, effective practice and key competences and how they experienced developing as professionals when they entered the VET workplace. A conceptual framework was developed for the study which drew on Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning which provided a lens for exploring workplace learning, including informal learning, participation and communities of practice. The conceptual framework also drew on Fuller and Unwin's (2004) notion of 'expansive' and 'restrictive' features which influence workplace learning. The conceptual framework provided a fresh way to consider how VET trainers are prepared in their workplace for professional practice. This was a small scale study, and as such any generalisation needs to be treated with caution. However, there are a number of points to be made and these are outlined as key issues emerging in the first part of the chapter. This is followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Key issues emerging

The study revealed that when the trainers participating in the study were recruited into VET, the qualifications, skills and experience associated with their former occupational area were the main consideration in their recruitment. They held varying qualifications in their subject matter area spanning from Level 6 to Level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Some trainers had previous part-time experience training in VET, but a significant proportion of the trainers entered VET without a training/teaching qualification. The study found that much of their professional and pedagogic development occurred in the VET organisations they entered.

Professional development of trainers in the workplace

It emerged from the study that a substantial number of trainers in VET undertook professional development following their entry to the sector and that they have attained significant training/teaching qualifications through attending formal courses run by third level institutions or private colleges. Of the trainers surveyed, 71% held a training/teaching qualification with 32% of trainers holding such a qualification at degree or masters level. This volume and level of training/teaching qualifications achieved is an indication of the trainers' commitment and desire to develop professionally and a willingness to undertake formal courses. It can be concluded that formal learning played a significant part in the trainers' pedagogic development.

The study found that trainers were rapidly immersed into their new roles (Boyd, 2010; Boyd and Harris, 2010; McKeon and Harrison 2010; Orr and Simmons, 2010). This required them to quickly move to full participation in their training role and they appeared to have experienced few opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This suggested that their dominant role was one of productive worker and this appeared to overshadow the fact that they were novice trainers (Lucas and Unwin, 2009). The study found that as the trainers had to quickly learn to perform and comply with existing practice, in many cases they compensated for their lack of pedagogic skills by establishing their credibility as a subject-matter expert. This suggested that some conflicts were experienced by the trainers, as novices on their entry to VET, which were:

- The dual roles required as both productive worker and novice trainer;
- The dual knowledge required to be a subject-matter expert and a pedagogic expert;
- The dual identities associated with former occupation and the role of trainer;
- A conflict between supporting learners and developing their own pedagogic practice.

The conflicting workplace environment experienced by novice trainers was significant in shaping their professional development in the workplace as it appeared to encourage the trainers to prioritise their subject-matter knowledge over pedagogic knowledge and to hold on to their former identities as subject-matter experts, rather than building a new identities as trainers with pedagogic expertise.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory views situated learning as a trajectory from novice to expert. Novices initially participate on the periphery (legitimate peripheral participation) and move to full participation with the support of experienced workers. In this way Lave and Wenger (1991) view the trajectory from novice to expert as an apprenticeship where knowledge and skills associated with practice are passed on to newcomers by old timers. However, this study appeared to indicate that novice trainers had limited opportunities to learn from and reflect with experienced trainers or their managers about pedagogic skills, and the trainers indicated that they would like more support in the workplace for their professional development. The trainers' managers organised for them to attend courses with external organisations to gain pedagogic qualifications. Apart from organising these courses, it appeared that there was little evidence of managers engaging with trainers for purposeful and deliberate clarification of the pedagogic expertise required and development of the new trainers' pedagogic skills. The study suggested that there appeared to be a dependence on external academic programmes for the pedagogic development of trainers, which may mean managers do not perceive it to be their responsibility and inadvertently view pedagogic development as a secondary consideration (Gleeson et al, 2005). Also the study indicated that managers may not conceptualise workplace learning as contributing to the professional development and values of trainers.

The trainers considered that it took them between two to five years to develop competence as a trainer. The study revealed that in many cases their trajectory from novice to competent trainer was not always a smooth one and that the trainers' experiences of developing pedagogic skills in the workplace were rather solitary, often involving a process of figuring things out for themselves. The study suggested that the

trainers' professional development in the workplace was enhanced or hindered by a number of factors that combined to create an expansive or restrictive learning environment (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). These are presented in Figure 38.

Figure 38. Expansive and restrictive features which impact on the workplace development of trainers

← ← ← Restrictive		Learning Environment		. . . . . Expansive → → →
Poorly planned induction	←	*Induction to Organisation*	→	Individualised and planned induction
Lack of clarity on role and performance required	←	*Role*	→	Clarity provided on role and performance required
Productive trainer, little recognition of novice status	←	*Full participation*	→	Supported full participation, recognising novice status
Support on ad hoc basis, often requested by novice trainer	←	*Support*	→	Mentoring, support, dialogue with peers
Poorly planned professional development	←	*Professional development*	→	Planned development and accreditation
Subject-matter expertise prioritised	←	*Knowledge and skills*	→	Pedagogic and subject-matter expertise prioritised
Reliance on trial and error	←	*Development of expertise*	→	Clarity provided on expertise required, opportunities to observe it
Former occupational identity prioritised	←	*Identity*	→	Identity as trainer prioritised

As discussed in earlier chapters, an agreed set of national standards of competences for VET trainers does not exist in Ireland. In their absence, it emerged that trainers judged their own level of competence, and this seemed to be mainly assessed against achieving targets and outcomes. The study found that managers also viewed trainers' competence in terms of achieving targets and outcomes for learners, particularly achievement of certification. Many of the trainers in the study considered competence as feeling

comfortable or confident. This may mean that trainers' competence is being construed by trainers (and managers) as the ability to cope and develop practice sufficiently to be a 'successful' trainer and achieve the required performance targets, therefore reinforcing low expectations of their pedagogic skills (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005).

Lucas and Unwin (2009, 431) argue that 'consideration of the workplace as the context for teacher training and professional development is currently absent from the reform process'. However, it has emerged from the study that the learning environment created in the workplace was a significant element in the trainers' professional development. It can be concluded therefore, that in addition to formal learning, informal learning in the workplace also played a significant part in the trainers' pedagogic development. Therefore, there is a challenge existing for VET providers to make workplace learning more visible and to enable it to take place in a more expansive environment.

Constructs of professionalism in VET

The findings from the study suggested that the model of professionalism which was constructed by the practitioners in the study predominantly prioritised subject matter knowledge and skills over pedagogy, and while achievement of pedagogic qualifications by trainers through attendance at courses run by external organisations is supported, pedagogic development seemed to be a secondary consideration. As previously discussed the workplace environment which emerged from the study appeared to encourage trainers to hold on to their former identities as subject matter experts. This may have supported the trainers to hold onto a concept of professionalism associated with their former occupations. The study revealed that although the impact of workplace learning on the

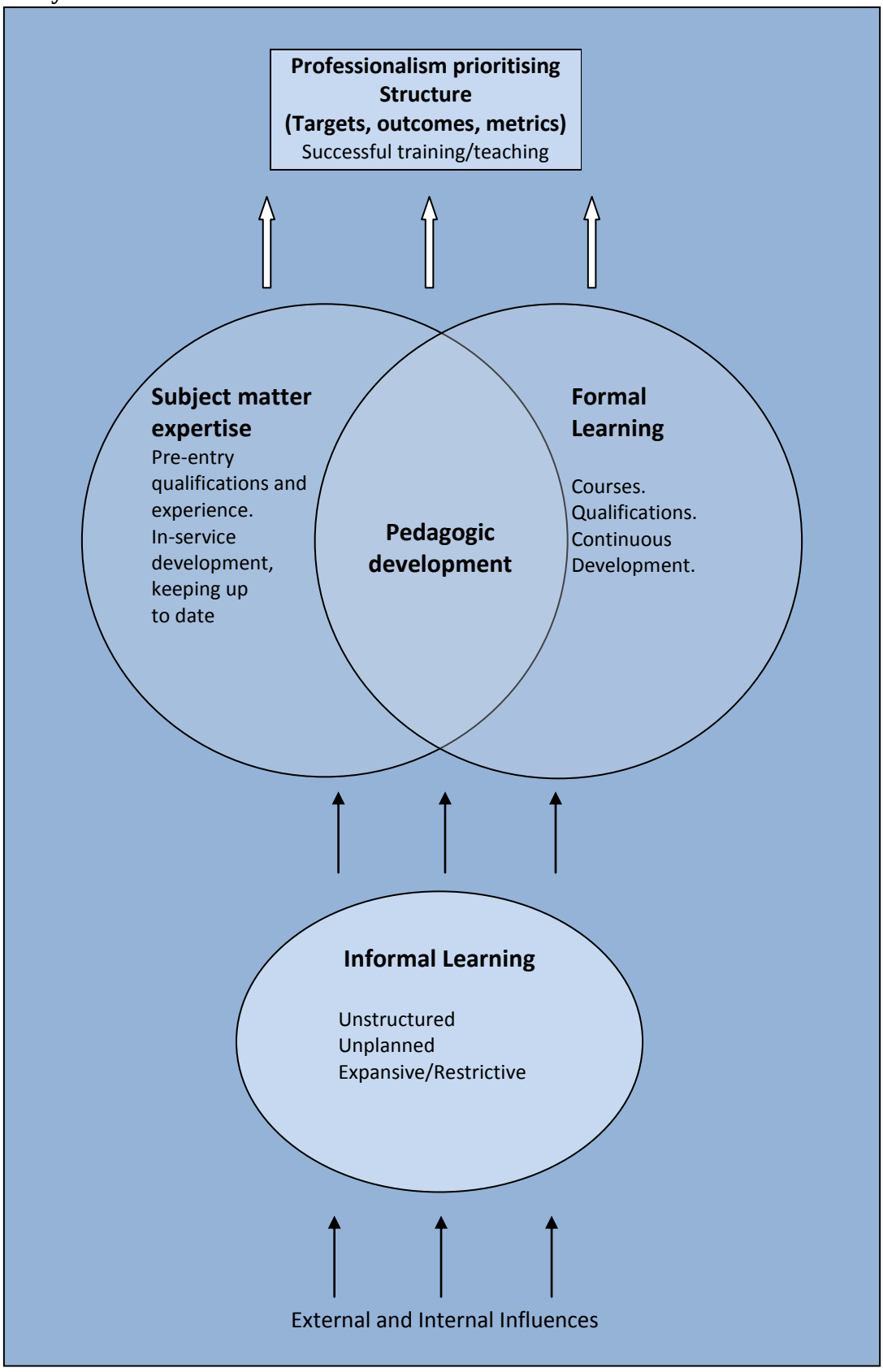
professional development of trainers in VET does not appear to be acknowledged, significant workplace learning takes place, mainly with an overreliance on informal learning and informal support. There is a risk that this may have an unintentional impact and develop a community of practice with limited pedagogic skills which practitioners perpetuate rather than improve.

The findings also suggested a focus on 'performativity' by both managers and trainers (Ball, 2003; Avis, 2005). The study indicated a construction of professionalism predominantly associated with achievement of targets and outcomes, professionalism as structure (Gleeson and Knights, 2006).

A model incorporating the concepts of professionalism in VET which emerged from the study has been developed and is shown in Figure 39.

The emerging construct of professionalism as structure may reflect the New Public Management ideology which is influencing public sector reform in Ireland and which is reflected in a focus on achievement of efficiencies (Department of an Taoiseach, 2008; Hardiman and MacCárthaigh, 2008; Gleeson and O'Donnabháin, 2009, 27). However Robson (2006, 604) argues that for education and training professionalism as structure is a 'narrow or technicist concept of professionalism, or one which might stress outcomes and performance . . . at the expense of pedagogy and a shared professional knowledge'.

Figure 39. A model of professionalism in the VET workplace emerging from the study



It is suggested in the literature that VET organisations need to change to respond to the changing labour market and provide learners with appropriate knowledge and skills to participate in the knowledge economy (e.g. Descy and Tessaring, 2002; Chappell 2003; Chappell and Johnson, 2003). The construct of professionalism emerging from the study may not be sufficiently effective in supporting the preparation of trainers for professional practice as VET providers in Ireland strive to respond to the changing environment. This will require a new construct of professionalism which positions pedagogic and public accountability requirements alongside each other (Gleeson et al, 2005).

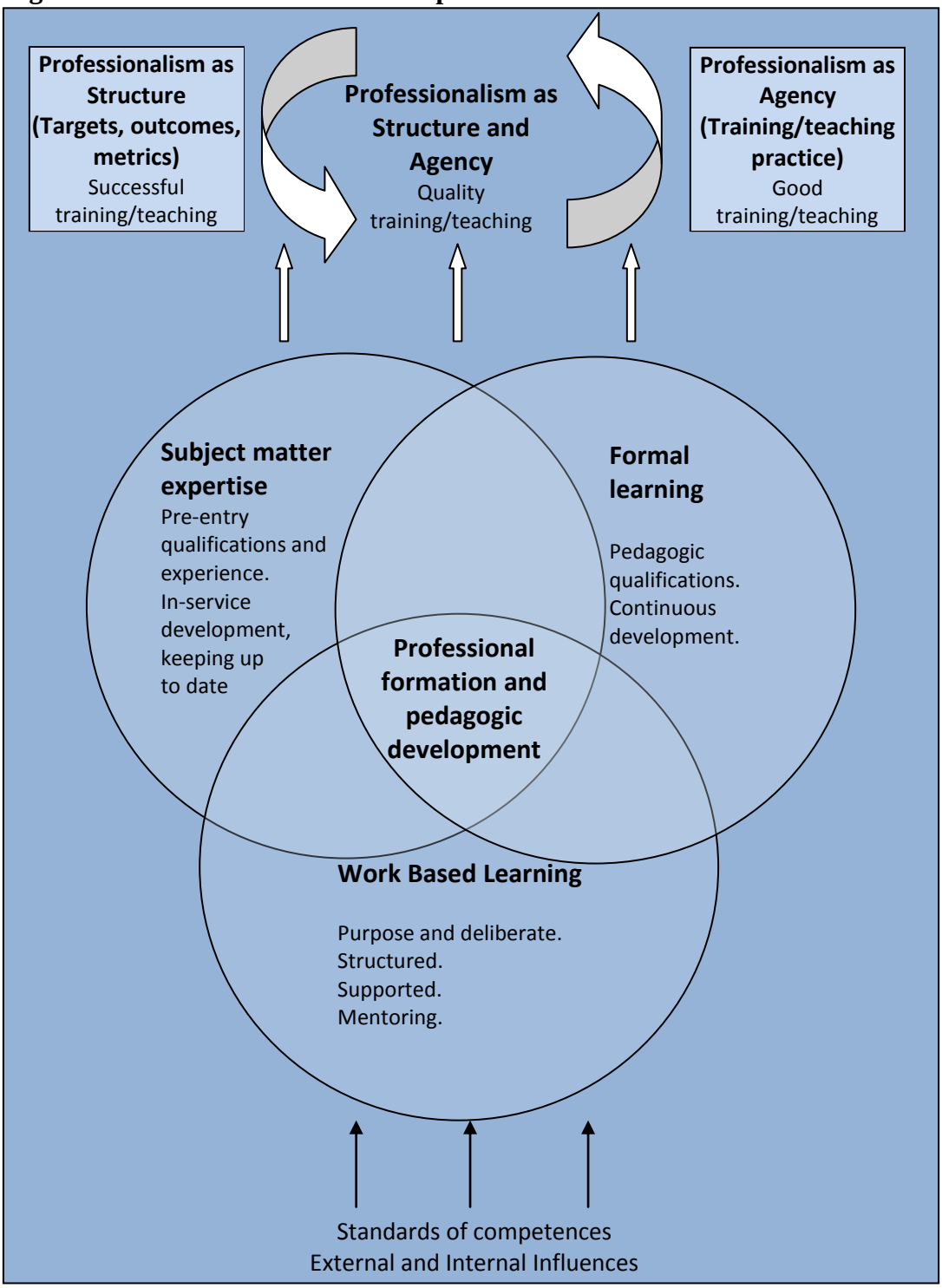
Towards an alternative model of professionalism for VET

The desire to modernise VET has brought a focus on the 'professionalisation' of trainers (Cedefop, 2009). Some policies to improve teaching and learning in training and education focus on a construct of professionalism driven by 'qualification and standards as the prime determinant of professional learning' (Colley et al, 2007). This may lead to professional status being associated with the achievement of professional qualifications and an 'implicit assumption that professional status is permanent once it has been attained' (Colley et al, 2007, 174). This notion is inadequate as a way to construct an alternative model of professionalism in VET as account is not taken of the impact of workplace learning in developing trainers' professional and pedagogic skills. There is a need for a new model that recognises that a career as a VET trainer is often a second career and, in addition to requiring qualifications in trainers' subject matter areas, includes a focus on pedagogic qualifications and standards and which also integrates formal and informal professional learning in the workplace.

It is useful to consider the notion of professional formation as a process underpinning the professional and pedagogic development of trainers. Knight (2006, 31) suggests 'professional formation, through formal and non-formal processes, involves the creation of a variety of knowings and ways of coordinating them for the purposes in hand'.

The idea of professional formation has been adopted for the further education sector in the UK (IFL, 2008). In that case professional formation includes a requirement to gain a professional training/teaching qualification and a process by which the practitioner demonstrates 'through professional practice the ability to use effectively the skills and knowledge acquired' and the 'capacity to meet the occupational standards required' (IFL, undated). Both definitions suggest the acquisition and application of new pedagogic knowledge and skills developed on a trajectory from novice to expert, and imply a learning journey involving formal and informal workplace learning. Thus professional formation may be seen as acquiring new skills whereas professional development may be seen as improving skills. Acknowledging a process of professional formation would provide a framework for purposeful and deliberate development of trainers' pedagogic skills in the workplace and may influence a construct of professionalism in VET that incorporates professionalism as agency (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). An alternative model of professionalism for VET is suggested in Figure 40.

Figure 40. Towards a new model of professionalism for VET



Conclusions

The study found evidence of a commitment to professional development through formal learning by practitioners in VET. It also found that informal learning in the workplace shaped the trainers' professional development and that their workplace learning was enhanced or hindered by a number of factors that combined to create an expansive or restrictive learning environment (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). Subject matter knowledge and skills were prioritised over pedagogic expertise. The findings from the study suggest that the workplace environment experienced by the trainers appeared to encourage them to hold onto their former identities as subject matter experts, rather than building new identities as trainers and developing their pedagogic expertise. It emerged from the study that there is a challenge for VET providers to make workplace learning more visible and to enable it to take place in a more expansive environment.

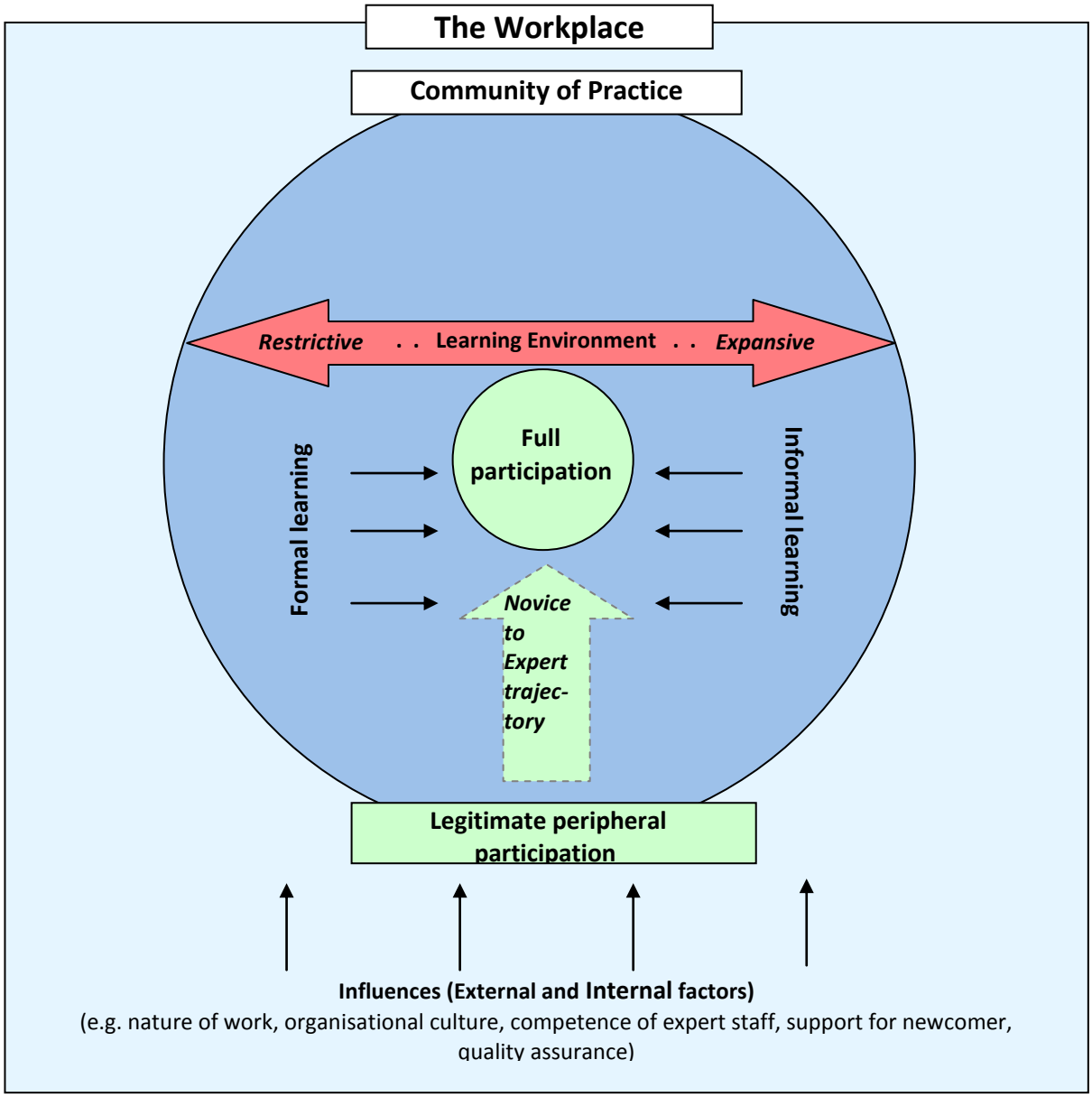
The study also indicated that a concept of professionalism as structure in VET was predominantly constructed by the practitioners in the study, a professionalism associated with achievement of targets and outcomes (Gleeson and Knights, 2006). A new model of professionalism was proposed which integrated formal and informal professional learning in the workplace and includes the notion of professional formation.

A conceptual framework incorporating workplace learning theories (i.e. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Fuller and Unwin, 2004) was developed for the study and provided a useful theoretical framework for understanding the nature and processes of professional learning and development of trainers in VET. Lave and Wenger's (1991) model appears to have limitations in the VET context. The model advocates newcomers gaining

confidence and expertise with the help of experienced workers. The study revealed a number of examples of where VET communities of practice do not function in this way and revealed that in the workplace novice trainers often had to develop pedagogic skills on their own with a minimum level of support. The study found that trainers' journey from newcomer to competent or expert practitioner was dependent on the learning environment they experienced in the workplace and that their progress was influenced by expansive and restrictive characteristics (Fuller and Unwin, 2004). As the study progressed it emerged that Fuller and Unwin's workplace learning theory became much more significant than was originally envisaged when developing the conceptual framework. Then, the learning environment was positioned as an influencing factor whereas the study has revealed that, as shown in Figure 41, it is a central factor.

A mixed methods approach was adopted for the study. This facilitated the collection of two sets of data which combined the strengths of a quantitative approach and a qualitative approach and has led to a better understanding of professionalism in VET.

Figure 41. Conceptual framework repositioning the learning environment



Implications of the study

This study makes the following contributions to research:

- A profile of current VET trainers has been generated which outlines their qualifications and experience and the nature of their work;

- Understanding of current VET practice has been developed including practitioners' perception of the nature of their practice, competence and professionalism and their experience of entry to and professional development in the VET sector;
- A model of the dominant construct of professionalism emerging from the practitioners who participated in the study has been formed, and an alternative model of professionalism for VET has been suggested.

Limitations of the study

It is recognised that this study has limitations. The study used vocational training organisations as a case study and reflected the views of a small sample of trainers. Therefore, it may not have reflected views and practices found in other organisations in the broader Further Education and Training sector, and findings may not be transferable to other client groups. The study was constrained by time and space requirements.

Data informing the qualitative strand of the study was perceptual data and was limited to the perceptions of VET practitioners participating in the study. Perceived practice may differ to actual practice, and how the practitioners in the study perceived practice may be different to how it is perceived by other stakeholders. Data was provided by practitioners who entered and remained in the VET sector. No data was collected from practitioners who left. It is suggested that more research is required in this area.

Recommendations for further research

Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 275-276) argue that 'the process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical. They are always ongoing, emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished'. This study has raised a number of areas where further research is recommended:

- A study to examine how professionalism and professional development is conceptualised and constructed by practitioners in the workplace in other FET organisations in Ireland.
- A study to develop standards of competence for FET and VET practitioners.
- A study to explore the pedagogic skills of FET and VET practitioners.

Overall the study suggests that conceptualising and constructing professionalism in the VET workplace is a demanding process within a complex and conflicting environment. However, it is a process that deserves the attention of policy-makers and VET managers who wish to understand and improve the process as professional practice and professional trainers are the key to making the further education and training sector in Ireland a success.

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Appendix A: Letter to VET organisations seeking permission to complete the study

Dear

The role and professional development of the practitioner in the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland

Reform of the further education and training (FET) sector in Ireland, influenced by the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999, has resulted in a period of change for education and training providers and their practitioners. Training providers are now required to have quality assurance systems agreed with the appropriate awards councils in place. In addition, the FET sector is being influenced by emerging changes in the labour market which is resulting in the need for different skills from workers to respond to a changing work environment.

The FET sector is recognised for its richness and diversity. Practitioners enter the FET sector from a variety of backgrounds and are working in the sector primarily because they have the expertise, skills and knowledge in specialist vocational/technical and/or academic disciplines to develop learners. However, despite the ongoing professionalization of FET sector, there is no national standard to inform the entry and professional development of FET practitioners in Ireland. It is now timely and important to study the role, the competences required for effective practice and professional development of FET practitioners in Ireland.

I work in FÁS as a manager in the Community Services division with responsibility for FÁS policy and programme development for community based training programmes. My contact details are included at the end of this letter.

I am currently completing a doctoral degree in Education and Training in Dublin City University. As part of the degree I am undertaking a study of the role and professional development of the practitioner in the FET sector in Ireland. I wish to include a range of FET organisations in the study, and I would be very interested in including your organisation. The methodology involves

(1) participation in an online survey by trainers/teachers in your organisation to build a profile of FET practitioners (sample copy of survey attached);
(2) interviewing 5 to 10 practitioners; and
(3) interviewing 1 or 2 managers.

All data gathered will be on a confidential basis. Practitioners' participation in the study will be voluntary, and interview participants will be invited to confirm their involvement through completion of an informed consent form. The completed study will be submitted to DCU. It is my hope that the study will inform development of policy and practice for FET organisations and FET practitioners.

I am writing to request permission to include your organisation as part of the study. I look forward to a favourable response and I am available to discuss the study further if required (*phone no*).

Yours sincerely

_____

Fionnuala Anderson

Appendix B: Letter to CTC managers requesting participation in the study

May 2009

Dear General Manager

I am currently completing a doctoral degree in Educational and Training Leadership run by the School of Education in Dublin City University (DCU) and I am undertaking a study titled *The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland.*

As part of the study I wish to develop a broad profile of practitioners (i.e. instructors, trainers, teachers etc) through the FET sector in Ireland. To help develop this profile, I am inviting practitioners in a range of organisations to participate in an online survey. A sample of the survey is attached. I also wish to interview a small number of Community Training Centre(CTC) general managers and practitioners to explore the role and development of CTC practitioners. All data gathered in the study will be treated confidentially and protected accordingly.

I am writing to you for your assistance as I wish to contact as many practitioners as possible to invite them to participate in the survey as all contributions will be very valuable in building a national profile. Therefore, I would appreciate if you would forward me email addresses of practitioners in your centre, so I can invite them to participate in the study. Their email addresses will be used for the purposes of sending them the attached letter and one general follow-up email only and to allow me to keep count of the total number of participants invited to complete the survey.

I would also like to interview one or two CTC General Managers who recruited new practitioners since 2000. If you would be willing to be interviewed, perhaps you would contact me (details below) to let me know.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks for your assistance.

Fionnuala Anderson

Phone no
Email address

Appendix C: E-mail to practitioners requesting participation in online survey

May 2009

Dear practitioner

I am currently completing a doctoral degree in Educational and Training Leadership run by the School of Education in Dublin City University (DCU) and I am undertaking a study titled *The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland.*

As part of the study I wish to develop a broad profile of practitioners (i.e. instructors, trainers, teachers etc) through the FET sector in Ireland. To help develop this profile, I am inviting practitioners in a range of FET organisations to participate in an online survey which takes about 10 minutes to complete.

The survey is confidential and the identity of all those participating in the survey is protected. All data will be treated confidentially and will be analysed and presented in collated form in the final report on the survey.

I would appreciate your participation in the survey. Your participation will be a valuable contribution to building a national profile. To complete the survey click on this web link:

(weblink here)

Should you require any further information before completing the survey, please contact me.

I also wish to interview a small number of practitioners who joined a FET organisation since 2000. If you would be willing to be interviewed about your role and professional development as a FET practitioner, please contact me.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Fionnuala Anderson

Phone no
Email address

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland

Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title

The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland.

The purpose of the research

The research is being undertaken as part of a DCU programme leading to a doctoral degree in Education (Leadership). The research aims to study the role and professional development of practitioners in the Further Education and Training sector by exploring how FET practitioners perceive their roles, and how they conceptualise effective practice, professionalism and key competences required in FET. The completed study will be submitted to DCU, and will be available on request to FÁS and any other FET organisation participating in the study.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each answer)

Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement?	Yes/No
Do you understand the information provided?	Yes/No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes/No
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	Yes/No
Do you agree to participate in an interview?	Yes/No
Are you aware that you interview will be audiotaped?	Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point.

V. Arrangements to protect confidentiality of data

All data collected during the study will be treated as confidential. Data will be protected accordingly and will only be accessible by the researcher in interview format. Data from interviews will be kept in electronic format on a home computer and back-up disk only, and printed copies will be kept in a file at the researcher's home for the duration of the study. No real names will be used on data stored.

It should be noted that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

For completion by participant:

Signature

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: _____

Date: _____

The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland

Plain Language Statement

Introduction to the Research Study

The title of the research study being undertaking is *The role and professional development of Further Education and Training (FET) practitioners in Ireland.* The study is being undertaken as part of a programme run by the School of Education, Dublin City University (DCU), leading to a doctoral degree in Education (Leadership).

The researcher works in FÁS as a manager in the Community Services division, with responsibility for FÁS-policy and programme development for community based training programmes. Contact details are:

Details

Involvement in the Research Study

Involvement in the research study requires participating in a one-to-one confidential interview lasting about 40 minutes. The interview will be recorded and will be transcribed with names changed to ensure confidentiality. A copy of the transcript will be issued to participants for checking. The transcript of the interview will be used by the researcher only, but it may be made available to supervisor or examiners in DCU if required. Interview data will be analysed and findings will be included in the final report. The interview transcript will not be published and will not appear in the completed study, but some quotations may be extracted from interviews and included in the report without using real names.

The completed study will be submitted to DCU, and will be available on request to FÁS and any other FET organisation participating in the study. Only data included in the final report will be available to FÁS and other FET organisations.

Potential risks

There are unlikely to be any risks from involvement in the research study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits from involvement in the study. However, the study has the potential to inform FET policy, programme development and practice.

Confidentiality of data

All data collected during the study will be treated as confidential and will be protected accordingly. Data from interviews will be kept in electronic format on the researcher's home computer and back-up disk only, and any printed copies will be kept securely in a file at the researcher's home for the duration of the study. No real names will be used on any data stored.

Participation in the study

Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any point.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.

Appendix E: Questionnaire

1. Gender

Are you male or female?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

2. Age

Which age range do you fall into?

- ◯ 20-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-54
- ◯ 55-64
- ◯ 65+

3. Organisation

What organisation do you work for?

- ◯ Community Training Centre
- ◯ Failte Ireland
- ◯ FAS
- ◯ Senior Traveller Training Centre
- ◯ Teagasc
- ◯ VEC (Youthreach)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

4. Employment

What is the status of your employment?

- ◯ Permanent full-time
- ◯ Permanent part-time
- ◯ Temporary full-time
- ◯ Temporary part-time

5. Job Title

What is your job title?

- ◯ Facilitator
- ◯ Instructor
- ◯ Lecturer
- ◯ Teacher
- ◯ Trainer
- ◯ Tutor
- ◯ Other (please specify)

6. Field

Which of the following best describes your FET field?

- ◯ Apprenticeship
- ◯ General education
- ◯ Literacy/Numeracy
- ◯ Personal development
- ◯ Vocational Skills Development

Other (please specify)

7. Employment as FET practitioner

How long have you worked as a further education and training (FET) practitioner?

- ◯ Less than 5 years
- ◯ 5-10 years
- ◯ 11-20 years
- ◯ 21-30 years
- ◯ More than 30 years

8. Industrial/Commercial experience prior to entry

Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years industrial or commercial experience, other than teaching/training experience, did you have?

- ◯ None
- ◯ Less than 5 years
- ◯ 5-10 years
- ◯ More than 10 years

9. Teaching/training experience prior to entry

Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years teaching/training experience did you have?

	None	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years
Full-time teaching/training experience	○	○	○	○
Part-time teaching/training experience	○	○	○	○

10. Vocational/technical qualifications at entry

On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, that you had?

- ○ Craft, technical or vocational certificate
- ○ Craft, technical or vocational diploma
- ○ Third level certificate
- ○ Third level diploma
- ○ Undergraduate degree
- ○ Masters degree
- ○ Doctoral degree
- ○ No vocational/technical qualifications when recruited

11. Teaching/training qualifications at entry

On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any training/teaching qualifications that you had?

- ○ Certificate in Training/Education
- ○ Diploma in Training/Education
- ○ Higher Diploma in Education
- ○ Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education
- ○ Masters Degree in Training/Education
- ○ Doctoral Degree in Training/Education
- ○ No teaching/training qualifications when recruited

Other (please specify)

12. Vocational/technical qualifications gained in service

Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, you may have achieved?

- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational certificate
- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational diploma
- ◯ Third level certificate
- ◯ Third level diploma
- ◯ Degree
- ◯ Masters degree
- ◯ Doctoral degree
- ◯ No vocational/technical qualifications achieved since commencing

13. Teaching/training qualifications gained in service

Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any teaching/training qualifications you may have achieved?

- ◯ Certificate in Training/Education
- ◯ Diploma in Training/Education
- ◯ Higher Diploma in Education
- ◯ Undergrad Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Masters Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Doctoral Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ No teaching/training qualifications achieved since commencing

Other (please specify)

14. Vocational/technical qualifications being undertaken

Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you may currently be undertaking

- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational certificate
- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational diploma
- ◯ Third level certificate
- ◯ Third level diploma
- ◯ Degree
- ◯ Masters degree
- ◯ Doctoral degree
- ◯ No vocational/technical qualifications being undertaken

15. Teaching/training qualifications being undertaken

Please indicate any teaching/training qualification you may currently be undertaking

- ◯ Certificate in Training/Education
- ◯ Diploma in Training/Education
- ◯ Higher Diploma in Education
- ◯ Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Masters Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Doctoral Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ None being undertaken

Other (please specify)

16. Vocational/technical qualifications of future interest

Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you would be interested in undertaking in the future

- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational certificate
- ◯ Craft, technical or vocational diploma
- ◯ Third level certificate
- ◯ Third level diploma
- ◯ Degree
- ◯ Masters degree
- ◯ Doctoral degree
- ◯ None

17. Teaching/training qualifications of future interest

Please indicate any teaching/training qualifications you would be interested in undertaking in the future

- ◯ Certificate in Training/Education
- ◯ Diploma in Training/Education
- ◯ Higher Diploma in Education
- ◯ Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Masters Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ Doctoral Degree in Training/Education
- ◯ None

Other (please specify)

18. FET functions carried out

Please indicate which of the following FET functions you carry out

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never
Teaching/training groups	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	◯	◯	◯	◯
Administering/marking assessments and tests	◯	◯	◯	◯
Assessing individual learners needs	◯	◯	◯	◯
Developing individual learning plan with learners	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group sessions to review learning	◯	◯	◯	◯
One-to-one sessions to review learning	◯	◯	◯	◯
Curriculum development	◯	◯	◯	◯

19. Teaching/training methods used

Please indicate how often you use the following teaching/training methods

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never
Talk	◯	◯	◯	◯
Demonstration	◯	◯	◯	◯
Role play	◯	◯	◯	◯
Games	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group discussion	◯	◯	◯	◯
Group work	◯	◯	◯	◯
Computer based training	◯	◯	◯	◯
Self-directed learning	◯	◯	◯	◯
Video/films	◯	◯	◯	◯
Case study	◯	◯	◯	◯
Practical assignments	◯	◯	◯	◯

20. Thank you for completing the survey

If you would like to add any additional information, please use the box below.

Appendix F: Interview Schedules

Topic	*Schedule for Trainers*
Roles	What is the role of your organisation? What is your role in the organisation? Has your role changed over the last five years? If yes, how?
Entry to FET	Why did you decide to become a FET practitioner? How did you become a FET practitioner? What qualifications and experience did you have when you entered the sector?
Development as a FET practitioner	When you started, how were you inducted and developed over your first year of practice? What is the standard you need to achieve as a practitioner, how do you know when you are there? What, or who, influenced how you developed as a practitioner? What professional development have you been offered or taken over the last five years? If you were responsible for inducting a new practitioner, how would you do it?
FET practice	Can you describe your practice to me – training methodology etc. How do you deliver your programme/course? Has how you deliver your programme changed over the last five years? If yes, how? What does quality training mean to you? How do you know if you are delivering a quality service?
Professionalism in FET	What does professionalism mean to you as a practitioner? What are the competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) you use most in your job? How do you know if you are a sufficiently competent practitioner? How do you know if you are performing adequately as a practitioner?
Values/beliefs	What does being a practitioner mean to you? What values and beliefs inform your practice? How would you like your learners to describe you? What do you like most about your job? What do you like least about your job?
Future needs	What do you think are the challenges facing you over the next five years? What do you think are the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that will be required to face these challenges? How well prepared are you to meet future challenges? What activities would be effective in assisting you to prepare for these challenges?

Topic	*Schedule for Managers*
Roles	What is the role of your organisation? What is your role in the organisation? What is the role of the FET practitioner in your organisation? What is your role in relation to the practitioners?
Entry to FET	What qualifications and experience do you look for when recruiting a new practitioner to your organisation?
Development as a FET practitioner	How do you induct practitioners when they enter your organisation? What is the standard you expect of practitioners? How do you assist them develop as FET practitioners? What professional development is available to practitioners?
FET practice	How does your organisation deliver training? Has how you deliver your training programmes changed over the last five years? If yes, how? How have the practitioners coped with the changes?
Professionalism in FET	What does professionalism mean to you in the context of practitioners? What competences are required by practitioners in your organisation? How do you know when practitioners have developed sufficient competence? How do you know how practitioners are performing? What behaviour do you think is important in practitioners? What does quality training mean to you? How do you know if practitioners are delivering a quality programme?
Future needs	What do you think are the challenges facing FET practitioners over the next five years? What do you think are the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that will be required over the next five years? How well prepared are your practitioners to meet these challenges? What activities do you think would be effective in assisting them to prepare for these challenges?

Appendix G: Response to Survey of VET trainers

n=154

Question 1: Are you male or female?

	Male	Female	Not specified
FÁS	80	23	1
CTCs	23	20	
Failte Ire	6	1	

Question 2: Which age range do you fall into?

	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Not specified
FÁS	10	25	37	31	1
CTCs	5	18	13	6	1
Failte Ire	1	4	1	1	0

Question 3: What organisation do you work for?

FÁS	104
CTCs	43
Failte Ire	7

Question 4: Which of the following best describes your type of employment?

	Permanent full-time	Permanent part-time	Temporary full-time	Temporary part-time	Not specified
FÁS	99	5	0	0	
CTCs	34	5	2	1	1
Failte Ire	5	1	1	0	

Question 5: What is the title of your job?

	Teacher	Trainer	Instructor	Tutor	Facilitator	Other	Not specified
FÁS		2	92	1		9	
CTCs	2	2	27	3	2	5	2
Failte Ire			7				

Question 6: Which of the following best describes your FET field?

	Apprenticeship	Personal Development	General Education	Vocational Skills	Literacy/Numeracy	Not specified
FÁS	54	2	11	33	0	4
CTC	3	8	7	18	6	1
Fáilte Ire	1	0	0	6	0	0

Question 7: How long have you worked as a further education and training (FET) practitioner?

	<5 yrs	5-10 yrs	11-20 yrs	21-30 yrs	30+ yrs	Not specified
FÁS	16	28	27	16	13	3
CTCs	8	12	9	12	0	3
Failte Ire	2	1	2	2	0	0

Question 8: Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years industrial or commercial experience, other than teaching/training experience, did you have?

	None	<5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10+ yrs	Not specified
FÁS	4	6	27	62	5
CTCs	7	8	17	7	4
Failte Ire	0	1	1	5	0

Question 9: Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years teaching/training experience did you have?

		None	<5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10+ yrs	Not specified
FÁS	Full-time		13	3	5	
	Part-time		20	13	1	
	F/T and P/T	42	2	1		4
CTC	Full-time			6	2	
	Part-time		9	2		
	F/T and P/T	18		1		5
Failte Ire	Full-time				1	
	Part-time		2	1		
	F/T and P/T	3				

Question 10: On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, that you had?

	Cert	Dip	Cert 3rd level	Dip 3rd level	Degree	Masters	No quals	Not specified
FÁS	35	25	13	10	11	4	0	6
CTCs	8	4	4	6	10	3	3	5
Failte Ire	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	

Question 11: On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any training/teaching qualifications that you had?

	Cert in Tr/Ed	Dip in Tr/Ed	HDip Ed	Deg in Tr/Ed	Masters Tr/Ed	No tr/ed quals	Not specified
FÁS	20	8	1	5	3	49	18
CTCs	6	2	5	3	3	16	8
Failte Ire	0	1	0	1	0	5	

Question 12: Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, you may have achieved?

	Cert	Dip	Cert 3rd level	Dip 3rd level	Degree	Masters	No quals	Not specified
FÁS	14	4	14	14	17	6	24	11
CTCs	4	1	6	6	7	1	13	5
Failte Ire	0	0	0	1	3	2	1	

Question 13: Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any teaching/training qualifications you may have achieved?

	Cert in Tr/Ed	Dip in Tr/Ed	HDip Ed	Deg in Tr/Ed	Masters Tr/Ed	No tr/ed quals	Not specified
FÁS	23	20	0	31	8	12	10
CTCs	5	7	2	8	1	13	7
Failte Ire	2	1			2	2	

Question 14: Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you may currently be undertaking

	Cert	Dip	Cert 3rd level	Dip 3rd level	Degree	Masters	Doctoral deg	No quals	Not specified
FÁS	7	1	4	4	6	4	2	63	13
CTCs	0	1	4	1	4	0	0	26	7
Failte Ire	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	

Question 15: Please indicate any teaching/training qualification you may currently be undertaking

	Cert in Tr/Ed	Dip in Tr/Ed	HDip Ed	Deg in Tr/Ed	Masters Tr/Ed	Doctoral Deg Tr/Ed	None	Not specified
FÁS	2	10	1	5	2	1	67	16
CTCs	0	4	0	3	0	0	26	10
Failte Ire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7

Question 16: Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Cert	Dip	Cert 3rd level	Dip 3rd level	Degree	Masters	Doctoral deg	None	Not specified
FÁS	4	6	5	4	22	15	3	30	15
CTCs	0	2	1	3	4	14	0	14	5
Failte Ire	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	

Question 17: Please indicate any teaching/training qualifications you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Cert in Tr/Ed	Dip in Tr/Ed	HDip Ed	Deg in Tr/Ed	Masters Tr/Ed	**Doctoral Deg Tr/Ed**	None	Other	Not specified
FÁS	1	6	2	8	22	6	42	4	13
CTCs	1	4	1	4	12	1	12	3	5
Failte Ire	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	

Question 18: Please indicate which of the following FET functions you carry out

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Not specified
Teaching/training groups	119	3	5	3	24
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	40	38	22	8	46
Administering/marking assessments and tests	66	37	12	4	35
Assessing individual learners needs	53	38	17	7	39
Developing individual learning plan with learners	39	31	29	13	42
Group sessions to review learning	45	39	18	9	43
One to one sessions to review learning	43	36	27	8	40
Curriculum development	27	32	40	14	41

	Very often %	Often %	Not often %	Never %	Not specified
Teaching/training groups	77.27	1.95	3.25	1.95	15.58
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	25.97	24.68	14.29	5.19	29.87
Administering/marking assessments and tests	42.86	24.03	7.79	2.60	22.73
Assessing individual learners needs	34.42	24.68	11.04	4.55	25.32
Developing individual learning plan with learners	25.32	20.13	18.83	8.44	27.27
Group sessions to review learning	29.22	25.32	11.69	5.84	27.92
One to one sessions to review learning	27.92	23.38	17.53	5.19	25.97
Curriculum development	17.53	20.78	25.97	9.09	26.62

Question 19: Please indicate how often you use the following teaching/training methods

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Not specified
Talk	122	12	1	0	19
Demonstration	111	16	3	2	22
Role play	17	26	42	34	35
Games	10	18	46	40	40
Group discussion	50	52	23	5	24
Group work	54	47	16	7	30
Computer based training	39	18	37	29	31
Self-directed learning	33	43	29	17	32
Video/films	17	45	46	15	31
Case study	12	18	48	40	36
Practical assignments	104	17	7	6	20

	Very often %	Often %	Not often %	Never %	Not specified %
Talk	79.22	7.79	0.65	0.00	12.34
Demonstration	72.08	10.39	1.95	1.30	14.29
Role play	11.04	16.88	27.27	22.08	22.73
Games	6.49	11.69	29.87	25.97	25.97
Group discussion	32.47	33.77	14.94	3.25	15.58
Group work	35.06	30.52	10.39	4.55	19.48
Computer based training	25.32	11.69	24.03	18.83	20.13
Self-directed learning	21.43	27.92	18.83	11.04	20.78
Video/films	11.04	29.22	29.87	9.74	20.13
Case study	7.79	11.69	31.17	25.97	23.38
Practical assignments	67.53	11.04	4.55	3.90	12.99

Question 20: If you would like to add any additional information, please use the box below

This is my first year. The response of learners has been very good to Practical Technology.
We as Beauty Instructors complete a minimum of 3 CPD courses a year, we are also qualified assessors with our awarding body, we are currently studying for Internal Verifier awards.
It is my belief that for trainers in the community training sector (CTC, youthreach) it is vital that some type of formal training in Behavioural Analysis is undertaken. Having completed BA., Training and Education many years ago (UCG), the most benefit I received from this course in relation to my occupation was from modules which dealt with motivation, needs analysis of the individual and possibly critical thinking. Trainers dealing with young, at risk teenagers would benefit greatly from a better understanding of various behaviour modification interventions which would be more effective in changing undesirable behaviours with learners, and hence improve their chances of progression in life, these include positive and negative reinforcers, reward systems or token economies, environmental stressors and aversive contingencies, to name but a few.
Our role is continuously changing and the methods we use for delivery need to adapt to these changes
The earlier years of the training and education degree really helped me especially with the different interventions needed to deal with the diverse range of learners that I come in contact with. As the study went on I found it less useful in my day-to-day work but of more benefit to my personal development.
Mostly practical and theory work
My preferred methodology in training is best described as "Creative Task -based" - trainees are given a specific task (at that point, beyond their ability) and through Q&A, research and trial and error they complete the task: gaining, thereby, the requisite skills in their field
I am currently running manual handling courses which are infrequent (possibly 40 a year and using a USB stick with multimedia overhead projection is my method of delivery.
I thinks an Instructors' Association would be a platform for instructors to demonstrate their professionalism and be recognised for their work.
Staff may be active in other areas outside the area you have focussed on
A colleague is currently studying for a masters Ed and Tr and as part of one project he has taught a number of us how Moodle might be used on our courses. So we have benefited from his efforts. My spouse is currently studying for an undergraduate degree in Ed and Tr and I have been acting as a critical friend. I have managed to pick up some things that were new to me e.g. webquests and using Hot Potatoes for quizzes etc. I am open to new learning but I am not interested in undertaking a long period of study.
More work should be done by Fas as to how learners learn and more discussion should take place with instructors on how we can improve in this area so that we get better results from our training programmes.

Appendix H: Summary of responses to questionnaire by FÁS trainers

FET Trainer Profile Survey

1. Are you male or female?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	**77.7%**	**80**
Female	22.3%	23
answered question		**103**
skipped question		**1**

2. Which age range do you fall into?

	Response Percent	Response Count
20-24	0.0%	0
25-34	9.7%	10
35-44	24.3%	25
45-54	**35.9%**	**37**
55-64	30.1%	31
65+	0.0%	0
answered question		**103**
skipped question		**1**

3. What organisation do you work for?

	Response Percent	Response Count
FAS	**100.0%**	**104**
Community Training Centre	0.0%	0
Senior Traveller Training Centre	0.0%	0
Teagasc	0.0%	0
Failte Ireland	0.0%	0
Youthreach	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	**104**
	skipped question	**0**

4. Which of the following best describes your type of employment?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Permanent full-time	**95.2%**	**99**
Permanent part-time	4.8%	5
Temporary full-time	0.0%	0
Temporary part-time	0.0%	0
	answered question	**104**
	skipped question	**0**

5. What is your job title?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Teacher	0.0%	0
Trainer	1.9%	2
Instructor	**88.5%**	**92**
Tutor	1.0%	1
Facilitator	0.0%	0
Lecturer	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	8.7%	9
	answered question	**104**
	skipped question	**0**

6. Which of the following best describes your FET field?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Apprenticeship	**67.5%**	**54**
Personal development	2.5%	2
General education	13.8%	11
Vocational Skills Development	16.3%	13
Literacy/Numeracy	0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)	22
	answered question	**80**
	skipped question	**24**

7. How long have you worked as a further education and training (FET) practitioner?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years	16.0%	16
5-10 years	**28.0%**	**28**
11-20 years	27.0%	27
21-30 years	16.0%	16
More than 30 years	13.0%	13
answered question		**100**
skipped question		**4**

8. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years industrial or commercial experience, other than teaching/training experience, did you have?

	Response Percent	Response Count
None	4.0%	4
Less than 5 years	6.1%	6
5-10 years	27.3%	27
More than 10 years	**62.6%**	**62**
answered question		**99**
skipped question		**5**

9. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years teaching/training experience did you have?

	None	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years	Response Count
Full-time teaching/training experience	**69.4% (50)**	19.4% (14)	5.6% (4)	5.6% (4)	72
Part-time teaching/training experience	34.9% (22)	**39.7% (25)**	23.8% (15)	1.6% (1)	63
				answered question	**100**
				skipped question	**4**

10. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	**35.7%**	**35**
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	25.5%	25
Third level certificate	13.3%	13
Third level diploma	10.2%	10
Undergraduate degree	11.2%	11
Masters degree	4.1%	4
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications when recruited	0.0%	0
	answered question	**98**
	skipped question	**6**

11. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any training/teaching qualifications that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	23.3%	20
Diploma in Training/Education	9.3%	8
Higher Diploma in Education	1.2%	1
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	5.8%	5
Masters Degree in Training/Education	3.5%	3
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications when recruited	**57.0%**	**49**
Other (please specify)		9
answered question		**86**
skipped question		**18**

12. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	15.1%	14
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	4.3%	4
Third level certificate	15.1%	14
Third level diploma	15.1%	14
Degree	18.3%	17
Masters degree	6.5%	6
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications achieved since commencing	**25.8%**	**24**
	answered question	**93**
	skipped question	**11**

13. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any teaching/training qualifications you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	24.5%	23
Diploma in Training/Education	21.3%	20
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergrad Degree in Training/Education	**33.0%**	**31**
Masters Degree in Training/Education	8.5%	8
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications achieved since commencing	12.8%	12
	Other (please specify)	0
	answered question	**94**
	skipped question	**10**

14. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	7.7%	7
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	1.1%	1
Third level certificate	4.4%	4
Third level diploma	4.4%	4
Degree	6.6%	6
Masters degree	4.4%	4
Doctoral degree	2.2%	2
No vocational/technical qualifications being undertaken	**69.2%**	**63**
	answered question	**91**
	skipped question	**13**

15. Please indicate any teaching/training qualification you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	2.3%	2
Diploma in Training/Education	11.4%	10
Higher Diploma in Education	1.1%	1
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	5.7%	5
Masters Degree in Training/Education	2.3%	2
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	1.1%	1
None being undertaken	**76.1%**	**67**
Other (please specify)		3
answered question		**88**
skipped question		**16**

16. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	4.5%	4
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	6.7%	6
Third level certificate	5.6%	5
Third level diploma	4.5%	4
Degree	24.7%	22
Masters degree	16.9%	15
Doctoral degree	3.4%	3
None	**33.7%**	**30**
	answered question	**89**
	skipped question	**15**

17. Please indicate any teaching/training qualifications you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	1.1%	1
Diploma in Training/Education	6.9%	6
Higher Diploma in Education	2.3%	2
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	9.2%	8
Masters Degree in Training/Education	25.3%	22
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	6.9%	6
None	**48.3%**	**42**
Other (please specify)		4
answered question		**87**
skipped question		17

18. Please indicate which of the following FET functions you carry out

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Teaching/training groups	**90.9% (80)**	2.3% (2)	3.4% (3)	3.4% (3)	88
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	**31.9% (22)**	**31.9% (22)**	26.1% (18)	10.1% (7)	69
Administering/marking assessments and tests	**64.1% (50)**	24.4% (19)	7.7% (6)	3.8% (3)	78
Assessing individual learners needs	**41.1% (30)**	30.1% (22)	20.5% (15)	8.2% (6)	73
Developing individual learning plan with learners	25.7% (18)	21.4% (15)	**34.3% (24)**	18.6% (13)	70
Group sessions to review learning	**45.1% (32)**	26.8% (19)	15.5% (11)	12.7% (9)	71
One-to-one sessions to review learning	31.9% (23)	22.2% (16)	**34.7% (25)**	11.1% (8)	72
Curriculum development	20.5% (15)	20.5% (15)	**43.8% (32)**	15.1% (11)	73
				answered question	**91**
				skipped question	**13**

19. Please indicate how often you use the following teaching/training methods

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Talk	**88.9% (80)**	10.0% (9)	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	90
Demonstration	**85.2% (75)**	11.4% (10)	1.1% (1)	2.3% (2)	88
Role play	11.8% (9)	17.1% (13)	**35.5% (27)**	**35.5% (27)**	76
Games	4.1% (3)	12.2% (9)	**43.2% (32)**	40.5% (30)	74
Group discussion	36.1% (30)	**38.6% (32)**	20.5% (17)	4.8% (4)	83
Group work	**43.4% (36)**	38.6% (32)	12.0% (10)	6.0% (5)	83
Computer based training	27.5% (22)	13.8% (11)	26.3% (21)	**32.5% (26)**	80
Self-directed learning	25.3% (20)	**32.9% (26)**	25.3% (20)	16.5% (13)	79
Video/films	17.3% (14)	**43.2% (35)**	29.6% (24)	9.9% (8)	81
Case study	13.2% (10)	15.8% (12)	32.9% (25)	**38.2% (29)**	76
Practical assignments	**82.2% (74)**	7.8% (7)	3.3% (3)	6.7% (6)	90
				answered question	**91**
				skipped question	**13**

20. If you would like to add any additional information, please use the box below.

	Response Count
	10
answered question	**10**
skipped question	**94**

Appendix I: Summary of responses to questionnaire by Fáilte Ireland trainers

FET Trainer Profile Survey

1. Are you male or female?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	**85.7%**	**6**
Female	14.3%	1
answered question		7
skipped question		0

2. Which age range do you fall into?

	Response Percent	Response Count
20-24	0.0%	0
25-34	14.3%	1
35-44	**57.1%**	**4**
45-54	14.3%	1
55-64	14.3%	1
65+	0.0%	0
answered question		7
skipped question		0

3. What organisation do you work for?

	Response Percent	Response Count
FAS	0.0%	0
Community Training Centre	0.0%	0
Senior Traveller Training Centre	0.0%	0
Teagasc	0.0%	0
Failte Ireland	**100.0%**	**7**
Youthreach	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

4. Which of the following best describes your type of employment?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Permanent full-time	**71.4%**	**5**
Permanent part-time	14.3%	1
Temporary full-time	14.3%	1
Temporary part-time	0.0%	0
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

5. What is your job title?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Teacher	0.0%	0
Trainer	0.0%	0
Instructor	**100.0%**	**7**
Tutor	0.0%	0
Facilitator	0.0%	0
Lecturer	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

6. Which of the following best describes your FET field?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Apprenticeship	20.0%	1
Personal development	0.0%	0
General education	0.0%	0
Vocational Skills Development	**80.0%**	**4**
Literacy/Numeracy	0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)	2
	answered question	**5**
	skipped question	**2**

7. How long have you worked as a further education and training (FET) practitioner?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years	**28.6%**	**2**
5-10 years	14.3%	1
11-20 years	**28.6%**	**2**
21-30 years	**28.6%**	**2**
More than 30 years	0.0%	0
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

8. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years industrial or commercial experience, other than teaching/training experience, did you have?

	Response Percent	Response Count
None	0.0%	0
Less than 5 years	14.3%	1
5-10 years	14.3%	1
More than 10 years	**71.4%**	**5**
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

9. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years teaching/training experience did you have?

	None	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years	Response Count
Full-time teaching/training experience	**75.0% (3)**	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (1)	4
Part-time teaching/training experience	0.0% (0)	**66.7% (2)**	33.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	3
				answered question	7
				skipped question	0

10. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	**28.6%**	**2**
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	0.0%	0
Third level certificate	**28.6%**	**2**
Third level diploma	14.3%	1
Undergraduate degree	**28.6%**	**2**
Masters degree	0.0%	0
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications when recruited	0.0%	0
	answered question	7
	skipped question	0

11. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any training/teaching qualifications that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Diploma in Training/Education	14.3%	1
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	14.3%	1
Masters Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications when recruited	**71.4%**	**5**
	Other (please specify)	0
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

12. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	0.0%	0
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	0.0%	0
Third level certificate	0.0%	0
Third level diploma 	14.3%	1
Degree 	**42.9%**	**3**
Masters degree 	28.6%	2
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications achieved since commencing 	14.3%	1
answered question		**7**
skipped question		**0**

13. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any teaching/training qualifications you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	**28.6%**	**2**
Diploma in Training/Education	14.3%	1
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergrad Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Masters Degree in Training/Education	**28.6%**	**2**
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications achieved since commencing	**28.6%**	**2**
Other (please specify)		1
answered question		**7**
skipped question		**0**

14. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	0.0%	0
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	0.0%	0
Third level certificate	0.0%	0
Third level diploma	0.0%	0
Degree	0.0%	0
Masters degree	14.3%	1
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications being undertaken	**85.7%**	**6**
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

15. Please indicate any teaching/training qualification you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Diploma in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Masters Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
None being undertaken	**100.0%**	**7**
Other (please specify)		1
answered question		**7**
skipped question		**0**

16. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	0.0%	0
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	0.0%	0
Third level certificate	0.0%	0
Third level diploma	0.0%	0
Degree	0.0%	0
Masters degree	**42.9%**	**3**
Doctoral degree	28.6%	2
None	28.6%	2
	answered question	**7**
	skipped question	**0**

17. Please indicate any teaching/training qualifications you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Diploma in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Masters Degree in Training/Education	**57.1%**	**4**
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	14.3%	1
None	28.6%	2
Other (please specify)		0
answered question		**7**
skipped question		**0**

18. Please indicate which of the following FET functions you carry out

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Teaching/training groups	**100.0% (7)**	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	**50.0% (3)**	33.3% (2)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	6
Administering/marking assessments and tests	**66.7% (4)**	33.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6
Assessing individual learners needs	**80.0% (4)**	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5
Developing individual learning plan with learners	**50.0% (3)**	33.3% (2)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	6
Group sessions to review learning	**50.0% (3)**	16.7% (1)	33.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	6
One-to-one sessions to review learning	**66.7% (4)**	33.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6
Curriculum development	0.0% (0)	**60.0% (3)**	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	5
				answered question	**7**
				skipped question	**0**

19. Please indicate how often you use the following teaching/training methods

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Talk	**100.0% (7)**	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7
Demonstration	**71.4% (5)**	28.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7
Role play	**42.9% (3)**	28.6% (2)	28.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	7
Games	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	**50.0% (3)**	6
Group discussion	42.9% (3)	**57.1% (4)**	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7
Group work	**80.0% (4)**	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5
Computer based training	14.3% (1)	28.6% (2)	**42.9% (3)**	14.3% (1)	7
Self-directed learning	14.3% (1)	**42.9% (3)**	28.6% (2)	14.3% (1)	7
Video/films	14.3% (1)	**71.4% (5)**	14.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	7
Case study	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	**83.3% (5)**	16.7% (1)	6
Practical assignments	**66.7% (4)**	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	6
				answered question	**7**
				skipped question	**0**

20. If you would like to add any additional information, please use the box below.

	Response Count
	1
answered question	**1**
skipped question	**6**

Appendix J: Summary of responses to questionnaire by Community Training Centre trainers

FET Trainer Profile Survey

1. Are you male or female?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	**53.5%**	**23**
Female	46.5%	20
answered question		**43**
skipped question		**0**

2. Which age range do you fall into?

	Response Percent	Response Count
20-24	0.0%	0
25-34	11.9%	5
35-44	**42.9%**	**18**
45-54	31.0%	13
55-64	14.3%	6
65+	0.0%	0
answered question		**42**
skipped question		**1**

3. What organisation do you work for?

	Response Percent	Response Count
FAS	0.0%	0
Community Training Centre	**100.0%**	**43**
Senior Traveller Training Centre	0.0%	0
Teagasc	0.0%	0
Failte Ireland	0.0%	0
Youthreach	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	answered question	**43**
	skipped question	**0**

4. Which of the following best describes your type of employment?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Permanent full-time	**81.0%**	**34**
Permanent part-time	11.9%	5
Temporary full-time	4.8%	2
Temporary part-time	2.4%	1
	answered question	**42**
	skipped question	**1**

5. What is your job title?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Teacher	4.9%	2
Trainer	4.9%	2
Instructor	**65.9%**	**27**
Tutor	7.3%	3
Facilitator	4.9%	2
Lecturer	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	12.2%	5
	answered question	**41**
	skipped question	**2**

6. Which of the following best describes your FET field?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Apprenticeship	8.3%	3
Personal development	13.9%	5
General education	19.4%	7
Vocational Skills Development	**41.7%**	**15**
Literacy/Numeracy	16.7%	6
	Other (please specify)	11
	answered question	**36**
	skipped question	**7**

7. How long have you worked as a further education and training (FET) practitioner?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 years	19.5%	8
5-10 years	**29.3%**	**12**
11-20 years	22.0%	9
21-30 years	**29.3%**	**12**
More than 30 years	0.0%	0
	answered question	**41**
	skipped question	**2**

8. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years industrial or commercial experience, other than teaching/training experience, did you have?

	Response Percent	Response Count
None	17.9%	7
Less than 5 years	20.5%	8
5-10 years	**43.6%**	**17**
More than 10 years	17.9%	7
	answered question	**39**
	skipped question	**4**

9. Before you were recruited as a FET practitioner, how many years teaching/training experience did you have?

	None	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years	Response Count
Full-time teaching/training experience	25.0% (7)	**42.9% (12)**	25.0% (7)	7.1% (2)	28
Part-time teaching/training experience	14.3% (2)	**64.3% (9)**	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	14
				answered question	**38**
				skipped question	**5**

10. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	21.1%	8
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	10.5%	4
Third level certificate	10.5%	4
Third level diploma	15.8%	6
Undergraduate degree	**26.3%**	**10**
Masters degree	7.9%	3
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications when recruited	7.9%	3
	answered question	**38**
	skipped question	**5**

11. On the day you started in the FET sector, what was the highest level of any training/teaching qualifications that you had?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	17.1%	6
Diploma in Training/Education	5.7%	2
Higher Diploma in Education	14.3%	5
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	8.6%	3
Masters Degree in Training/Education	8.6%	3
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications when recruited	**45.7%**	**16**
Other (please specify)		5
answered question		**35**
skipped question		**8**

12. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any vocational/technical qualifications, other than teaching/training, you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	10.5%	4
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	2.6%	1
Third level certificate	15.8%	6
Third level diploma	15.8%	6
Degree	18.4%	7
Masters degree	2.6%	1
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications achieved since commencing	**34.2%**	**13**
	answered question	**38**
	skipped question	**5**

13. Since you started as a FET practitioner, what is the highest level of any teaching/training qualifications you may have achieved?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	13.9%	5
Diploma in Training/Education	19.4%	7
Higher Diploma in Education	5.6%	2
Undergrad Degree in Training/Education	22.2%	8
Masters Degree in Training/Education	2.8%	1
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
No teaching/training qualifications achieved since commencing	**36.1%**	**13**
Other (please specify)		0
answered question		**36**
skipped question		**7**

14. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	0.0%	0
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	2.8%	1
Third level certificate	11.1%	4
Third level diploma	2.8%	1
Degree	11.1%	4
Masters degree	0.0%	0
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
No vocational/technical qualifications being undertaken	**72.2%**	**26**
	answered question	**36**
	skipped question	**7**

15. Please indicate any teaching/training qualification you may currently be undertaking

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Diploma in Training/Education	12.1%	4
Higher Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	9.1%	3
Masters Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	0.0%	0
None being undertaken	**78.8%**	**26**
Other (please specify)		4
answered question		**33**
skipped question		**10**

16. Please indicate any vocational/technical qualification, other than teaching, you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Craft, technical or vocational certificate	0.0%	0
Craft, technical or vocational diploma	5.3%	2
Third level certificate	2.6%	1
Third level diploma	7.9%	3
Degree	10.5%	4
Masters degree	**36.8%**	**14**
Doctoral degree	0.0%	0
None	**36.8%**	**14**
	answered question	**38**
	skipped question	**5**

17. Please indicate any teaching/training qualifications you would be interested in undertaking in the future

	Response Percent	Response Count
Certificate in Training/Education	2.9%	1
Diploma in Training/Education	11.4%	4
Higher Diploma in Education	2.9%	1
Undergraduate Degree in Training/Education	11.4%	4
Masters Degree in Training/Education	**34.3%**	**12**
Doctoral Degree in Training/Education	2.9%	1
None	**34.3%**	**12**
Other (please specify)		3
answered question		**35**
skipped question		**8**

18. Please indicate which of the following FET functions you carry out

	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Teaching/training groups	**91.4% (32)**	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	35
Teaching/training on one-to-one basis	**45.5% (15)**	42.4% (14)	9.1% (3)	3.0% (1)	33
Administering/marking assessments and tests	34.3% (12)	**45.7% (16)**	17.1% (6)	2.9% (1)	35
Assessing individual learners needs	**51.4% (19)**	40.5% (15)	5.4% (2)	2.7% (1)	37
Developing individual learning plan with learners	**50.0% (18)**	38.9% (14)	11.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	36
Group sessions to review learning	29.4% (10)	**55.9% (19)**	14.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	34
One-to-one sessions to review learning	44.4% (16)	**50.0% (18)**	5.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	36
Curriculum development	34.3% (12)	**40.0% (14)**	20.0% (7)	5.7% (2)	35
				answered question	**38**
				skipped question	**5**

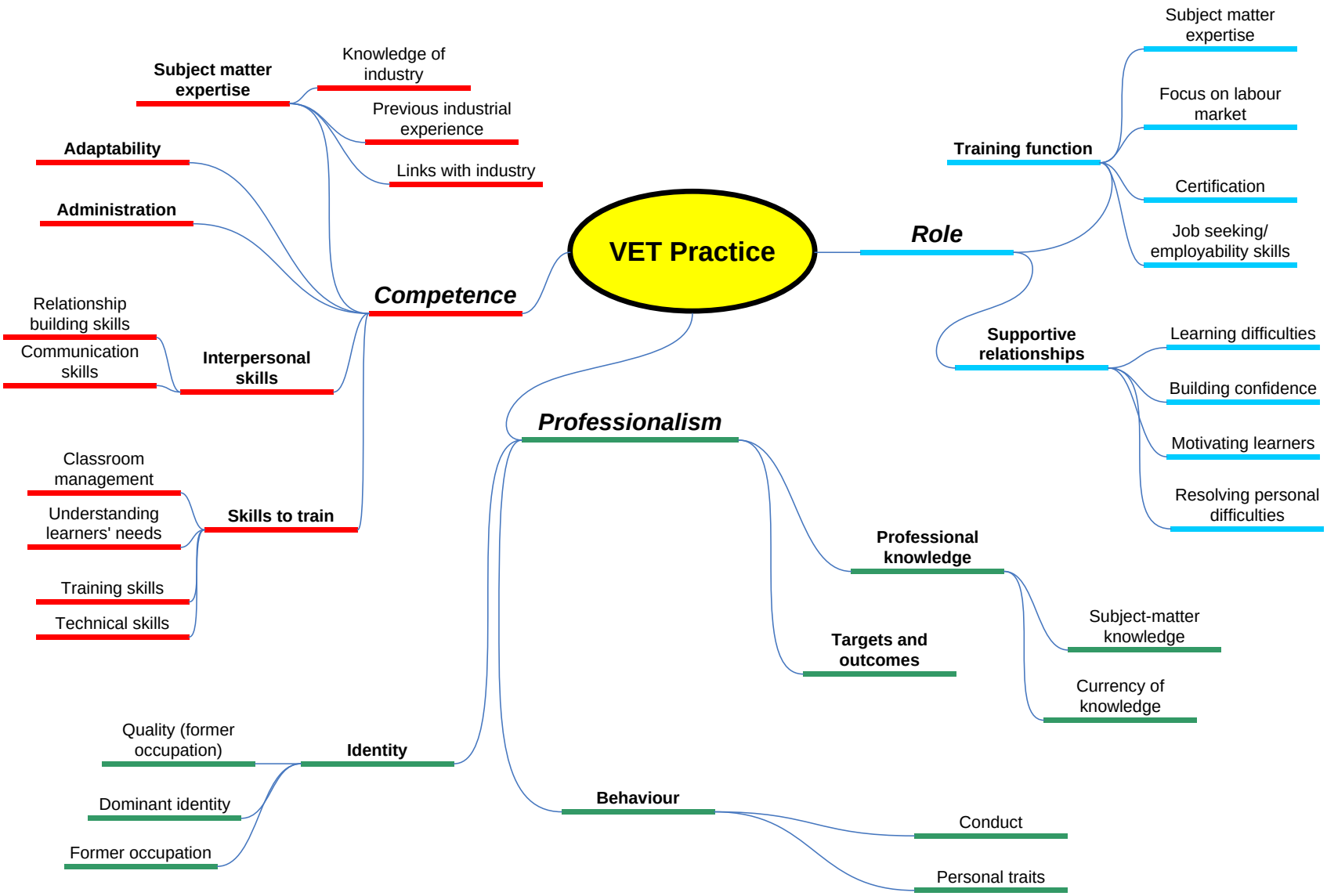
19. Please indicate how often you use the following teaching/training methods

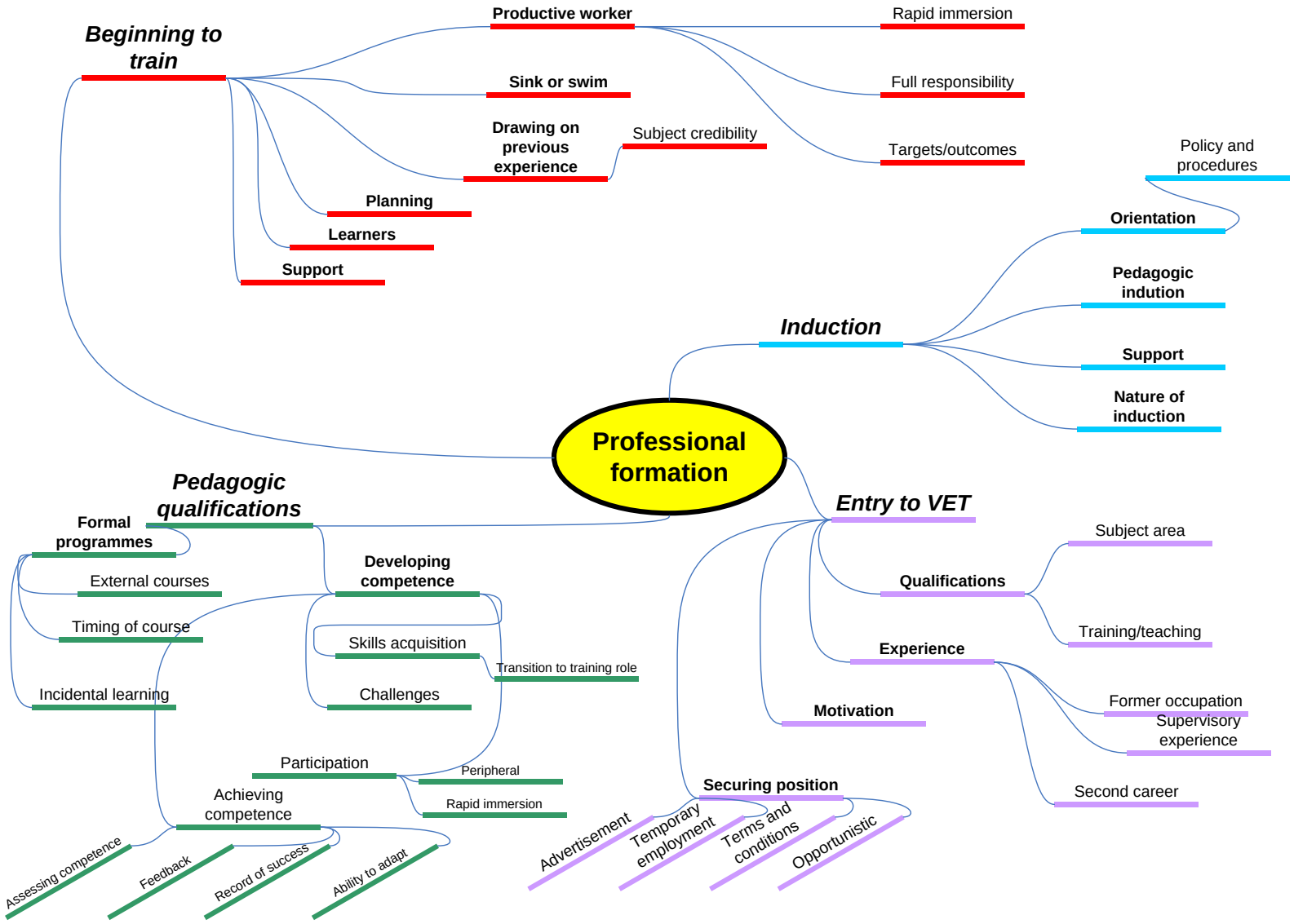
	Very often	Often	Not often	Never	Response Count
Talk	**92.1% (35)**	7.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	38
Demonstration	**83.8% (31)**	10.8% (4)	5.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	37
Role play	13.9% (5)	30.6% (11)	**36.1% (13)**	19.4% (7)	36
Games	17.1% (6)	25.7% (9)	**37.1% (13)**	20.0% (7)	35
Group discussion	**44.7% (17)**	42.1% (16)	10.5% (4)	2.6% (1)	38
Group work	**38.9% (14)**	**38.9% (14)**	16.7% (6)	5.6% (2)	36
Computer based training	**44.4% (16)**	13.9% (5)	36.1% (13)	5.6% (2)	36
Self-directed learning	34.3% (12)	**40.0% (14)**	17.1% (6)	8.6% (3)	35
Video/films	5.7% (2)	14.3% (5)	**60.0% (21)**	20.0% (7)	35
Case study	5.6% (2)	16.7% (6)	**50.0% (18)**	27.8% (10)	36
Practical assignments	**68.4% (26)**	23.7% (9)	7.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	38
				answered question	**38**
				skipped question	**5**

20. If you would like to add any additional information, please use the box below.

	Response Count
	5
answered question	**5**
skipped question	**38**

Appendix K: Map of themes


VET Practice
Competence
Subject matter expertise
Knowledge of industry
Previous industrial experience
Links with industry
Adaptability
Administration
Interpersonal skills
Relationship building skills
Communication skills
Skills to train
Classroom management
Understanding learners' needs
Training skills
Technical skills
Role
Training function
Subject matter expertise
Focus on labour market
Certification
Job seeking/ employability skills
Supportive relationships
Learning difficulties
Building confidence
Motivating learners
Resolving personal difficulties
Professionalism
Professional knowledge
Subject-matter knowledge
Currency of knowledge
Targets and outcomes
Identity
Quality (former occupation)
Dominant identity
Former occupation
Behaviour
Conduct
Personal traits


Professional formation
Beginning to train
Productive worker
Rapid immersion
Sink or swim
Full responsibility
Drawing on previous experience
Subject credibility
Targets/outcomes
Planning
Learners
Support
Induction
Policy and procedures
Orientation
Pedagogic indution
Support
Nature of induction
Pedagogic qualifications
Formal programmes
External courses
Timing of course
Incidental learning
Developing competence
Skills acquisition
Transition to training role
Challenges
Participation
Peripheral
Rapid immersion
Achieving competence
Assessing competence
Feedback
Record of success
Ability to adapt
Entry to VET
Qualifications
Subject area
Training/teaching
Experience
Former occupation
Supervisory experience
Second career
Motivation
Securing position
Advertisement
Temporary employment
Terms and conditions
Opportunistic

Appendix L: Themes and categories emerging from data analysis

Themes	Categories		
Theme 1: VET Practice	Role	Training Function	Subject matter expertise
			Focus on labour market
			Certification
			Job seeking and employability skills
		Supportive relationships	Learning difficulties
			Building confidence
			Motivating learners
			Resolving personal difficulties
	Competence	Subject matter expertise	Knowledge of related industry
			Previous industrial experience
			Links with industry
		Skills to train in subject area	Technical skills
			Training skills
			Understanding needs of learners
			Classroom management and discipline
		Interpersonal skills	Communication skills
			Relationship building skills
		Administration	
		Adaptability	Contextualising competence
	Professionalism	Professional knowledge	Subject-Matter knowledge
			Keeping up to date
		Achieving targets and outcomes	
		Attitude	Conduct
			Personal traits
		Identity	Identity with former occupation
			Quality associated with former occupation
			Dominant identity

Themes	Categories		
Theme 2: Professional Development	Entry to VET	Qualifications	Subject matter area
			Training/teaching
		Experience	Former occupation
			Supervisory experience
			Training/Teaching
			Second career
		Motivation to enter VET	
		Securing a position	Advertisement
			Opportunistic
			Temporary employment
			Terms and conditions
	Induction	Orientation	Organisational
		Pedagogic induction	
		Support	
		Nature of induction	
	Beginning to train	Productive workers	Rapid immersion
			Full responsibility
			Targets and outcomes
		Sink or swim	Drawing on own resources
		Drawing on previous experience	Establishing credibility
		Planning	
		Learners	
		Support	
	Pedagogic qualifications	Formal programmes	External courses
			Timing of course
			Incidental learning
	Developing competence	Skills acquisition	Transition to training role
		Challenges	
		Participation	Peripheral
			Rapid immersion
		Achieving competence	Assessing competence
			Feedback from learners
			Record of success
			Ability to adapt