Primary School Teachers' Understanding of Themselves as Professionals

Doctor of Education

Dublin City University

Supervisor: Dr. James O'Higgins Norman

School of Education Studies

Bernadette O'Donovan

B.Ed., M.Ed.

2013

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctorate 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.

Signed: _____ (Bernadette O'Donovan)

ID Number: 56111762

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all who have helped in the completion of this thesis: the teachers who participated in the study by agreeing to be interviewed; my colleagues in Scoil Assaim for their continued interest in the topic; my fellow students in DCU for their support and some good laughs; my supervisor, Dr. James O'Higgins Norman, for his endless patience, his scholarly advice, and his constant encouragement; I could not have done this without his guidance. And finally, my family: Tony, Derval, Killian, Tiernan and Ailíse who have been wonderful – as ever!

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents: to my late father, who would have been very proud, and to my mother, who is!

Table of Contents

Figures:

Appendices:

Abstract

This research study set out to gain an insight into primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. The knowledge to be generated in this research is subjective as it involved teachers expressing their opinions and beliefs in the context of their own experience as teachers. This places the research study in the qualitative field as it is grounded in people's own experiences and perceptions. The data were gathered in semi-structured interviews conducted with primary school teachers; this reflects a constructivist view of knowledge as coming from experience and interaction with others.

My position as the researcher conducting this study can be considered as an insider researcher as my own experience as a primary school principal provides me with a tacit understanding of the situations and context described by the interviewees; this situational knowledge is regarded as an advantage in conducting the interviews for this research.

The study includes a detailed history of the education system in Ireland which provides a context for the development of primary teaching as a profession. The literature review outlines the key elements of professionalism and considers these in relation to primary teaching. The key question being asked was 'What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?' and this is explored in the interviews under various headings. The data generated are analysed using themes; these provide a structure for identifying the key points being made.

The study concludes with a summary of how primary school teachers view themselves as professionals, what their understanding of 'being a professional' is, and what issues are of concern to them.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis represents research conducted to investigate primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. The study involved interviews conducted with 10 primary school teachers who had agreed to participate in the research.

1.2 Background to the Study

I am a primary school principal and was curious to explore primary school teachers' understanding of what it means to be a professional; I also wanted to discover whether they considered themselves professionals. The decision to use interviewing as the method of data collection was an easy one as I believed that in order to gather the data needed for the study, it was important to hear from the people themselves. This acknowledges my view of knowledge as subjective and 'situated with particular people or within particular contexts' (Matthews and Ross 2010:24); my position as a primary school principal provided 'situational' knowledge as I was researching an area that was familiar to me and of which I had tacit knowledge. The interviews were conducted on a one to one basis, and they involved the social construction of knowledge as interviewees discussed at length the issues that emerged. This co-construction of knowledge reflects the democratic aspect of constructivist enquiry; this research study sits comfortably in this ontological approach.

All of the interviewees were current primary school teachers; how they were selected and invited to participate is described in Chapter 4.

1.3 The Research Question

The overarching question was: 'What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?'. Two further questions were added: 'How do primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals?' and 'What professional issues are of concern to primary school teachers?'

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis comprises 6 chapters and takes the reader from the introduction which explains the reason for undertaking the study through to the conclusion which makes recommendations for the future.

Chapter 2 sets out the historical background to primary education in Ireland and focuses on the emergence and development of primary teachers' professional identity. In order to give context to this development, the chapter begins by looking back to the hedge schools and then traces the changes that have occurred through the centuries to produce today's all-graduate teaching profession. Chapter 3 presents the literature on teacher professionalism and highlights the lack of an agreed definition. In acknowledging the absence of a definition, the chapter explores the concept from a historical and cultural point of view and considers whether teaching can be viewed alongside the classical professions. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of the research study. It begins with a consideration of research methodology and illustrates with a diagram how epistemology, methodology and method are linked. The research design is outlined and the choice of interviewing as the research method for the study is explained. Ethical and political considerations are set out and the low-risk categorisation of the study is confirmed. Purposive sampling is introduced as the method used to identify participants, and the interview process is described in detail in the context of the good practice recommended by Ribbins (2007). Chapter 5 presents the data gathered during the interviews conducted with primary school teachers as part of this research study. The chapter describes the process used to analyse the data and explains how thematic statements were extracted and then reduced to form four themes which were analysed in detail. The classical triangle of professionalism – knowledge, autonomy and altruism – provides a framework for considering the data. Chapter 6 is the final chapter; it draws the thesis together and provides a summary of the findings, and concludes with recommendations for the future.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the historical emergence and development of primary teachers' professional identity in Ireland and explores how the development of Ireland's education system influenced that identity. In order to give context to this, the chapter looks back to the seventeenth century and the impact of the introduction of Penal Laws in Ireland. The chapter continues with a discussion of teachers in the so called 'hedge schools'; their contribution to the survival of Irish cultural and religious identity is explained. The Relief Acts that brought about the easing of the Penal Laws are also mentioned in the context of the changes that ensued in Irish education.

The chapter briefly describes what was happening in Europe and the influence of Enlightenment thinking on the students from wealthy Irish families who were studying in the various Irish colleges around Europe and how their professional and vocational identity was affected by the new discourses associated with the Enlightenment. The Maynooth College Act is explained as a concession to the existing laws which prohibited any exclusively Catholic institution from being established, and as an effort by the authorities to gain control over an influential area of Irish education.

The Kildare Place Society is presented as a provider, from 1811, of education that was 'divested of all sectarian distinctions'. The Society's use of the monitorial system provided the basis for the state's later choice of the Lancastrian monitorial method in the state's first national school system. The background to the establishment of the national school system is outlined, beginning with the Stanley letter of 1831.

The chapter looks at the report of The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland (1868-70), also known as the Powis Commission, and its findings in 1870 that 'the progress of the children in the national schools of Ireland is very much less than it ought to be' (The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland 1868-70, Volume 1:11) and the consequences of this finding for teacher education. Payment by results is briefly described in terms of its impact on teacher autonomy in the classroom; it is noted that the scheme ended in 1900.

The chapter moves on to discuss the changes that followed Ireland's establishment as an Independent state in 1922 and the concerted effort that was made 'to develop the best traits of the national character and to inculcate national pride and self-respect' through the programme that was set down for use in primary schools. This is considered as an attempt to prioritise the establishment of a cultural identity for a newly-independent Ireland; schools and teachers are presented as central to this process.

Primary teacher education is discussed at length and the various changes that occurred from the 1930s onwards are outlined. The 1970s are portrayed as a decade of development in teacher education with a new awareness of the importance of research in education; the introduction of the Bachelor of Education degree programme is presented as one of the most significant changes in primary teacher education. The 1980s are discussed as a time of little investment in teacher education, reflecting the economic difficulties of the time. The 1990s are then discussed as significant in terms of official activity in relation to education. This decade saw the OECD (1991:100) Report commend the calibre of Irish teachers in its statement that 'Ireland has been fortunate to maintain the quality of its teaching force'. The 1992 Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* and the 1995 White Paper *Charting Our Education Future* are both noted as recognising continuing professional development as an important element in teacher education. The 1998 Education Act is summarised in relation to its provision of a legislative framework for changes in schools and their function.

The Primary Curriculum is described as the 'new' curriculum, introduced in 1971, and the 'revised' curriculum, introduced in 1999. The 1971 curriculum is seen as providing a new vision for learning and teaching, while the 1999 curriculum identifies the quality of teaching as the most important factor in determining the success of children's learning and development. Both are considered important elements in the development of teachers and teaching.

Primary teacher competence is then discussed under the heading of teacher assessment. Two aspects of the current system of assessing primary teachers are outlined: the probationary first year of newly qualified teachers, and the whole school evaluation (WSE) process for full staff assessment. Assessment of competence is deemed an important element of primary teacher professionalism.

The chapter concludes with a brief description of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the Teaching Council, two important organisations in any discussion of primary teachers as professionals.

2.2 Historical Background & Development of the Teaching Profession in Ireland

It could be argued that the result of the introduction in 1690 of a ban on Catholic education in Ireland was to make education appear more precious to the general population and, thus, the so called hedge schools flourished as Irish people realised that only by 'preserving some semblance of learning could [they] preserve themselves from cultural extinction' (Akenson, 1970:50). O'Riordan (1983:51) describes hedge schools as schools that were 'usually at the sunny side of the hedge' where the 'transmission of Latin, Greek and bardic lore, usually in traditional oral form, was highly valued'. Carleton (1896), who was educated in hedge schools, provides a more detailed picture of a hedge school as:

> ... a sod house scooped out of the bank on the roadside, and in the course of a month it was filled with upwards of a hundred scholars, most of them males, but a good number of them females. Every winter's day each (scholar) brought two sods of turf for the fire, which was kept burning in the centre of the school: there was a hole in the roof that discharged the functions of a chimney. Around this fire, especially during cold and severe weather, the boys were entitled to sit in a circle by turns....The seats about the fire were round stones. (Carleton, 1896:19-20)

The Report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education (1813) appears to concur with this picture of hedge schools taking place in makeshift buildings, in its reference to a hedge school in Newport, County Tipperary, where the lessons were conducted in a stable . . . 'which a young man had taken for the Summer season'. The stable was often so crowded with pupils that '. . . the youngest were placed in a manger there being no room for them on the floor' (Report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education Inquiry 1813, Volume V:342). Hedge schools were illegal but they illustrate how, in aiming to suppress education for Irish Catholics, the Penal Laws may have fostered a determination to pass on learning despite obstacles.

According to Dowling (1935), hedge school teachers were often poets or former clerical students. There appears to be agreement on this as Coolahan (1981:9) also refers to hedge school teachers as 'poets or ex-students of the priesthood' while O'Riordan (1983:51), places

their origins in the 'dispersed bardic schools and the sacked monasteries of the 17th century'. McKenna (1920:44), in reviewing the history of County Monaghan, refers to the Report from the Lords' Committee in 1731 which notes that 'Owen Gallagher, "an old fryer", instructed many Popish students in Inishmacsaint parish'; this points to a tradition of clerics or former clerics having a central role in teaching in Irish history. Hedge school teachers taught the classics as well as handing on Irish culture and history; according to Dowling (1968**)** they could be viewed as vital in ensuring cultural survival for Irish Catholics. It could be argued that in the minds of ordinary people of the time, the link between the contemporary hedge school teachers and their cultural predecessors gave an authority and an elevated status to hedge school teachers.

Coolahan (1981:9) notes that the government authorities were suspicious of hedge schools 'fearing their potential for political subversion and alleging immoral content in books used'; the reference to books is an interesting one as writers generally refer to the oral handing on of knowledge in hedge schools. Hedge school teachers are referred to as schoolmasters, presumably because the majority appear to have been male teachers, although Carleton (1896:15) refers to a 'Mrs. Dumont…a lady of great charm and breeding' who was the widow of 'a distinguished French nobleman, killed in the Revolution' who taught in the hedge schools in Monaghan and moved around the area teaching for a few months at a time before moving on. Being a female hedge school teacher appears to be unusual but the moving around to different areas was the norm as Johnson (1969:40) points out that mobility was very typical of the hedge schoolmaster, who depended on a good 'catchment area' for his livelihood. This points to the need for a good number of pupils attending in order for the hedge school teacher to make a living and appears to indicate a tradition of, not just turf, as described by Carleton, being 'donated' to keep the hedge school running. This shows how education was accepted as something to be paid for and, presumably, worthwhile. However, McEvoy (1991) criticises the custom of children being taken from school once they were old enough to perform tasks such as herding cattle. The custom seems to put children's education behind the need to work the land or farm, or perhaps it simply implies a seasonal aspect to schooling where children attended when they were not required for work at home.

The hedge school teachers clearly had some status attached to their role; McKenna (1920:44) in his review of the official reports of the number of hedge schools in existence in 18th century Ireland, notes that hedge school teachers had to keep their identity secret and that: 'many of

the teachers followed the trade of a cooper, a weaver, etc., and cloaked their noble calling under the garb of humble tradesmen.' This clearly places hedge school teachers 'above' tradesmen and also recognises the notion of teaching as a noble calling.

The concept of teaching as a calling is one that has prevailed; MacMahon (1992) writing about teaching in the middle of the twentieth century, describes the 'call' as something to be prized. I find it interesting to see it emerging early on in the history of teaching in Ireland; perhaps its origins are tied to the fact that many of the early hedge school teachers were former clerical students who, having answered the 'call' to the priesthood and then abandoned that particular path, turned to teaching as their next vocation or calling. Denoting teaching as a noble calling as far back as the 18th century, appears to be an early acknowledgement of the elevated status attached to the occupation; teaching was regarded as being above 'humble trades' which may mean it was already being perceived as something of a profession. Carleton (1836) acknowledges the academic knowledge of the hedge school teachers and, according to Dowling (1968) gives intellectual vindication to them. Carleton (1836:200) describes the teachers as 'superior in literary knowledge and educational requirements to the class of men who are now engaged in the general education of the people' but also notes that they are 'beneath them in moral and religious character'. This lack of moral character appears to contradict the picture generally painted of hedge school teachers as former clerical students with an implied good moral character; Carleton (1836:200) sees this as related to an 'addiction to good whiskey' which he describes as responsible for the moral failings of hedge school teachers. Despite this criticism, hedge school teachers are portrayed as well-educated, transient members of local communities, where 'funding' is provided in the form of fuel and lodgings for the teachers who educate the children, most likely on a seasonal basis. The reference to the moral character of hedge school teachers shows a historical acceptance that a teacher's morals and values were considered important to the role; this is a recurring theme in the identity of primary teachers as professionals.

2.3 Easing of the Penal Laws

Through the eighteenth century, the Penal Laws against Catholics eased. The Relief Acts of 1782, 1792 and 1793 removed many of the obstacles to Catholic education in Ireland (Coolahan, 1981); thus, Religious Orders dedicated to teaching began to operate with greater freedom. The Presentation Sisters, for example, were founded in Ireland in 1782; the Loreto Sisters were established in Ireland in 1822, and the Sisters of Mercy in 1827; all of these were

involved in providing schools. This indicates a strong Catholic presence in the education of Irish children. The voluntary groups and societies of the time who were involved in providing education were mainly of the Protestant tradition; they included groups such as the Sunday School Society in Ireland, and the Association for Discountenancing Vice (Bowen, 1978). These societies received public funding for their work and their education programmes. The schools appear to have used the Lancastrian model of teaching, as described below in relation to The Kildare Place Society schools and the Model Schools.

With the emergence of new liberal ideas across Europe, it is easy to see why both political and church authorities in Ireland became concerned that Irish students being educated in Europe in the Irish colleges would embrace what were seen as revolutionary concepts (Coolahan, 1981) and bring them home to Ireland. This new enlightened thinking was clearly going to give rise to a changed society as people were encouraged to question, and gather knowledge based on observation and experience. This would, I believe, hugely change the role of teachers as scientific study of teaching began to emerge; teaching up to then had been based on a model that reflected society's acceptance of a structure of core values around faith, tradition and authority (Israel, 2002). This new thinking implied a more secular world. Ireland's hedge school tradition was steeped in the structured society of the time; most of the hedge school teachers were from a former clerical background, others were poets; all would have been teaching in a culture where teachers taught and pupils listened and learned. It is difficult to see how the new enlightened thinking would fit easily with what was the accepted model of teaching at the time. While the authorities were fearful of the influence of students returning from Europe with their 'new' ideas, teachers in Ireland, particularly in hedge schools, must also have been aware of the implications for themselves as teachers. Where up to then, the schoolmaster was regarded as someone with a 'noble calling' (Mc Kenna, 1920:44) whose job was to teach the students in what appears as a lecturing style with a vast amount of rote learning, the emergence of a new emphasis on scientific method and theory exploration would surely have been daunting.

2.4 The Maynooth College Act

In this climate of change, Irish colleges in France were forced by the French Government to close; this added pressure, or perhaps provided an opportunity, to make provision for the training of Catholic priests at home in Ireland. A petition to parliament from the Irish Catholic bishops requesting permission to set up a college for the education of priests was successful

and, in 1795, following the passing of the Maynooth College Act 'For the better education of persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic Religion' (1795:35 George III, Chapter 21), a grant was provided for the setting up of Maynooth College as a seminary to provide education for priests. The idea of a government-funded Catholic college being established in 1795 appears unusual, given that the government's official established church was Anglican; it illustrates, perhaps, how real the fear was that 'new' ideas from Europe could be fostered and spread by Catholics who studied abroad and then returned to Ireland. Providing education at home in Ireland for these future priests and teachers was possibly a way of regaining some control over a section of the education system that was being conducted outside of the authorities' control. If students returning from Europe saw themselves as agents of change who would challenge the status quo in Ireland, their position as educators of young people was indeed a powerful one. By establishing a college at home in Ireland, the authorities were regaining control of, and exerting authority over, what was a hugely influential area. They were also taking what appears to be a first official step into delivering initial teacher education, albeit with priests, in Ireland, and the consequences for the values and vision of schooling were far-reaching. The 1795 Act was quite specific in setting down that approval was given to establish one academy only, for the education of priests, and that it would be unlawful to educate or instruct any person of protestant religion in the Catholic college. This indicates the concession being made as an exception to the existing laws which, up to then, had prohibited the establishment of any exclusively Catholic institution (Corcoran, 1931). In the years before the establishment of state-supported primary schools, the various religions existing in Ireland at the time – mainly Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian – sought to promote their own schools to reflect their denominational values and ethos. In granting funding and approval for Maynooth College, the authorities were not signalling a change in the established practice in relation to schools; Catholic schools were still prohibited from receiving grants, and 'mixed education' continued to receive approval only where the school authority was 'assuredly Protestant' (Corcoran, 1932:621).

2.5 Reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education (1791-1813)

Although the Irish national school system was not established until 1831, many of the ideas and principles had been discussed or proposed earlier. The 1791 Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education, for example, proposed a scheme of parish schools, managed by a committee comprising lay and clerical members of various denominations. The schools were to be open to pupils of all religions; clergy from each denomination would be allowed to give

religious instruction outside of the secular teaching time. The system was to be controlled by a state board (Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Enquiry, 1791). The 1799 Report to the House of Commons proposed an annual licensing process for school masters, all of whom would be required to pass an examination and receive certification in Morals and Ability (Corcoran, 1931). This proposal was agreed but, due to the cost of implementing it and the various other resolutions in the report, was not enacted; nevertheless, it does point to an awareness of the requirement for the school master to be a person of morals and ability and is an early indication of teachers having a broader role than just imparting knowledge to pupils. This recurring emphasis on the morals of the teacher reinforces the image of the teacher as a person well-regarded in society and, as implied by McKenna (1920), with a higher standing than a humble tradesman. The later commission of 1806-1812 made several recommendations, particularly in relation to the control of the education system by a state board. Its strongest proposal, however, was in relation to religion: it recommended 'that no attempt shall be made to influence or disturb the peculiar religious tenets of any sect or description of Christians' (Fourteenth Report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education in Ireland H.C., 1812-13 Volume V:221). In order to fulfil this, it was proposed that religious instruction would be separate from secular instruction; children would be taught together for secular and moral instruction, and would receive religious instruction separately, according to their faith denomination, by members of the clergy.

2.6 The Kildare Place Society

It was in this context that the Kildare Place Society, set up in 1811, emerged as a provider of education that was 'divested of all sectarian distinctions in Christianity' (Moore, 1904:1). The Society received government funding to provide education for children and was active in producing textbooks for use in schools. Schools operated using a monitorial method of teaching, known as the Lancaster system, which involved older pupils 'teaching' younger children the basics of reading and writing. The Society also established its own system of school inspectors, in recognition, I would say, of the need to regularise and adhere to standards in teaching and in learning. In adhering to the principle of non-sectarianism, schools run by the Kildare Place Society were required to have Bible reading 'without note or comment' (Plunkett, 1904:124). This proved to be one of the main issues of contention for the Catholic Church, which originally supported the Society's work.

It is interesting to consider the teachers themselves in the Kildare Place Society schools; using the monitorial method of teaching meant that large numbers of pupils received instruction as older pupils were used to teach their younger counterparts. The teacher's role was one of supervision rather than direct teaching; the monitors worked with groups of children within the large classroom, under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher appears to occupy a position slightly removed from the day to day hands-on interaction with pupils. If we also consider the Society's rule in relation to Bible reading 'without note or comment', this adds to the notion of a lack of interaction between teacher and pupils. A teacher or monitor reading excerpts from any text, not just the Bible, would expect to have questions asked by the pupils; the lack of opportunity, or the absence of permission to ask questions, creates an impression of passive students, and teachers in a lecturing mode. It is difficult to imagine the atmosphere within which these teachers were required to work; they were clearly placed in a conflicted environment where the expectations of the various bodies with a vested interest had to be accommodated, something which can be seen to continue today in Irish society when we consider the current debate over patronage and Religious Education in Irish primary schools (Coolahan et al 2012). It is also difficult to ascertain the level of autonomy that the teachers themselves had; they appear to have been answerable to the Society but also aware of the requirement to facilitate the authority of the various churches and clergymen who had an active role in the schools, while also being subject to visits from inspectors appointed specifically to inspect what was going on in schools and classrooms. The notion of teachers having autonomy in this setting is difficult to imagine.

In 1824, a further commission, known as the Irish Education Enquiry, was set up by the government (1824-1827) to review and investigate the education system. This commission reiterated the recommendation made by earlier commissions that a State Board should be set up to manage the education system in Ireland. It rejected as unsatisfactory the system of providing funding for education to voluntary societies such as the Kildare Place Society. The commission recommended literary instruction for children of all denominations together, and separate religious instruction. In 1828, the parliamentary committee recommended to the House of Commons that a system such as the one outlined by the 1824-1827 commission should be established. The decision to set up a national system of education in Ireland was made in this climate of reviews and recommendations.

2.7 The Stanley Letter (1831)

In 1831, Lord Stanley, Chief Secretary for Ireland, in his letter to the Duke of Leinster, set out the proposed structure and aims of what was to be 'a system of National Education in Ireland' (Stanley, 1831:1). The purpose of the letter was to invite the Duke of Leinster to become President of the new Board of Education. The new Board was to have full control over the various schools under its auspices. The Board itself was to include 'men of high personal character, including individuals of exalted station in the Church' (Stanley, 1831:2). Schools were to be funded by money raised locally to cover annual repairs to the schoolhouse, furniture, the master's salary, and half the cost of books and school supplies. Government grants would provide the balance of funds required. Significantly, teachers were to be trained in Model Schools and a central teacher training college in Marlborough Street in Dublin.

This, then, provided the foundation for the national school system in Ireland - a system that was 'undenominational in theory but denominational in practice' (Ó Buachalla, 1988:22). An important point to note for this research study was that the Stanley letter set out for the first time a system of initial teacher education.

2.8 The Model Schools

Teacher education was generally known as teacher training until the 1960s when a greater emphasis was placed on education as part of the programme of preparation for teachers. The term teacher education was introduced although use of the term 'teacher training' continued and still appears in literature today. The move from teacher training to teacher education reflects a change in understanding of the role of a primary school teacher, from someone who merely needs to be trained in the dispersal of knowledge to one who facilitates the holistic development of pupils and thus needs to be similarly educated him/herself. In 1832, teacher training was seen as an extension of the state-sponsored national school system and the Commissioners for National Education, or the National Education Board, established a central 'Model School' and central teacher training college in Marlborough Street in Dublin. This was in line with what had been set out in the Stanley Letter of 1831 as one of the Board's purposes: to establish and maintain a model school in Dublin and to train teachers for country schools (Stanley, 1831).

2.9 The Lancastrian Monitorial System

The National Education Board opted to use the system already in use by the Kildare Place Society whose method was based on the Lancastrian model of using older pupils as monitors (Lancaster, 1805:6) to 'teach' younger pupils. It is easy to understand the appeal of this form of mass education from a financial point of view; it was clearly an efficient and relatively cheap way of providing schooling to large numbers of children. Ironically, this system which was based on a 'banking' style of learning was being implemented at the same time that Enlightenment thinking was spreading across Europe encouraging a more liberal and questioning approach to learning. However, the Lancastrian system may have allowed some questioning as it was also called 'mutual instruction' and there are references to students questioning one another as part of the learning (Cohen Zacek, 1967) which appears to fit with an enlightened approach. Cohen Zacek (1967:344) notes that 'the curriculum was limited to subjects which were deemed elementary enough not to require specially trained teachers: reading, writing and arithmetic' so perhaps the questioning was part of the rote learning rather than exploratory. The Lancastrian system was adopted in many countries, including France, where between 1814 and 1819, 1500 such schools were opened. Sweden had 500 monitorial schools by 1841. Denmark had 3000 monitorial schools by 1831, and had introduced a requirement that those completing their teaching diploma should have a sound knowledge of the monitorial system (Hager, 1959). Spain, Italy and Switzerland also used the monitorial system. In Ireland, the new National Board adopted the system as it appeared to be a good working model, was popular in many countries, and allowed large numbers of pupils to be taught literacy and numeracy. The system expanded in Ireland as the National Board encouraged pupils, aged 14-16, who had succeeded in the system to apply for monitorships (Coolahan, 2004). These monitors were selected on the basis of an examination by district inspectors and then became apprentice teachers. As the system expanded, the monitors, who were paid, completed a four-year 'Programme of Examination and Course of Study for Paid Monitors'. This involved examinations on course content, and the demonstration by monitors of practical teaching skills (Commissioners of the National Board of Education in Ireland, 1848). On successful completion of the programme, monitors were deemed to be 'teachers'.

This model of teacher training is based very much on an apprenticeship model of training; pupils who were identified as good students were chosen to be monitors and then learned their 'trade' as they worked. Cubberley (1920:664) maintains that Lancaster's monitorial school system 'dignified the work of the teacher by showing the necessity for teacher training', and that the model schools first established in the United States in 1818 were the 'precursors

of the American normal schools'. This is an interesting point as it sees the requirement for training as adding dignity to the work of teaching. One outcome of the requirement for monitors to train in this way was that they began to form an identity as a body of teachers having completed an extended period of apprenticeship.

The model school in Marlborough Street was the first of a series of model schools in Ireland, set up as part of the state's teacher training programme; by 1867, there were 27 model schools in operation around the country. According to the report from the Commissioners of National Schools in Ireland (1834-1836), 'The Model Schools were to be under the direction of teachers of superior attainment who would be specially paid for their services' (Report of the Commissioners, 1837).

It appears that the mixed-denominational element of teacher training and model schools continued to be controversial for the churches. Coolahan (1981:23) notes that the Catholic Church, for example, remained 'apprehensive about the formative influence which the experience of mixed denominational education might have on future teachers'. In 1863, the Catholic Church banned attendance at the model schools and at the teacher training college in Marlborough Street. At the same time, there was concern in England about the costs associated with education; in trying to establish whether money was being well-spent, and in the interest of accountability, three separate commissions were established to review the education systems in England (1858), Scotland (1864), and Ireland (1868).

2.10 The Powis Commission

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland, also known as the Powis Commission (1868-70), found that teacher training in Ireland was unsatisfactory. The Powis Commission recommended the phasing out of model schools, and a move to state-supported denominational teacher training. This recommendation was naturally welcomed by the Catholic Church in Ireland who opened St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, in 1875, under the auspices of the Vincentian Fathers, for the training of male primary teachers. The Sisters of Mercy opened their Sedes Sapientiae Catholic training college for females in Baggot Street in 1877, later transferring to Carysfort College in Blackrock; Mary Immaculate College in Limerick opened in 1898, also under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy.

The Powis Commission Report (1870) noted that only 34% of teachers had received formal training; it recommended that all teachers should have a formal pre-service training of 12 months duration (Report of the Commissioners, 1870); this was a clear move away from the monitorial system of 'on the job' training and was, perhaps, a recognition of the need for specialist knowledge to be acquired before becoming a teacher. This could be considered as part of the process of recognising teaching as a profession rather than a trade; learning 'on the job' would be more associated with learning a trade. From 1883, in the state-supported denominational colleges, the teacher training programme was extended from one year to two years, perhaps a further acknowledgement of the importance of 'proper' pre-service training for teachers The Report also recommended the introduction of a payment by results scheme, a new phenomenon in teaching at the time.

2.11 Payment of Teachers

Payment by results was introduced at primary level following the 1870 Report from the Powis Commission. Coolahan (1981) describes the system of inspectors testing the pupils on what they had learned, to determine how their teacher would be paid, as a crude method of evaluation; he notes that the system 'did not encourage probing for comprehension or grasp of principles, and mechanical proficiency sufficed for passing, and achieving payment' (Coolahan, 1981:29). Burke (1992:37) describes it as an 'accountability mechanism aimed at ensuring value for public monies expended on education'. It appears to reflect the thinking of the time as both the 1858 commission on the English education system, and the 1864 commission on the Scottish education system were in favour of payment by results. For teachers in Ireland, it meant that a programme was set down for each subject and class level; the emphasis was on Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (the 3Rs) and, if students achieved success in these, they could study optional extra subjects, including Irish. A teacher was paid based on his/her pupils' achievements in all subjects which were examined by an inspector.

The system of payment by results introduces the issue of a particular type of accountability for teachers and would, I believe, have encouraged an emphasis on ensuring that pupils could 'perform' for inspectors. For teachers at the time, it would have impacted on their autonomy in the classroom as a clear programme of work was set out for each class level with a requirement that the teacher, through the pupils' performance for the inspector, would demonstrate that what was required for the particular class level had been taught. It is difficult to imagine teachers using their own professional judgement in deciding to teach something

new or different in a situation where it would impact on the teacher's own pay. The payment by results system came to an end in Ireland in 1900.

2.12 Changes in Ireland post 1922

Ireland became an independent state in 1922 and, by that time, there were five primary teacher training colleges in operation: St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin; Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort, Blackrock, Dublin; Church of Ireland College, Rathmines, Dublin; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; De La Salle College, Waterford. Schools were seen as central to the promotion of the Irish language and culture in a newly-independent Ireland. One of the criticisms of the Board and its management of national schools from 1831 was the neglect of the Irish language (Wall, 1969); no particular emphasis had been given to Irish culture, language or identity. According to Coolahan (1981:21) 'The national school system was one important factor in the decline of the Irish language in nineteenth century Ireland. The policies adopted were in line with the assimilation policies typically pursued by colonial powers'. In seeking to address the 'subordinate position' (National Programme Conference Report, 1922:91) held by the Irish language, Irish became compulsory, to be taught for at least one hour per day and, where possible, was to be used as the language of instruction in schools. Singing was to be taught using only Irish songs; History was to be taught as Irish history only. The aim in setting down these rules for teaching was 'to develop the best traits of the national character and to inculcate national pride and self-respect' (National Programme Conference Report, 1922:94).

One issue that would have immediately arisen was the need for teacher training colleges to promote fluency and competence in Irish language and culture. This would surely have impacted on the selection of candidates for teacher training. If proficiency in the Irish language was a priority, this would have limited the access of people from non-Irish speaking backgrounds, and may, in fact, have positively discriminated in favour of those for whom Irish was a first language. This emphasis on ensuring trainee teachers were fluent in Irish clearly prioritises proficiency in the native language over ability in other areas. To understand this, we need to look at education from a sociological perspective.

Drudy & Lynch (1993) describe education as a central social institution because of its crucial ideological role. Ó Súilleabháin (1986), in looking at education from an emancipatory perspective in an Irish context, suggests that 'the essence of education is 'becoming', the

gradual discovery of what it means to be human, the search for a personal identity, an identity which brings individual autonomy within a community structure' (Ó Súilleabháin, 1986:91). In the context of Ireland, with its newly-emerging nationalist identity, schools could be seen as central to that identity and to the transmission of culture. This concurs with Durkheim's view of education as central to socialisation and the transmission of culture. Durkheim (1973) believed that schools were the key place where modern societies achieved social consensus and order, through the inculcation of central moral values. For Ireland, this would be evident in the value placed on aspiring teachers being fluent Irish speakers and immersed in Irish culture and traditions. For a newly-independent Irish state, the need to address the weakened cultural identity would clearly be a priority; hence a dominance of trainee teachers from Irish-speaking backgrounds. Padraig Ó Brolcháin, in his role as chief executive officer for education, set out the new government's policy on national education for the Irish Free State as follows:

> In the administration of Irish education, it is the intention of the new government to work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music and tradition of Ireland, their natural place in the life of Irish schools. (Ó Brolcháin, 1922:127)

For teachers, this appears to reflect a return to Akenson's (1970) view of hedge schools and their determination to preserve Irish people from cultural extinction. MacMahon (1992) provides an insight into the backgrounds of those who entered primary teaching; he points out that 'The subsidised training as a teacher and the permanent salary that followed – the 'standing thing' as it was called – appealed to the sons and daughters of teachers, small farmers, and minor officials' (Mac Mahon, 1992:110). This implies that people from a particular type of family background were attracted to teaching, mainly for its security. If we consider this aspect alongside the stated preference for fluent Irish speakers, it is clear that those who entered teaching in the early years of newly-independent Ireland were not a representative group of the whole population but were, in fact, from a fairly specific cultural group; this would surely have implications for how teaching as a profession was perceived. The family backgrounds, as described by MacMahon, are not belonging to the 'higher' professions; teaching, therefore, may have found itself ranked lower down the professions, reflecting the type of people drawn to become teachers, rather than due to issues relating to teaching itself as a profession.

2.13 Changes in Teacher Education

A noticeable change occurred in 1933 when the teacher training colleges adopted a new structure for their programmes. For the first time, a course entitled 'Principles of Teaching' was included; and the former teaching practice model became 'Practical Teaching' where trainee teachers taught in schools near the various colleges for blocks of up to 6 weeks per year, and were monitored by Department of Education inspectors. This framework continued through to the 1960s. Coolahan (2004) noted that:

> There was very little time for personal reflection and little emphasis on extra reading by the students. The libraries were inadequately stocked and little used. The colleges had very little academic autonomy … Lecturers were neither expected nor facilitated to engage in educational research, other than lecture preparation. The retention of scholarly or research interests was a matter for themselves. (Coolahan, 2004:5)

Coolahan (2004) describes this as an almost anti-intellectual sub-culture in the primary teacher training colleges. He does, however, stress the vocational ethos which prevailed, and maintains that a person receiving a 'call' to teacher training was held in great esteem in a local community and that teaching itself was 'a role which held high social status' (Coolahan, 2004:5). Drudy (2001) concurs with this and sees it as a tradition, particularly strong in Ireland, but also observed in other cultures, where the importance of education is recognised and where teachers are valued as 'the bearers and disseminators of knowledge' (Drudy, 2001:363). Other sociologists, including Bourdieu (1973), see teachers as part of the 'dominant classes', alongside engineers, managers, industry heads, and top civil servants. For teachers, their perception of themselves and their place in society also raises some of the issues associated with teaching as a profession; this is developed in a later chapter in this research.

The 1960s saw changes occurring in the teacher training colleges. The colleges became known as Colleges of Education, rather than teacher training colleges, and assumed a more active role in structuring their courses to include educational theory and psychology (Coolahan, 1981). To put this in the context of what was occurring in Ireland at the time is important: Ireland's economy was at a vibrant stage of development in the 1960s; social, cultural and economic changes were occurring. It was probably a suitable time to review what was happening in the field of education. The Investment in Education Report (1965) produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in conjunction with the Department of Education, was a report of research conducted in this climate of review and change. The report

made recommendations for modernising and improving the educational system. O'Sullivan (2006) believes that the report indicated a move away from the earlier approach of viewing education as character building, and a move towards considering education as the key to providing a skilled workforce for a new and modern economy. An awareness of the need for, and the importance of, research into education was obviously emerging as the Educational Research Centre was established in 1966 to conduct research studies on the qualitative aspects of the education service (OECD, 2003). The Commission on Higher Education (1967) recommended changes in the education departments of the universities with a new emphasis on research and post-graduate courses in education. All of these reports and recommendations illustrate a change in what had up to then been accepted as 'education'; this change would directly impact on teacher education and, therefore, affect primary school teachers and their identity. There is a sense of the content of the teacher training programmes being broadened to reflect the future needs of pupils entering the workforce, and also an expectation that schools, and teachers, would prepare their students for life in the new, modern economy. This appears to be the first direct acknowledgement of the link between what children learn at school and their later working life. For primary school teachers, this would have meant a change in their own perception of their function as teachers; schools were to be a part of the process of developing a newly skilled workforce, and teachers had a role to fulfil in that. There is a feeling of primary teachers being part of a larger economic system which I am not sure was evident before the 1960s; up to then, the emphasis appears to have been more focused on developing and reinforcing cultural and historical knowledge. This appears to be a change in teachers' functional role in society.

Alongside this, open competition was introduced for the first time for students entering primary teacher education courses. Up to 1961, the majority of trainee teachers would have come through the preparatory colleges which catered for students from Irish-speaking backgrounds. The preparatory colleges provided free secondary education to Irish-speaking students and facilitated their entry into teacher training. The preparatory colleges had been established in 1926 as all-Irish secondary boarding schools to provide Irish-speaking cohorts to the primary teacher training colleges (Coolahan, 2004). This system was discontinued in 1961 and the preparatory colleges became 'Class A secondary schools' (Hillery, 1961) rather than feeder-type schools for the teacher education colleges. The new, more open entry process would have broadened the 'type' of candidate entering teaching as, up to then, given the emphasis on cultural nationalism in the newly-independent Ireland, and the priority given to

the use and teaching of Irish, students entering teacher training would have come from similar, predominantly Gaeltacht, backgrounds and communities. The closing of the preparatory colleges would, I believe, have given an opportunity for 'non-typical' applicants to apply to enter teaching and perhaps bring a new dimension to what was the accepted profile of primary teachers.

2.14 Introduction of the Bachelor of Education Programme

The 1970s can be viewed as a time of investment and development in teacher education in Ireland. Perhaps the most significant move towards the professionalisation of teaching occurred in 1974 with the introduction of a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree for primary school teachers in Ireland. The B.Ed was a three-year degree programme which replaced the existing two-year National Teacher (N.T.) programme. For primary school teachers, the introduction of a degree programme would have given a new status to the 'job' as the move towards establishing teaching as an all-graduate profession began. It is difficult to ascertain whether issues of conflict emerged between graduates entering teaching with the new B.Ed qualification and their older colleagues who had an N.T. qualification; there were direct consequences in terms of salary as new graduates began at the second point of the established salary scale, having spent an extra year in college completing the degree programme. This issue became controversial in later years and was resolved eventually in 1996, following negotiations between the teaching unions and the Department of Education, by establishing a qualification allowance payment for all primary school teachers.

The introduction in 1974 of the degree programme for trainee primary school teachers occurred in a time of change right across the education sector. Research and development in education had begun to emerge as important. The Reading Association of Ireland (RAI), for example, was established in 1975 to support the development of reading, language and literacy, and also, according to its mission statement, to encourage reflection and dialogue among those involved in education. This represents a change for primary school teachers who were now encouraged to reflect on and discuss their practice; when viewed alongside the establishment in the 1970s of the new centres for the professional development of teachers, it demonstrates a significant step in encouraging and cultivating professional development in teaching. The teacher centres, now known as Education Centres, aimed to support teachers in their work; to provide leadership in education; and to promote educational research and innovation. These changes and initiatives point to an acknowledgement of the importance of

providing on-going development and education for teachers. For the first time, research based on Irish education was becoming available (Coolahan, 2007), another significant development in teaching in Ireland.

The 1980s in Ireland were economically difficult times and this was mirrored in a slowdown in developments in education. Coolahan describes this slowdown and a number of policy 'wobbles' (Coolahan, 2004:9) as almost undoing the progress that had been made in education in Ireland in the previous decade. The Report on the In-Service Education of Teachers (1984) was marked by a lack of government action. The report recommended a review of the B.Ed programme; this did not take place. In-service training for teachers was to be prioritised but no additional funding was allocated to provide the training. Colleges were required to reduce their intake and the report stated that 'The overall reduction in student numbers in Colleges of Education will have to be accompanied by corresponding operational savings in the Colleges and by a restriction in staff recruitment and replacement' (Dept. of Education, 1984:34). The contrast between the period of development in teacher education in the 1970s and the lack of attention or resources given to it in the 1980s is stark; the closing of Carysfort College in 1987, is, perhaps, an illustration of the government's determination at the time to reduce its spending on education in general, and on teacher education in particular. For primary school teachers, the lack of further positive developments in teacher education would have been disappointing in terms of teachers' own professional development.

2.15 1991 OECD Report

The 1990s saw further changes occur in education in Ireland. The 1990s were years of social and economic changes internationally; knowledge-based industries began to grow; migration became a feature of life in many countries; the new concept of a *Knowledge Society* was emerging. For Ireland, these were also years of review and analysis of policies in education. If Ireland was to be a part of the new economic developments and opportunities that were presenting themselves, it was acknowledged that a quality education system was essential; central to this was a quality teaching profession (Coolahan, 2007).

The 1991 review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) affirmed the calibre of teachers and teacher education in Ireland; it stated that 'Ireland has been fortunate to maintain the quality of its teaching force' (OECD, 1991:100). Given that the previous decade, the 1980s, had been a time of non-investment and little development in

education, this positive affirmation appears as high praise for the teaching profession. The OECD report acknowledged that the existing teacher education programmes were providing solid initial teacher education; however, the report identified a need for on-going in-service training. It recommended that teacher education should involve more than just the initial teacher education programme; what was needed was 'a framework in which the elements of induction and in-service play a role at least as vital as that of initial training' (OECD 1991:92).

The report clearly viewed teaching as a career during which the education of the teachers themselves was structured and on-going. The '3 **I**s' of teacher education - **I**nitial, **I**nduction, and **I**n-service - were seen as complementary. Initial teacher education was the remit of the colleges of education whose programmes were continuing to develop in line with new approaches. Induction would then follow in the first year of actual teaching 'as a distinct and discrete phase in the professional development of the teacher with its own clearly-spelt out objectives, procedures, role definitions and resource allocations' (OECD 1991:101). The report described this induction phase as essential for ensuring and maintaining quality teaching. The third element of teacher education was in-service education which would traditionally have taken the form of courses which could be completed at any stage of a teacher's career. The OECD report advocated a broadening of this aspect to encourage the concept of schools as learning communities. The concept of performance criteria being set, and met, by teachers at various stages during their teaching career was proposed, as well as an expanded post-graduate programme for teachers. This 1991 OECD report set out many of the issues which were to feature in later developments in teacher education. Coolahan (2007) believes the report was a major force in influencing the discussions and changes that took place in the years after its publication. The government Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (1992), for example, endorsed many of the points made in the OECD (1991) Report; it concurred with the 3 **I**s vision of teacher education but was more definite in relation to what teacher induction should involve.

2.16 The 1992 Green Paper: Education for a Changing World

The Green Paper (1992) proposed a year of formal induction for teachers after they had completed their degree programme; this was to be a combination of the existing probationary year and a new set of modules to be completed within the first year of teaching. The Green Paper recognised continuous professional development as worthwhile, personally and professionally. Teacher competence was also raised:

> The problem of unsatisfactory teaching must be debated and resolved, including, at the end of the remedial procedures, the withdrawal of recognition if deemed chronically unsatisfactory. (Department of Education, 1992:166)

This appears to be a very strong statement of intent in relation to maintaining standards in the teaching profession; the issue is still topical and sensitive today as the Teaching Council, as part of its remit, establishes and maintains a register of teachers. However, competence is a key part of any discussion on professionalism, and the Government's Green Paper proposal that recognition would be withdrawn if teachers' performance was still deemed to be unsatisfactory despite remedial interventions, was perhaps a reminder to teachers that in teaching, as in any profession, standards must be set and adhered to. The Green Paper recommended the formation of a Teaching Council, a recommendation that had been made in the 1991 OECD Report This was also endorsed in 1994 by the National Education Convention (NEC), a gathering of all the education-associated stakeholders and agencies, which saw the establishment of a Teaching Council as important in promoting 'a distinguished future for the teaching profession in Ireland' (NEC, 1994:89).

2.17 The 1995 White paper: Charting Our Education Future

The Government's White Paper *Charting Our Education Future* was published in 1995 and reiterated much of what had been set down by the 1994 NEC Report, the 1992 Green Paper and the 1991 OECD Report, particularly in relation to teacher education as a continuum which would involve initial teacher education, induction, and in-career development opportunities. The induction programme was to be formalised as a combined process between the colleges of education and schools. The colleges' role was to outline individual profiles of newly-graduated students; schools would then assess the teacher's competence and suitability. Department of Education inspectors would have a monitoring role in the process.

This 1995 proposed programme of induction for teachers did not materialise; it was, perhaps, aspirational. It is worth noting that when a similar format was proposed many years later in 2008, where school principals were to assume a more active role in newly-qualified teachers' (NQTs) probationary year, this was met with concern and resistance by principals, some of whom expressed their concerns on the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) on-line forum in emotive terms, describing the proposed 'new' system of having principals involved in assessing primary school teacher competence as 'unfair; unjust; controversial'.

There is clearly sensitivity around the issue of competence; given that competence is accepted as one element of professionalism, it is interesting to note this reluctance on the part of teachers and principals to engage in the process of determining teachers' competence. An aspect of professionalism is the self-regulation of the profession; teachers' reluctance to engage with assessing competence could be viewed as contrary to the spirit of self-regulation.

2.18 Education Act (1998)

When the Education Act (1998) was passed, it provided what Coolahan (2003) describes as a legislative framework for change. In setting out the functions of a school, the Education Act (1998) required schools to: 'promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school' (Education Act 1998, Section 9d). This implies a broad role for teachers involving more than merely imparting knowledge to pupils; it has strong echoes of the 1991 OECD report on Irish education which stated that: 'Teachers' roles … must encompass not only the instructional, the custodial, the inspirational, and the disciplinary but extend into practically all spheres of life with teachers acting as agents of physical, moral and spiritual development, emotional and mental health, and social welfare...'(OECD, 1991:91).

For primary school teachers, the responsibility for the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of pupils has implications for teachers' own personal values. This is an example of how professional identity impacts on personal life; it would be difficult for primary school teachers to be accepted as promoting moral and spiritual development without being perceived as good role models. The issue of being a role model for pupils, and the various roles adopted by primary school teachers, was explored in the interviews conducted for this research and is discussed in the findings section of this thesis.

2.19 The Primary Curriculum

Primary schools follow a prescribed curriculum. The 'new' curriculum, Curaclam na Bunscoile, was introduced in 1971. The Minister for Education at the time was Pádraig Ó Fachtna who, in his foreword, described the introduction of the new curriculum as '*ar cheann de na céimeanna móra tábhachtacha ar bhóthar forbartha an oideachais sa tír seo'* (Dept. of Education, 1971:7); (a very important step in the development of education in this country). He described it as a guide not just for teachers but for all who are interested in education, and he expressed a wish

that it would provide *'méar ar eolas go speisialta do na tuismitheoirí'* (a pointer, particularly for parents) and that it would encourage parents to have *'tuilleadh suim … ina bhfuil ar siúl ag a gcuid páistí ar scoil'* (more interest in what their children are doing at school) and *'le comhoibriú faoi bhá agus faoi thuiscint a dhéanamh leis na múinteoirí'* (create a sympathetic cooperation, and understanding with teachers) (Dept. of Education, 1971:7).

The minister concluded by saying that he believed that the new curriculum would provide a new vision for learning and teaching and hoped that it would bring new energy and life to primary education in Ireland. The minister's words convey how big a step the new curriculum was for teachers and for parents; they also introduce the concept of parents and teachers working together in educating children. For primary school teachers, this would have been an innovative, and perhaps aspirational, concept as schools traditionally operated with total autonomy in relation to children's learning; parental involvement was not the norm. It is interesting to consider the reaction of primary school teachers to this more inclusive aspect of knowledge-sharing that was being proposed in the 1971 Curriculum; it raises the concept of specialist or professional knowledge, as outlined in the review of the literature. MacDonald's (1995:186) description of professional knowledge as 'only what the occupational group can annexe and hold onto' would imply an expected reluctance on the part of primary school teachers to relinquish their cognitive exclusivity and the status attached to it. It was not possible to ascertain in the interviews conducted for this research whether this was an issue in the introduction of the 1971 Curriculum, as none of the participants had been teaching at that time.

The 1971 Curriculum was set down in two teacher handbooks. Part 1 was a 380 page document which set out the aims and functions of primary education and explained the structure of the curriculum and its organisation. It then outlined in individual chapters the subject areas: Religion, Gaeilge, English, Mathematics, and Art & Craft Activities. Part 2 was a 327 page document with individual chapters on: Social & Environmental Studies, History, Civics, Geography, Music and Physical Education. Each subject chapter had an introduction which outlined the aims and approach, the syllabus for each class level, suggestions for teachers, and a bibliography. Each syllabus was drafted to allow schools flexibility in choosing the programmes most suitable in terms of environment, facilities and resources. During their time in College, primary school teachers studied the curriculum handbooks and, at the end of their training, were required to be familiar with the suggested approaches to teaching the

curriculum content. On appointment to a teaching position, primary school teachers generally followed what had been set out by the school as the programme for the class level, in accordance with the curriculum.

2.20 The Revised Curriculum (1999)

The 1971 Curriculum was in use right through to the 1990s when, following a report by the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (1990), a major revision took place and the Primary School Curriculum (1999) was introduced. The introduction of the revised curriculum was overseen by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and was described by Dr. Caroline Hussey, Director of NCCA, as 'a significant educational development [which] … incorporates new content and embraces new approaches and methodologies' (DES, 1999:vii). Micheál Martin, Minister for Education & Science at the time, saw the revised curriculum as encompassing 'the philosophical thrust of Curaclam na Bunscoile (1971) and the Education Act, 1998' and incorporating 'current educational thinking and most effective pedagogical practices' (DES, 1999:vi).

The revised curriculum identified the quality of teaching as the most important factor in determining the success of children's learning and development in school and stated that 'The teacher offers a wide repertoire of expertise and competence and exercises professional discretion in planning and directing the learning process' (DES, 1999:20). The teacher's role is described as a 'caring facilitator and guide'. The teacher's 'professional expertise enables him or her to interpret the needs of the child and the requirements of the curriculum in order to provide effective learning experiences' (DES, 1999:20). The document also notes that 'It is important, therefore, that the teacher is committed to a process of continuing professional reflection, development and renewal' (DES, 1999:20).

The 1999 Revised Curriculum puts teachers and teaching at the centre of children's learning and, in keeping with what had been set down in the Education Act (1998) and the OECD Report (1991), describes teaching as more than just imparting knowledge; the primary school teacher's role is clearly painted as one that involves personal skills as well as professional knowledge and expertise. The terminology used, such as 'professional expertise', 'interpreting the needs of the child', and 'providing effective learning experiences', appears to empower teachers with a high level of autonomy and demonstrates a change of focus in its approach to

teaching. The Revised Curriculum provides an insight into what was expected of primary school teachers as professionals.

2.21 Assessing Teacher Competence

There are many ways of assessing or establishing competence in any profession. Competence can be viewed in isolation; it is a concept that lends itself to checklists and standards. Whether one takes a functional analysis approach, which concentrates on the functions of the job, or a role analysis approach which includes role/task analysis, or if one uses a personal attributes approach to competence, it is possible to determine a person's competence in the context of agreed criteria. Primary school teacher competence could be assessed in this way but it is difficult to accept that this would encompass the broader aspects of teaching as described and recommended in the Revised Curriculum (1999). Hager & Gonczi's (1991) integrated approach to competence analysis is one that can better reflect the teaching situation. They see competence analysis as considering 'professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of the performance of realistic professional tasks' (Hager & Gonczi, 1991:30). Regardless of what approach one takes to assessing or establishing competence, it is a key aspect of professionalism; it must, therefore, feature in any discussion of primary school teacher professionalism. It is an area that was explored in the interviews conducted for this research. The current system of assessing teacher competence is described below; it is a system that is conducted by the DES Inspectorate during visits to primary schools to assess individual teacher and whole staff competence. The system comprises two main elements: the assessment of a primary school teacher in his/her first year of teaching after initial teacher education, and the assessment of primary school teachers in the context of whole school evaluation (WSE).

2.22 Assessment of Newly Qualified Teachers

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are *'ar promhadh'* (on probation) and under the supervision of DES *Cigirí* (inspectors) for their first year. The Cigirí are expected to conduct a number of visits as part of assessing the NQT. A preliminary meeting generally takes place in the first term to allow the Cigire and NQT to be introduced to one another. The meeting may include an unannounced visit to the NQT's classroom, but will always include an inspection of the NQT's notes and lesson plans. A Cigire sets out his/her requirements regarding notes, at the preliminary meeting with the NQT.

NQTs are required to have detailed lesson planning notes outlining learning objectives, methodologies and resources; these are written in weekly blocks known as *scéim seachtaine*. NQTs must also complete a plan of work for the year - *scéim bliana*. On a practical level, a *scéim bliana* is a daunting task and most Cigirí suggest that the yearly plan is broken down into term blocks to allow for changes to be made as the teacher becomes more familiar with the pupils and their strengths and learning abilities. This also allows for the teacher's own learning and development that occurs as the NQT is guided through his/her first year of teaching.

While the theories and methodologies are covered during the teacher education programme, there is an element of learning 'on the job' initially as NQTs apply, or adapt, the strategies and approaches they have learned in college to their new classroom setting. The issue of 'on the job' learning was discussed in detail in the interviews conducted for this research. The third element of NQT notes is the *Cuntas Míosúil*, an end of month record of what has been covered in all subject areas in the preceding month. This links with the accountability aspect of professionalism in teaching; keeping an account of what has been taught provides a record for primary school teachers themselves, for the Cigire, for the principal, for school management, and, if necessary, for parents. It is an important element of teacher professionalism; keeping a record of what has been taught allows primary school teachers to take responsibility for what happens in their classroom and to be accountable for it.

The Inspectorate has tried to standardise the requirements in order to ensure a fair and equitable system for NQT assessment. The '*Guidelines for Probationary Teachers in Primary Schools'* was published in 2005; it states that:

> The probationary process is designed to ensure that you have a period in which you can develop your teaching skills and can satisfy an inspector of the DES that you are able to teach competently. (DES, 2005:5)

Again, the notion of teachers developing their skills as they teach, concurs with the OECD 1991 concept of the 'Three **I**s' of teacher education (**I**nitial, **I**nduction and **I**n-service). The first year of teaching is an important aspect of building on what has been learned in college; for primary school teachers, a structured induction programme provides an opportunity to begin the development of teaching skills under the formal guidance of the Cigire, and generally with

advice and guidance from teaching colleagues. This collegial support, though informal, is a good example of a learning community in action.

Incidental visits by the Cigire to the NQT's classroom to observe the teacher teaching, and to review lesson plans and notes, take place several times during the year. These visits are not notified in advance. Teachers are expected to conduct their class as they would normally do and to have their written notes up to date. The Cigire provides verbal feedback to the NQT after each of these visits. The Cigire makes notes of any recommendations but does not file a report with the DES. The Cigire may/may not discuss the NQT's performance with the Principal. A *Beagfhiosrú* is an unannounced visit, lasting approximately two hours, during which the NQT teaches two or three lessons, and lesson plans and notes are reviewed. Verbal feedback is given to the NQT. A written report (*beag thuairisc*) of this visit is filed by the Cigire and placed on record with the DES. If the Cigire is satisfied that the NQT is sufficiently prepared for formal assessment, he/she will state this and will give seven days' notice of the next visit. If the Cigire is not satisfied, he/she will conduct a further *beagfhiosrú* and will then decide whether the NQT should be listed for formal assessment. The *Mórfhiosrú* is a full day's assessment, notified in advance, during which the NQT is required to teach all the main areas of the Curriculum. The Cigire's written report of this visit (*mórthuairisc*) becomes the NQT's Diploma; a copy is placed on file in the DES; a copy is sent to the Principal; and a copy is received by the NQT. NQTs achieving *sásúil* (satisfactory) in this report are deemed, at the end of the year in which they have satisfactorily completed the *Mórfhiosrú,* to be qualified and no longer '*ar promhadh*'. In relation to the 'Three **I**s' of teacher education, the NQT would now have completed 2 (**I**nitial and **I**nduction).

2.23 Whole School Evaluation

The second element in the current system of assessing teacher competence involves the inspection of whole schools. This was traditionally known as a *Tuairisc Scoile* but has changed in recent years to a set format known as Whole School Evaluation (WSE). All teaching staff are assessed during a WSE, regardless of the length of their teaching service. The WSE process is a structured framework and involves a team of inspectors visiting the school and assessing, over a set period of time, the operation of the school's management; planning; curriculum provision; learning and teaching in curriculum areas; and support for pupils. All teachers are observed teaching in class, and lesson plans and notes are reviewed and assessed. A written report is placed on file by the Cigire in the DES and a copy is given to the school Board of

Management. Individual teachers are not named in the written report; any concerns or recommendations are noted in a general sense.

McNamara & O'Hara (2008) note that in this WSE System 'Professional and organisational development is prioritised ahead of accountability, and naming and shaming of teachers or schools and comparisons and league tables are strictly forbidden' (2008:77). The WSE, while part of the system of assessment of primary school teachers' competence, focuses on the school as a whole rather than on individual teachers' performance. It does, however, view individual competence in that each teacher is required to demonstrate good practice by teaching lessons while the DES inspector observes, and by producing lesson plans and notes for inspection. Teacher competence, therefore, has both an individual and group element; a teacher may operate in an individual capacity in the classroom but the WSE process and report site each teacher's competence in the context of the whole school and its development. I would see this as making teachers accountable to one another, which is also an element of professionalism.

These two situations: the probationary first year and the WSE are, for the majority of primary school teachers, their only encounter with any form of assessment of their teaching. Primary school teachers who remain for many years in one school could expect to experience WSE every 7 or 8 years. Primary school teachers who change schools may experience WSE more frequently or less frequently. It is theoretically possible to teach for over 40 years and not experience WSE; a teacher in this scenario would, therefore, have had his/her competence assessed during the first year of teaching only. From a professional point of view, this must be considered unsatisfactory, as review and feedback form an important part of primary school teachers' professional development. Dewey (1904:15) described a teacher as a 'student of teaching', that is, someone who continues to learn and develop throughout his/her teaching life; I would see assessment as essential to this process of ongoing development as a professional.

2.24 The Irish National Teachers' Organisation

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) is central to any review of the development of primary school teaching as a profession in Ireland. The INTO is the largest of the teacher trade unions in Ireland and was established in 1868, originally as the Irish National Teachers'

Association, following the amalgamation of various associations that had been formed to represent teachers' interests.

The INTO's objectives cover a variety of areas and benefits for members; its main stated objective is to: unite and organise the teachers of Ireland, and to provide a means for the expression of their collective opinion on matters affecting the interests of education and of the teaching profession (INTO Members' Handbook). This serves as a reminder of the conditions that led to the formation of the union. The national system of education had been in operation since 1831 and a national Board was responsible for the running of the schools. The Board had an extensive list of rules with which teachers were expected to comply; these included tasks such as accurate record keeping, looking after school supplies, inspecting children's hair to ensure cleanliness, as well as cleaning and maintenance of their school accommodation. The Board also had clear expectations in relation to what was acceptable behaviour for teachers outside the school setting: teachers could not attend fairs or public meetings and they could not be involved in any occupation that might 'impair their usefulness as teachers' (Coolahan, 1981:31). There clearly was dissatisfaction among teachers at the amount of duties attached to the school day; teachers' pay was also considered low. In order to address these issues, teachers began to form associations to gather and decide what could be done; the subsequent amalgamation of these led to the formation of the INTO at a time when the Powis Commission (1868-1870) was reviewing the education system in Ireland and reporting that 'the progress of the children in the national schools of Ireland is very much less than it ought to be' (Report of the Commissioners, 1870:xxviii).

Since its formation, the INTO has been closely involved in all issues relating to primary school teachers' terms and conditions of employment. The INTO is also involved in education policy matters as it seeks to continuously improve the education system. A monthly publication, InTouch, is issued to all INTO members to ensure that current issues are communicated and discussed. For primary school teachers, an active and involved union that represents teachers' interests, and maintains a strong presence in policy making decisions, adds to the sense of being a professional. It also ensures that primary teachers' voices are heard in relation to proposed changes and initiatives.

2.25 The Teaching Council

The Teaching Council was established in Ireland in 2006, under The Teaching Council Act 2001, to regulate the teaching profession and to promote professional standards in teaching. The Teaching Council supports teachers in all sectors of education in Ireland, not just at primary level. The Teaching Council's role is similar to that of already well-established professional regulatory bodies such as the Medical Council, for doctors, and An Bord Altranais, for nurses. The vision of the Teaching Council is, according to its Annual report 2009/2010, to be 'at the heart of teaching and learning, promoting, supporting and regulating the teaching profession' (The Teaching Council Annual Report 2009/2010:4). The functions of the Teaching Council are, among others, to promote teaching as a profession; to maintain and improve standards of teaching, knowledge, skills and competence; to promote the continuing professional development of teachers, to regulate the profession, and to establish and maintain a register of teachers. The Teaching Council first published its Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers in 2007 and issued a newly updated version in 2012; a copy is issued to all teachers once they complete their registration with the Teaching Council. The Codes outline the core values which underpin the profession and which span all aspects of teachers' work; they set out the standards of professional practice and professional conduct which are expected. The Registration Handbook 2011 notes that registered teachers have primary responsibility, and are individually accountable, for their professional conduct and practice. 'As a professional, a teacher is answerable for the decisions he/she makes and the actions he/she takes in the course of his/her professional practice' (Registration Handbook, Teaching Council 2011:7).

For primary school teachers, the Teaching Council could be considered as public recognition of the professional status of teaching. The majority of the 'higher' professions have their own professional organisations to represent their interests; before the establishment of the Teaching Council in 2006, the main body representing primary school teachers' interests was the INTO, the union set up in 1868 to provide a voice for teachers in negotiations concerning the terms and conditions of employment. The Teaching Council's remit is a wider one as it focuses on being an 'authoritative, respected voice for the profession and a guardian of teaching standards' (The Teaching Council Annual Report 2009/2010:4). All teachers are required to renew their membership annually and to pay an annual registration fee. The Teaching Council was discussed in detail in the interviews conducted for this research; its role and function was questioned by many interviewees, and the cost of annual registration was raised as a point for discussion by most. For me, this pointed to a lack of awareness among

primary school teachers of what the Teaching Council does and how it impacts on teachers' professional life; this point is discussed in the findings section of this thesis.

2.26 Summary

This chapter has outlined the historical background of primary teaching in Ireland from the early hedge schools through to today's all-graduate profession. It has highlighted some of the key points in the emergence of teachers as professionals. It describes the widespread use of the Lancastrian monitorial system as a method of teaching that was adopted by the model schools in Ireland following the establishment of the new National Board of Education in 1831. The payments by results scheme, introduced as an accountability mechanism and to ensure value for money in education, is discussed and described as a crude method of evaluation. Ireland's new independent state was founded in 1922; the changes that occurred in primary education following independence are outlined, particularly in relation to the new emphasis on the Irish language and culture. The changes in primary teacher education since the foundation of the state are also discussed with the new emphasis on research in education that emerged in the 1970s noted as significant. The establishment of the Bachelor of Education programme in 1974 is posited as the biggest change to occur in modern primary teacher education and is seen as part of the move towards teaching becoming an all-graduate profession. The 1990s are discussed as years when official reports focused on education in general, and teacher education in particular. The 1991 OECD Report, while affirming the quality of teachers in Ireland, noted the need for on-going in-service programmes to build on initial teacher education; the 1992 Green Paper and the 1995 White Paper concurred with this view on the need for a continuum of teacher education to ensure continuing professional development for teachers. The 1998 Education Act is mentioned in relation to its framework for change.

The chapter describes the introduction of the 1971 'new' curriculum and the 1999 'revised' curriculum as important in their contribution to changing the vision for teaching and learning in Ireland. The current system of teacher assessment is outlined in detail to provide an insight into how primary school teachers' competence is determined; competence is noted as an essential aspect of primary school teacher professionalism. The chapter concludes with a short explanation of the role of the INTO and the Teaching Council in primary teachers' professionalism.

This research sought to answer the question: 'What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?'. In order to give context to the discussions and data that would emerge in the interviews conducted for this research, it was important to look back at the history of primary school teachers in Ireland. Coolahan (1981:230) described Irish teachers as 'heirs to a distinguished tradition of professional dedication and service'; this chapter allows us to see the development of that tradition from the hedge school teachers providing their pupils with lessons in the classics to today's all graduate teaching body who continue to do more than 'just teach' every day.

The next chapter provides a review of the literature on teacher professionalism.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to review the literature on teacher professionalism; what becomes immediately apparent is the lack of agreement over what teacher professionalism is and how it can be described or defined. There is no one agreed definition of teacher professionalism; there is clearly much debate over the concept itself and also the issue of whether teachers can actually be considered professionals. The chapter outlines the key concepts identified in the literature and explores how they relate to teaching.

Sachs (2003:6), in writing about teaching as a profession, maintains that it is impossible to find an actual definition of professionalism. In his opinion, 'to seek a fixed position is futile: professionalism has always been a changing concept rather than a generic one.'

I believe some of the debate or lack of agreement is based upon each writer's own perspective or background. Traditional sociologists, for example, look to the historical concept of professions as sociological classifications; more contemporary writers, including Sachs (2001), focus on professions in terms of being either managerial or democratic in perspective, and also introduce the issue of political agenda being part of any evolving definitions of profession and professionalism. Hilferty (2005) sees professionalism as a socially constructed term that is constantly redefined through theory and practice, and also influenced by the prevailing policies and ideologies of a given time or place.

In accepting that there is no agreed definition of profession or professional in the literature about teachers and teaching, I have, nevertheless, considered what the dominant concepts and schools of thought in the literature are. In doing this, I have kept in mind the focus of my research which is primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals.

3.2 Concepts of professionalism

The term professionalism is tied to what a person accepts as the meaning of 'professional'. Many writers use the traditional concept of a professional, as represented by the medical and legal professions in most Western societies. This concept is both historical and cultural in origin, and law and medicine are often referred to as the 'classic' professions. These

professions have codes of behaviour, accepted standards of practice, and recognised expectations associated with their occupations; these have evolved and developed over many centuries (Hart & Marshall, 1992). This understanding of 'professional' is rooted firmly in a sociological approach based on the classification, organisation and role aspects of professions (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000).

In considering this traditional concept of a profession, the literature points to Flexner (1915) and Tomlinson (1978) as some of the writers who use a 'list of attributes' approach to denoting what constitutes a profession. The list of attributes sets out what is required in the traditionally recognised professions and then 'measures' occupations against this list to determine whether they meet the requirements to be deemed a 'profession'. This method takes no account of attributes which may be particular or relevant to a specific profession; this would appear to be problematic in considering teaching, as much of what is required, or happens, in a classroom is, I believe, unique to the teaching situation. What is consistent in the literature on the traditional concept of a profession is an acknowledgement of specialist knowledge, autonomy and responsibility as key elements that characterise an occupation as professional. There is also a sense of an implied status associated with the professions, as evidenced in the use, by some writers, of the term 'elite' when referring to the professions of law and medicine.

Sexton (2007) conducted an extensive analysis of the literature on the attributes of the classical professions. His analysis included writing by Flexner (1915), Parsons (1954), Lieberman (1956), Leggatt (1970), Page and Thomas (1977), Tomlinson (1978), Rowntree (1981), Downie (1990), Hoyle and John (1995), Davies and Ferguson (1998), Shafritz, Koeppe and Soper (1998), Furlong et al (2000) and Breathnach (2000). The first point to note in Sexton's analysis is the time span; the writings included in his analysis cover a period of 85 years; the second point is that the writers were from a variety of backgrounds. Flexner, for example, although a teacher originally, is best known for his work in researching the medical profession; he was the author of The Flexner Report (1910) which is considered a seminal work in reforming medical schools and the education of doctors in North America and Canada. Parsons was writing as a sociologist while Davies and John were writing from the perspective of teacher education. Despite the varied backgrounds and disciplines of the writers, and the length of time spanned by their writing, there were many similarities in what they believed were the attributes of the classical or traditionally accepted professions. Figure 1 shows what

Sexton concludes were the attributes of professions, as identified in his search of the literature.

Figure 1: Attributes of professions as identified in the literature (M. Sexton, 2007)

	Presence of Recognised Knowledge Base	Extensive Degree of Autonomy	Personal Responsibility/ Code of Ethics	Spirit of Altruism	Intellectually Based/ Extended Training	Commitment to On-going Professional Development	High Status/ Prestige	High Level of Remuneration
Flexner (1915)	●	●	●	●	●			
Parsons (1954)	●	●	●	●	●			
Lieberman (1956)		●	●	●	●			
Leggatt (1970)	●	●	●	●	●			
Page & Thomas (1977)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tomlinson (1978)	●	●	●		●			
Rowntree (1981)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Downie (1990)		●	●	●	●	●		
Hoyle & John (1995)	●	●	●					
Davies & Ferguson (1998)	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Shafritz, Koeppe& Soper (1998)	●		●	●	●			
Furlong *et al*. (2000)	●	●	●					
Breathnach (2000)		●	●		●		●	

According to Sexton's findings, the five most commonly featured attributes in the literature on professions are: Personal Responsibility/Code of Ethics; Extensive Degree of Autonomy; Intellectually Based/Extended Training; Presence of Recognised Knowledge Base; and Spirit of Altruism. Sexton sees these findings as more or less complying with Hoyle and John's (1995) own analysis of the professions which can be grouped under three headings: the knowledge attributes; the autonomy attribute; and the service attributes (Sexton, 2007). These form what Locke (2004) describes as 'the classical triangle'. It is worth looking at these attributes in the context of primary teaching.

3.2.1 Knowledge Attributes:

This is the first of Hoyle and John's (1995) headings in their analysis of the professions, and is one element of Locke's (2004) classical triangle. Knowledge attributes would include the body of knowledge or knowledge base required in teaching and also the training or education involved. There are writers, including Lortie (1975), who maintain that there is no knowledge base in teaching; the majority of writers, however, acknowledge that teaching has a knowledge base which is of fundamental importance (Burke, 1992). Sockett (1993) distinguishes between subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Other writers refer to subject knowledge as research knowledge, theoretical knowledge or scientific knowledge but, all are referencing a teacher's knowledge of the topic or subject being taught. In contrast, pedagogical knowledge, described by Shulman (1986) as pedagogical content knowledge, and by other writers, including Leinhardt (1990) and Brown and McIntyre (1993), as craft knowledge, refers to a teacher's grasp of how to teach and also an awareness of the context of the teaching situation, and the values and morals being developed. Leggatt (1970:156) sees practice as being founded upon a base of theoretical, esoteric knowledge. I feel that my own view of teaching would fit with this concept of practice based on theoretical knowledge; however, I find Leggatt's use of 'esoteric' to describe knowledge interesting. If we take a literal definition of esoteric, then this implies that the knowledge is understood by or meant for only the select few who have special knowledge or interest; in the sense of a philosophical doctrine, it would be something that is to be revealed only to the initiates of a group. This links very closely to what Robson (2006) describes as professions ensuring exclusivity. Robson sees having a body of knowledge as central to being recognised as a professional and maintains that keeping this knowledge exclusive is a key aspect of a profession's

status; hence the term 'cognitive exclusivity'. Robson describes a profession's status or social standing as being affected by the extent to which other professions or groups can encroach on its body of knowledge, or where knowledge and technique become separated, or where the profession's body of knowledge is difficult to clearly define. MacDonald (1995:186) concurs with this exclusivity of knowledge and describes professional knowledge as 'only what the occupational group can annexe and hold onto.'

This concept of cognitive exclusivity is unusual in the context of teachers and teaching; it is more obviously associated with bodies of knowledge associated with medicine, engineering and architecture, for example. This points to what some writers describe as different hierarchies of knowledge. Becher (1989) sees a clear distinction between 'hard' i.e. scientific knowledge, and 'soft', or applied knowledge. The professions associated with hard, scientific knowledge, also known as 'pure' knowledge are, according to Becher, afforded higher prestige than those associated with soft or applied knowledge. Nursing, teaching and social work all fit under the heading of professions with soft knowledge. One of the difficulties is that the knowledge base in these professions is not necessarily clearly defined, as noted by Robson above, who claims that the knowledge involved in teaching can sometimes be perceived as everyday knowledge or common sense and, thus, not as highly regarded as more scientific knowledge. Batten et al (1993:3), however, describe the knowledge involved in teaching as comprising 'the complexity of experience and skill that the teacher brings to bear on the classroom situation'.

There is also an element of having to use judgement in applying knowledge in these professions; this contrasts with scientific professions where knowledge is value-free and does not involve a personal aspect in its application. Veugelers and de Kat (2003) believe that education always involves the teaching of values. Hansen (2001) noted this aspect of teaching and described teachers as important contributors to the moral formation of their pupils, and example-setters in terms of norms and values.This raises the notion of what is clearly an accepted or expected extra dimension to teaching. Klaasen and Maslovaty (2010), for example, see teachers who focus only on their subject content as failing in their pedagogical task and having a limited interpretation of their professionalism. This appears to give weight to the argument that teachers do not 'just teach'. This is not a new concept of teaching: Sockett (1993), in describing teaching as directly

connected with human betterment, believes that every teaching act is 'invested with moral considerations'. Sockett (1993:90) uses the term 'professional virtue' to describe the:

> collection of those qualities embedded in the social practice of teaching that are necessary to the professional task and that, as such, form the core of expertise needed.

This vision of teaching builds on Sockett's argument that a teacher's professional knowledge and expertise must be viewed in the context of personal qualities, such as honesty, fairness, care etc. which are an integral part of a teacher's ability to be effective in his/her role. These same personal qualities: honesty, fairness, care etc. are also seen as content for teachers i.e. a teacher will be 'teaching', or helping students to acquire, these qualities. I believe that teachers themselves have this understanding of their 'job' as not just about passing on subject matter. Research carried out by Norman (2002) into pastoral care in schools found that an overwhelming majority of teachers, in this study, believed that pastoral care was part of being a teacher.

This points to an awareness among teachers of the moral and values element of teaching; I am not sure that this is perceived by people outside the profession. Perhaps, this is an example, however inadvertent, of Leggatt's (1970) esoteric knowledge base.

Leggatt (1970:156) noted that 'a long period of education and socialisation' was required for the acquisition of knowledge, if an occupation was to be considered a profession. This fits with Sexton's (2007) findings listing Intellectually Based/Extended Training as one of the five most commonly featured attributes in the literature on the classical professions. Education and training is part of what Hoyle and John (1995) include in their term Knowledge Attributes.Primary teacher education in Ireland has changed from its early focus on training rather than education, particularly since the introduction of the Bachelor of Education programme in 1974, as outlined in the historical background section of this research, and changes and developments continue. Primary teaching has become an all-graduate profession (Coolahan, 2001) with a formal initial teacher education course (ITE) providing the first step in what is described as a continuum of professional development. Primary teacher education is generally discussed internationally as the 'Three **I**s' – Initial Teacher Education, Induction and In-Career Development. The "Three **I**s' appeared formally in relation to teacher education in Ireland in The Green Paper on Education in

1992; the paper proposed the 'Three **I**s' approach as part of the vision for teacher education. The In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) was established in 1992 as an acknowledgement of the concept of a continuum of education for teachers. The Teaching Council in its Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education, June 2011, adopted a new set of '**I**s': Innovation, Integration and Improvement to underpin all stages of the continuum of teacher education. In introducing these three new '**I**s', the Council acknowledged the need for new models of provision to help teachers develop and broaden their own professional knowledge, skill and competencies; the importance of cohesion in order to ensure the various elements along the continuum of teacher education link and build on each other; and the requirement to improve the actual programmes available as part of continued professional development. As part of the programme to improve teacher education, from September 2012, the current three year initial teacher education programme for primary teachers (B.Ed.) will become a four year programme.

What is of interest in extending the programme of education for primary teaching is what will be changed or added. Saracho & Spodek (2003), place teaching as a 'lower level' profession, based mainly on the amount of preparation required to become a teacher; they regard medicine and law as higher level professions. The addition of an extra year to the primary teacher education programme is part of an acknowledgement of the need to allow time in the initial teacher education programme for the development of teachers as 'reflective, enquiry-oriented, life-long learners' (Teaching Council, June 2011:9). This is perceived as not being catered for in the current three year programme. Sachs (2003:73) stressed the importance of developing teachers as reflective practitioners:

> Teaching itself can be seen as a form of inquiry … professional teachers are viewed as researchers of their own practices, capable of producing worthwhile knowledge about teaching which can contribute to teachers' own and others' professional development. Developing the skills to help teachers inquire into their own and others' practice is fundamental to an activist oriented teacher education program.

This clearly refers to Schön's (1983) concept of reflective practice but with a more updated focus, as the literature shows some criticism of Schön's work as being too restrictive as a basis for teacher development (Day:1999) and too backward-looking (Beckett and Hager:2002). Beckett and

Hager prefer the notion of combining reflection and anticipation in what they see as 'judgement making', an activity involving emotion, reason and practice. Hodkinson (2009:159) summarises this newer and broader version of Schön's work as focusing on the learner as a more holistic embodied person for whom learning is:

> essentially concerned with changing the learner - constructing a developing and improving teacher through engagement in learning.

This appears to build on the work of various educationalists, including Fullan (1991), Hargreaves (1998) and Sachs (2003) all of whom describe a 'new' professionalism, also called 'extended' professionalism or 'activist' professionalism in the literature. The main features of this 'new' professionalism are: learner-centred practice; clarity about moral and social purpose; commitment to evidence-informed practice and critical reflection; discretionary judgement; collegiality and collaboration; and commitment to continuing professional development and knowledge creation (Reeves, 2007).

So, while there are clearly variations in terms of what actually constitutes the knowledge base in teaching, the literature in general indicates an acceptance that there is a body of knowledge. The arguments are more focused on what is accepted as knowledge and how it 'ranks' in relation to more widely understood concepts of knowledge. In relation to primary teacher education as part of Hoyle and John's (1995) Knowledge Attributes, the literature shows an awareness of the need to change. The proposed extending of the programme of education for primary teachers is, perhaps, a practical illustration of this.

3.2.2 The Autonomy Attribute:

Autonomy is the second heading under Hoyle and John's (1995) analysis of the professions, and is the second element of Locke's (2004) classical triangle. Autonomy is defined as the right or state of self-government, and the freedom to determine one's own actions, behaviour, etc. (Collins Dictionary). In terms of philosophy, autonomy is understood to mean that the individual human is governed only by its own principles and laws. Coolahan (2001) described teaching in Ireland as increasing in autonomy; it is not clear what informs this opinion.

There are two aspects to consider in discussing autonomy: a teacher's own individual autonomy in his/her classroom, and the autonomy of teachers and teaching, in general, as one entity. Given that the curriculum is set by the Department of Education & Skills there is certainly an apparent 'control' over what is taught in class or prescribed for each class level; teachers, however, do have autonomy in terms of how they plan, organise and teach their lessons. This can be within a whole school context or at particular class levels. Primary teachers generally operate at this level of personal autonomy in the context of whole school planning. At the start of each school year, for example, a programme of work is laid out for the year ahead; individual primary teachers can then set out what they plan to cover, in terms of content, within this programme; they can also decide how they will actually teach this. This indicates an acceptance of a teacher's knowledge base in terms of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge and expertise. Autonomy, therefore, appears to rest on the presumption of a certain level of knowledge.

In considering a teacher's individual autonomy, it is important to place it in a context wider than just the classroom; teachers may have autonomy in their teaching but there are external factors which have a direct influence on this. The OECD, for example, although an international body, indicates how the external 'control' by the Department of Education & Skills can be exercised to determine what a primary teacher actually teaches in his/her classroom. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report 2009 showed a drop in Irish students' performance in literacy compared to the 2006 PISA Report. The PISA 2009 report showed Ireland ranking 17th out of 34 OECD countries, and Ireland's fifteen-year old students, who in 2006 were performing at "above average" level, scored at the 'average level' in 2009. The PISA 2009 Report assessment of Maths placed Ireland's fifteen-year olds at the 'below average' level and ranked Ireland 26th out of 34 OECD countries (OECD, PISA 2009 Results:135). This report was a key factor in the Department of Education & Skills' decision to put in place strategies to improve literacy and numeracy. Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 was launched in 2011. Improving numeracy and literacy standards was described as 'an urgent national priority for the Minister for Education & Skills and the Government' (Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, 2011:14). The strategy includes a section on Improving Teachers' and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Practitioners' Practice, and stresses the importance of enhancing the professional practice of teachers in helping to improve education and learning. A new focus on learning outcomes for

students is prioritised in the strategy; this, in turn, necessitates a change in the curriculum statements so that the curricula will state clearly the skills and competences expected of learners at key points in their education. On a practical level, the strategy sets down an increase in time allocated to Language and Literacy, and to Maths and Numeracy each day; the increased time allocation is to be implemented with immediate effect. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is an example of the external control which can impact on a teacher's own level of autonomy. The PISA 2009 Report studied the performance of 15 year olds, (i.e. second level students) but its disappointing results led to an immediate change in the amount of time primary school teachers, as well as second level teachers, in Ireland were to allocate to numeracy and literacy each day. This illustrates the limitations that exist when describing primary school teachers as having autonomy in their teaching.

The other aspect of autonomy is that of the teaching body as a whole. The Teaching Council can be viewed as part of the development of greater autonomy in teaching; its establishment in 2006 was to regulate the teaching profession, promote professional standards, publish codes of conduct and deal with issues relating to teachers' fitness to practise. This, to me, describes an organisation with autonomy and also builds on Sockett's (1993) notion of the importance of professionals judging themselves on the quality of their professionalism.

3.2.3 Service Attributes:

This is the third heading under Hoyle and John's (1995) analysis of professions and is designated 'altruism' in Locke's (2004) classical triangle. Hoyle and John (1995) include responsibility and ethics as well as altruism in their concept of 'service'. Flexner (1915) considered altruism the most important attribute in any profession. In terms of teaching, it raises the notion of the vocation, or 'call' to teaching which traditionally, in Ireland, was considered almost an honour for a family. Arthur (2003:318) regards teaching as 'a self-giving enterprise concerned with the betterment or good of pupils and society'. He stresses the integral part that values and beliefs play in a teacher's interactions with pupils and sees the teacher-pupil relationship as character-forming, providing an opportunity to promote moral and social development. Again, this raises the moral aspect or character of teachers themselves. Sockett (1993) believes that character can be shown in altruism. Both Goodlad (1994) and Lortie (1975) see altruistic and idealistic people being drawn to

occupations, such as teaching, where helping to form and shape what people become morally is part of the job. Peters (1996) and Tom (1984), in accepting that a teacher shapes what a person becomes, describe the moral good of the learner as fundamentally important in every teaching situation. This reiterates the point made earlier about what is accepted as the body of knowledge in teaching and how teaching is more than merely passing on information. There appears to be general acknowledgement in the literature that teachers are conscious of their role in the betterment of their pupils (Arthur, 2003).

Responsibility and ethics also fit under Hoyle and John's (1995) third heading of service attributes. These raise the issue of codes of practice and professional conduct. While there may always have been an awareness of responsibility and ethics in primary teaching, it is only since the formation of The Teaching Council in 2006 that the process of setting these out in a formal and legal capacity has emerged. The Teaching Council was established in Ireland in 2006, under The Teaching Council Act 2001, to regulate the teaching profession and to promote professional standards in teaching. The Teaching Council first published its Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers in 2007; the Codes outline the core values which underpin the profession and which span all aspects of teachers' work. They set out the expected standards of professional practice and professional conduct. The Registration Handbook 2011 notes that registered teachers have primary responsibility, and are individually accountable, for their professional conduct and practice: 'As a professional, a teacher is answerable for the decisions he/she makes and the actions he/she takes in the course of his/her professional practice' (Registration Handbook, Teaching Council 2011:7). The establishing of professional codes of practice for teaching is clearly a move towards a formal recognition of what is acceptable in terms of conduct, behaviour and standards in teaching and for teachers. It is easy to see how this models the Medical Council and its standards and practices for practising doctors. The majority of the public would, I believe, be aware of the existence of codes of practice in relation to doctors; applying the same model to teaching is a new phenomenon for teachers and the public in general. It is too early in the process to judge how the formal establishment of standards and codes of practice has impacted on the public perception of primary teachers as professionals and whether it has affected teachers' own practice. The publication of the Codes of Professional Practice for Teachers does, however, point to how teachers must reach the agreed standards if they are to be recognised as professionals, and wish to continue as registered teachers. The consequences of not reaching the standard or not

adhering to the code of practice appear to remain untested as yet; there are no recorded instances of consequences for teachers who were found to be below standard.

I believe that using the three attribute headings of Knowledge, Autonomy and Service provides a good framework for considering primary teaching as a profession; it is not, however, the only method found in the literature. Other writers take an essentialist approach to defining what a profession is; this is also described as a criterion approach where a set of criteria is drawn up as the measure against which an occupation can be judged professional or not. Hoyle's earlier work defined a profession in terms of its central social function, length of training, body of knowledge, high skill level, code of ethical conduct, client-centredness, autonomy, decision-making, adaptability, self-governance and its role in public policy-making (Hoyle, 1982). This appears as a list of ideal characteristics or conduct and there are variations in the literature as to what should be included in the criteria. In considering how teaching fits with this definition of a profession, the Hay McBer (2000) report is of interest in that it uses the criterion approach but also takes into account the teacher as a practitioner, and considers attributes in terms of skills, attitudes and actual practice. This, to me, provides the opportunity for a broader consideration of teaching as a profession; the earlier 'list of attributes' approach feels too restrictive and prescribed.

3.3 The Hay McBer (2000) Report

The Hay McBer (2000) UK report on teacher effectiveness is regarded as the first real attempt to outline, in detail, practitioner professionalism in teaching. The report set out to identify what an effective teacher was. In studying teacher effectiveness, the report identified three inter-related aspects: professional characteristics, teaching skills, and classroom climate. The detail of what is listed as professional characteristics is of interest here. The professional characteristics were described as the underlying dispositions and patterns of behaviour that drive what teachers do. They included values, commitments and attitudes and were grouped into five main clusters: *Professionalism*: which included confidence, respect for others, creating trust, and challenging and supporting pupils; *Thinking*: both analytical and conceptual; *Planning and Setting Expectations*: which included drive for improvement, information-seeking and initiative; *Leading*: comprising flexibility, holding people accountable, managing pupils and passion for learning; and *Relating to Others*: which included impact and influence, team working and understanding others. This appears aspirational in its inclusion of a range of qualities such as respect and creating trust, which

admittedly are inherent in a good teacher-pupil relationship, alongside initiative, holding people accountable, being able to manage and influence people and so on. I see the framework of the report as being essentialist in that the essence of essentialism is that it sets out an ideal for professional conduct. The Hay McBer report, while taking a broader perspective than the original 'list of attributes' approach, and basing its criteria on observed and reported teaching, does actually describe ideal behaviours and characteristics. It is, thus, similar in approach to Hoyle's (1982) work but is more specific in that it focuses on specific teacher behaviour. The report talks of teachers making a difference in pupils' lives and notes that outstanding teachers display more professional characteristics at higher levels of sophistication (Hay McBer, 2000). The report, therefore, acknowledges the different elements involved in successful teaching and, in describing the key features associated with this, places a teacher's own attitudes, values and characteristics at the centre of professionalism. I like this acknowledgement of teaching as more than just passing on knowledge. This fits with Sockett's (1993:13) description of a teacher as 'one who helps shape what a person becomes'. Other writers include commitment (Beck and Murphy, 1996), discretionary judgement, care for students, and professional judgement (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998) in their descriptions of teacher professionalism, all adding to the picture of the personal characteristics and values of teachers themselves as central to the concept of teacher professionalism.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) defines a teacher as a person whose 'Professional activity involves the transmission of knowledge, attitude and skills that are stipulated to students enrolled in an educational programme' (OECD, 2005:26). This is a more functional description of teachers and does not place the same emphasis on the affective aspects of teaching. Johnson (1972) sees teachers as not being professionals, given that they do not exercise sufficient control over their services. For Johnson and other sociologists, an occupational group is called a profession 'when it exercises collegiate control i.e. when it is the primary authority defining the relationship between the giver and receiver of its services' (Drudy& Lynch, 1993:90). This is a point worth considering as, in a classroom, the teacher-pupil relationship is one where the primary authority is the teacher; the authority vested in the teacher in the classroom situation is central to defining the relationship between the giver and receiver of services. Many factors, including communication skills of the teacher and pupils, classroom management, mutual respect etc., may contribute to how successful the relationship is but, nevertheless, the primary

authority defining the relationship in the classroom is the teacher. If we look at teaching in a broader sense than just in the classroom, the issue of who is the primary authority defining the relationship is not as clear. There are many stakeholders involved: the Board of Management, which is the local managing authority in the school is the body that appoints teachers to positions of employment in a school; the Patron, a person of authority and, depending on the ethos of the school, often a member of the clergy, appoints the Board of Management and authorises it to manage the day to day running of the school; the Department of Education and Skills, the central and, in many ways, the ultimate authority, prescribes what is to be taught in all schools and also pays teachers' salaries; the Teaching Council, established in 2006, regulates the profession and sets out the core professional values and standards of practice; the various teacher unions take responsibility for ensuring that teachers are allowed to fulfil their roles, as agreed by all the stakeholders. It is difficult to state who the primary authority is in defining the relationship between giver and receiver of services, as outlined by Drudy and Lynch (1993), among all these different stakeholders. The Teaching Council will most likely emerge as central to this issue over the next few years; it is an organisation in its early stages, having been established in 2006, that has focused on putting in place Codes of Conduct and Practice. I see this as recognition of the need to have agreed standards of practice in place if collegiate control is to be exercised.

3.4 Outside the Classroom

Sockett (1993:8) states that 'Professionalism requires that we go beyond classroom performance or classroom activity as descriptors of teaching acts to the complete and complex role a teacher fulfils'. He believes that as well as the individual requirements of character, commitment, subject knowledge, and pedagogical (or methodological) knowledge, there are four dimensions in teacher professionalism: The professional community; professional expertise; professional accountability; and the professional ideal of service.

The professional community refers to the schools and educational institutions where teachers work, and the professional relationships they have with colleagues there. The group has an identity as people working in an educational setting, helping people to learn, hopefully, in an environment of trust and collegiality; in this sense, it is seen as a professional community. Professional expertise refers somewhat similarly to the Knowledge Base described earlier, to subject knowledge and also to pedagogical knowledge. The two together can be described as

professional expertise contained in professional practice (Sockett, 1993). Professional accountability focuses on responsibility. In a general sense, a professional is accountable to his/her client; in teaching, a professional teacher is also accountable to his/her "client". The "client" may be the pupils, parents, Board of Management, Department of Education & Skills, and, in line with current developments, the Teaching Council. Professional accountability for teachers would involve ensuring that agreed ethical standards are met. Professional ideal of service reflects the earlier discussion of a spirit of altruism. Sockett (1993) compares doctors' Hippocratic Oath and lawyers' commitment to justice as similar to teachers' commitment to education. In helping pupils to learn and, therefore, better themselves, a teacher is working with a professional ideal of service. This ideal of service is a recurring theme in the literature on teaching; there is certainly a sense of teachers working to help their students improve in both knowledge and life skills. This appears as an accepted, and yet perhaps unseen, aspect of teaching.

3.5 Ideological Perspectives

A point to note in the Hay McBer (2000) report is its use of pupil progress as a measure of teacher effectiveness; this implies a functionalist perspective of professionalism. Functionalism is one of two sociological ideologies which feature fairly commonly in the literature on professions. Functionalist theorists focus on education as serving the needs of society by passing on knowledge and skills to pupils. Durkheim (1973), who is regarded as the founder of functionalism, also emphasised the less obvious role of education as socialising pupils into society and transmitting core values. If we describe professionalism using a functionalist perspective, the key element is trust. A profession is trusted to carry out a service to society. Society confirms this trust in the profession by allowing it to regulate itself in terms of quality assurance. The profession is rewarded and appreciated by society for its service. The key motivator for carrying out the service is altruism. Placing teaching as a profession with this ideological perspective, appears to see teachers as people having an acknowledged job to do and being trusted to do it. Coolahan's (1981:230) description of teachers as 'heirs to a distinguished tradition of professional dedication and service' concurs with this.

The other ideology featuring in the literature is Weberian (1949) which focuses on the rewards received rather than on service provided. Haralambos & Holborn (2000) see this Weberian perspective in the professions as focused on power, mainly through exclusivity. This concept of

exclusivity evolved from Weber but has been developed by various sociologists since then. It points to the possessors of assets in society; the assets can be economic, cultural or organisational. Those who possess the assets exert and secure their power by excluding outsiders. If an occupation is perceived as professional, the implied status associated with it adds an element of exclusivity and, presumably, an opportunity for increased reward. The motivation from a Weberian perspective would be self-interest, in contrast to the altruistic element of functionalism. I find this a problematic concept to reconcile with what appears to be the more common perception of primary teaching as motivated by the desire to help pupils to learn and improve themselves.

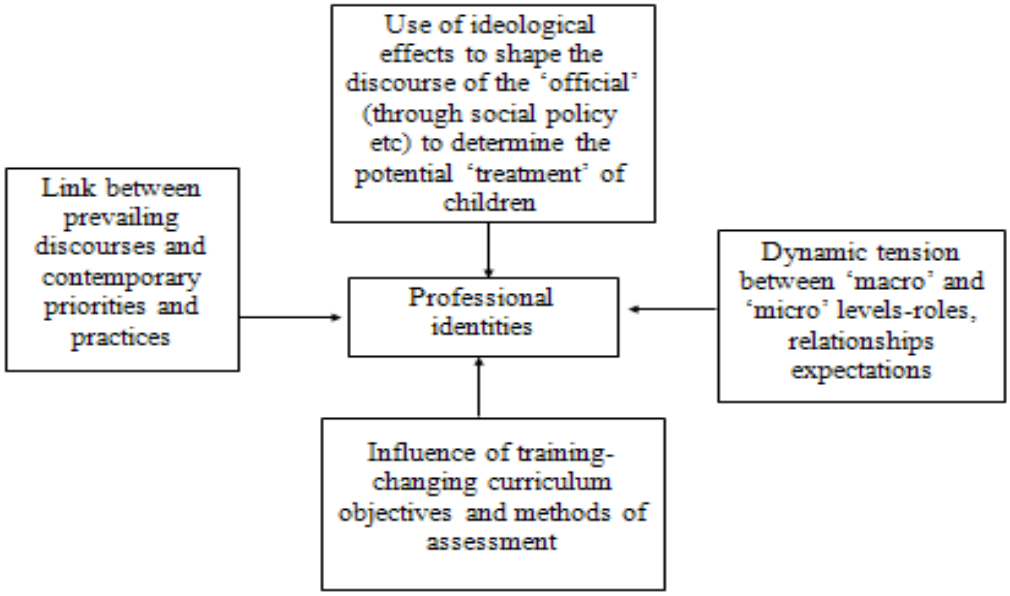
What is clear from discussions about ideologies is that the concept of teaching as a profession is fraught with many unresolved issues. As far back as 1981, professionalism is mentioned as a 'form of organisational control (Ozga & Lawn, 1981:35), a view shared by Smyth et al (2000:45) who talk of professionalism being used to control teachers and also being used by teachers themselves 'as a weapon to maintain and/or regain some control over their work'. This appears to place the lack of clarity over what constitutes professionalism at the centre of industrial relations and union activity; I find this interesting in the context of Drudy (2000) who, in writing about the professionalisation of teaching, noted that Ireland was to the fore in the move to professionalise teaching and that teacher union leaders in Ireland were keen to portray teachers' work as professional. This, presumably, raises wider issues than just control but does imply that having teaching recognised as a profession would add value to the occupation. Sachs (2003:6) refers to the concept and practice of professionalism as 'a site of struggle' and one used by the various stakeholders and interest groups. This implies using the concept of professionalism as something of a bargaining tool or instrument; it is not clear how common this perspective has been in relation to teaching.

3.6 Teachers' Identity

There are no definitive answers to many of the questions writers have asked in researching teacher professionalism. Drudy and Lynch (1993:91) note teachers as a 'significant interest group in education' while Moloney (2010:172) sees teachers as people who 'fit within the established social order, [who] are seen as valuable contributors to society and are important, indeed critical, to children's education and development.' Fullan (1991) places teachers at the centre of

educational change; for him, any changes in education actually depend on what teachers think and do. I find this an empowering but daunting concept of teachers as it appears to place a huge responsibility on teachers in siting them at the centre of education and educational change; professionally, this is a responsibility that is central to who teachers are and what they understand as their role and function. Wenger (1998:162) describes teachers' identities as 'rich and complex because they are produced in a rich and complex set of relations of practice'. The concept of professional identity is raised in the interviews conducted for this research. Tucker (2004) proposed a framework which identifies the factors involved in constructing professional identity:

Figure 2: Factors involved in the construction of professional identity



Factors involved in the construction of professional identity (Tucker 2004, p88)

For Tucker (2004), it was important to establish how ideas, prevailing discourses, experience, relationships and expectations all impact on professional identity. Teacher training or education is presented as just one of the elements contributing to professional identity. Moloney (2010), while agreeing with Tucker's presentation, sees professional identity as part of a broader picture of connections and interactions between personal and societal values, ideals and philosophies. Moloney (2010:172) stresses the importance of on-going support and professional development

as 'central to the development, understanding, sharing and implementation of common core principles that, ultimately, are at the heart of professional identity'; I see this as part of what The Teaching Council sets out as its role in the continued development of teachers as professionals.

3.7 Professionality and Professionalisation

Other terms that appear in the literature are Hoyle's (1980) 'restricted professionality' which describes a classroom-centred autonomy where teachers are free to do their own thing. While sounding as if it provides an opportunity for a broad teaching and learning experience, Hoyle maintained that, in fact, it was restrictive in that it was antithetical to fostering professional knowledge and altruism – the other two sides of the classical triangle in relation to professionals (Locke, 2004). In contrast, 'extended professionality' is used to describe teachers who work collaboratively with colleagues and have a broader vision of teaching. This 'extended professionality' appears to fit with Sockett's (1993) view of teachers as part of a professional community. The Teaching Council's emphasis on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) also resonates with this concept of extended professionality, as it places an emphasis on teachers developing their knowledge and expertise in the context of their own teaching and, by extension, as part of a professional community.

Sachs (2001) uses the terms 'managerial' and 'democratic' to contrast two perspectives of professionalism which have emerged in recent years and which differ from the traditional sociological perspective of professionalism. Sachs (2003:6) believes that this change or development in the concept of professionalism is indicative of 'changing social, economic and political conditions' and the need to respond to these changes. Other writers, including Smyth et al (2000), see the emergence of managerial professionalism with its emphasis on effectiveness, efficiency and compliance, as part of globalisation. As countries compete on the global market, the need for marketable skills to be developed in students becomes part of the economic drive; this, then, impacts on teachers as they strive to comply with what is essentially a business model where efficiency, targets and accountability are priorities. Smyth et al (2000:1) see teachers in this type of educational setting as being 'expected to follow directives and become compliant operatives'. This provides a very different view of teachers and teaching and is certainly a sharp contrast to the altruistic aspect discussed earlier.

Sachs (2001:152) uses the term 'democratic' professionalism to describe professionalism where social justice, equality and values are at the core. In teaching, democratic professionalism would see teachers working together and building alliances with 'excluded constituencies'. This places collaboration at the centre of teaching and learning and appears to be in direct contrast to the earlier concept of cognitive exclusivity. Interestingly, Kennedy (2007:99) sees this democratic perspective as demystifying professional work and, therefore, 'threatening to a profession such as teaching which is still struggling to be viewed as a 'true profession'. I see this as an extension of the earlier debate about whether teaching is considered a profession in the traditional sense of the classic professions.

Codd (1997) provides a good illustration of the different conceptions of teaching involved in managerial versus democratic professionalism. Codd (1997:140) uses the term 'technocratic-reductionist' to describe teaching where no account is taken of the moral dimension involved: good practice is determined by a set list of skills or competences. This is very close to Sachs's (2001) managerial professionalism. Codd (1997) uses 'professional-contextualist' to describe a teacher who acts with moral integrity in a teaching situation and who incorporates and integrates prior learning and knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. This is very close to Sachs's (2001) democratic professionalism.

Figure 3: Contrasting conceptions of teaching

	Technocratic-reductionist	Professional-contextualist
Role model	Skilled technician	Reflective practitioner
Criterion of good practice	Competence	Integrity
Pedagogical aim	To produce the attainment of specific learning outcomes	To enable the development of diverse human capabilities
Administrative context	Efficient management (hierarchical)	Professional leadership (collaborative)
Type of motivation	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Form of accountability	Contractual compliance	Professional commitment

Contrasting conceptions of teaching (Codd, 1997 p.140)

I would see primary teaching as naturally tending towards the democratic perspective of professionalism. However, given the increased pressure on schools and teachers to produce results that, for example, show an improvement in numeracy and literacy following the government's intervention after the publication of PISA 2009 Report, there are certainly areas where teacher professionalism moves to the managerial perspective.

Finally, many writers make a distinction between professionalism and professionalisation. Sockett (1993:9) maintains that the term professionalism 'describes the quality of practice' and quotes Hoyle's (1980) definition of professionalisation as '*the process whereby an occupation (rather than an individual) gains the status of a profession*'. Englund (1996:76) refers to professionalisation as 'a sociological project, relating to the authority and status of the teaching profession'. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) use similar language in describing professionalisation as a mission to enhance the interests of an occupational group. These writers raise many of the issues involved in what is the focus of this research: primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. One of the key questions is what primary teachers actually mean when they talk about being a professional; quality of practice, status, authority, and the notion of an occupational group working to enhance its interests, are all points that emerge. I believe that the distinction between professionalism and professionalisation is not necessarily clear to those actually working in the teaching profession.

3.8 Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature on professionalism and looked at the classical professions in order to establish what the main concepts associated with being a professional would be. The classical triangle of knowledge, autonomy and service was used as a framework for considering how teaching would 'fit' with the concepts identified. There was an acknowledgement of the existence of a body of knowledge associated with teaching; this was found to include soft knowledge, and was generally considered in the context of a teacher's personal qualities. It was concluded that teaching involved more than just passing on knowledge and that the pastoral care of pupils was part of being a teacher. Autonomy was discussed in terms of teachers' own personal autonomy and was found to rest on the presumption of a certain level of knowledge which teachers use in their teaching but which is limited or constrained by external influences such as the DES. The Teaching Council was recognised as representing autonomy for the teaching body in general. The service attribute of teaching was presented and the altruism of wanting to 'better'

people was accepted as an example of the moral aspect of teaching which had implications for the type of people drawn to become teachers. The ideal of service was found to be a recurring theme throughout the chapter.

The Hay McBer Report (2000) provided a list of professional characteristics that described the underlying dispositions and patterns of behaviour that drive what teachers do. The report placed teachers' own attitudes and values as central to professionalism; the OECD (2005) Report, however, provided a more functional description of teachers as transmitters of knowledge, attitude and skills. Functionalist theories showed education as serving the needs of society, and Durkheim was cited as seeing teaching as transmitting values and socialising pupils; this again placed teachers in a service role.

The chapter continued with a look at teachers' identity and how it is constructed. Tucker's (2004) framework illustrated the factors which contribute to that professional identity. The chapter concluded with a brief outline of some of the other terms that feature in the literature including the distinction between professionalism and professionalisation. Other terms that were noted included: restricted professionality and extended professionality. Codd's (1997) table was used to contrast managerial and democratic professionalism, described by Codd as techno-reductionist and professional-contextualist; the latter again pointing to moral integrity as central to teaching.

The next chapter describes the research design and the methods used in conducting this research study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of this research study. It begins with a consideration of research methodology itself and establishes what is to be accepted as knowledge in the context of this research. A diagram is used to illustrate the relationship between epistemology, methodology and method. The aim of the study is explained and the research questions are set down. The research design is outlined and the choice of interviewing as a research method is explained in detail. Qualitative interviewing is considered using a two-dimensional diagram and the semi-structured interviews used in this study are deemed to belong in the 'in-between' category of both dimensions. The ethical and political considerations relevant to this research study are set out; the study is classified as low-risk but, given that it is based in an educational setting, the potential to cause harm is acknowledged and discussed. The issues of reliability and validity are raised and the difficulty pertaining to the concept of validity in a qualitative study of this nature is acknowledged; the notion of trustworthiness is posited as a valid ethical consideration. The use of a focus group in the preliminary stage of the research is introduced as an unexpected step in the research process. Purposive sampling is discussed and explained as the sampling method chosen; the use of a sample matrix to identify possible participants is also explained. The selection of participants is examined and then a detailed description of how the interviews were conducted is given. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of some of the issues and points raised.

4.2 Research Methodology

The aim of my research was to gain an insight into primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. The knowledge to be generated in this research would be subjective as it involved teachers expressing their opinions and beliefs in the context of their own experience as teachers. This places my research in the qualitative field as it is firmly grounded in people's own experiences and perceptions (Marshall & Rossmann, 1999). In choosing primary teacher professionalism as the focus of my research, I was aware that the data I would be gathering would include opinions and feelings based on teachers' own experience; the knowledge generated from the research would, therefore, not be generalisable. This immediately points to my

epistemological position. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and, for a researcher, raises questions about what constitutes knowledge and what is accepted as evidence. Schwandt (2001:71) describes epistemology as 'the study of the nature of knowledge and justification'; this refers to how a researcher's own epistemological position justifies what is accepted as knowledge. Carter & Little (2007:1317) also note that 'Epistemology can be thought of as justification of knowledge'. These writers place the researcher's own epistemological position as central to the choices to be made about the research process and design. I believe that this is an important point to make early on in this study. Matthews and Ross (2010:24) state that:

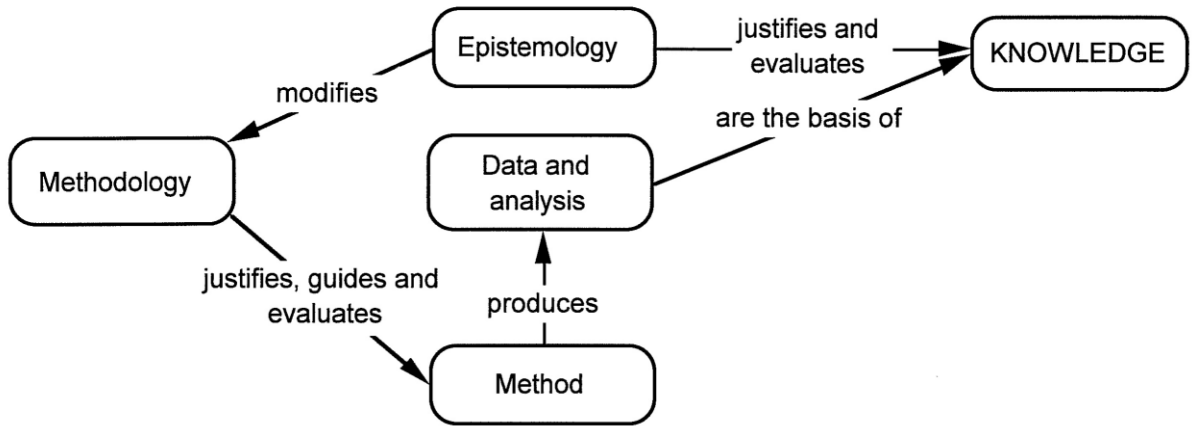
> Our own ideas and perspectives on knowledge, what we know and how we know, will then impact on the way in which we think about and design social research.

Being a primary school principal places me in an insider position in this research study even though I did not include any members of my staff in the interviews conducted. I have personal experience as a teacher, having taught primary school children for a number of years, and, therefore, would have a tacit understanding of the situations and context described by the interviewees. My position as an insider in the research study was acknowledged; attempting to place myself outside the process would not have been possible. Kanuha (2000:442) argues that it can be counterproductive for insider researchers to distance 'the personal-self to maintain the 'objective' researcher-self' as the efforts to distance oneself 'emotionally and intellectually from the substance of the material' may, in fact, result in distancing from the process of the research and the ability to attain 'thick' description. (Geertz: 1973). Hargreaves (1995) sees this insider position as significant to the research if one accepts the concept of 'situational' knowledge and certainty, rather than knowledge as scientific certainty only. I believe that in asking teachers to explore and discuss their own understanding of themselves as professionals, I was not looking for scientific facts and certainty; I was looking for more subjective knowledge. The knowledge gathered and created as part of this research study adheres to Cohen et al's (2000) definition of knowledge as:

> description rather than prediction, induction rather than deduction, generation rather than verification of facts, construction rather than enumeration, and subjective rather than objective knowledge (Cohen et al 2000:139).

Matthews and Ross (2010:24) see knowledge as 'situated with particular people or within particular contexts'. My 'situational' knowledge, as a researcher who is also a primary school principal, is of significance in that it allowed me to understand the context of some of the interviewee responses; an 'outsider' researcher might have required clarification or elaboration of some of the points made. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) see the praxis of social enquiry as an important means by which theories of knowledge can be constructed; this research study belongs in that school of thought and accurately reflects my epistemological position, which, in turn, influences my methodology for this study. Harding (1987:2) describes methodology as 'a theory and analysis of how research should proceed'. Carter and Little's (2007) illustration (Figure 4) of how epistemology and methodology are linked provides a clear outline of how each element in a research project relates to the others.

Figure 4: The Simple Relationship between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method



Carter & Little (2007:1317)

Carter and Little's (2007) summary of the diagram explains this very succinctly:

> Methodology justifies method, which produces data and analyses. Knowledge is created from data and analyses. Epistemology modifies methodology and justifies the knowledge produced.

My position as a primary school principal conducting research that involved interviewing primary school teachers points to Denzin and Lincoln's (1994:2) view that:

> ...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In terms of this research study, the 'natural setting' might have been to interview teachers in their own school settings; however, as the questions being asked related to the teachers themselves and their understanding of what being a professional means, rather than questions directly related to the classroom, the issue of a 'natural setting' did not appear to be important. What was important for me as the researcher was that the teachers involved were comfortable discussing themselves as teachers, and expressing their opinions on the issues that arose, while being aware that I was also a primary school principal.

Mertens (2003:139) describes a paradigm as a 'world view, complete with the assumptions associated with that view'. LeCompte and Schensul (1999:4) have a similar definition; for them a paradigm constitutes 'a way of looking at the world; interpreting what is seen; and deciding which of the things seen by researchers are real, valid and important to document'. Guba and Lincoln (1994) believe that there is no one particular paradigm for use in all social research. They define a paradigm as:

> the basic belief that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (Guba & Lincoln 1994:105).

Ontology in social research is about how we see the world, and what we can assume about the reality and social phenomena that form the social world. From an ontological point of view, this research is constructivist in that the teachers interviewed were part of the social construction of ideas developed and explored. Constructivism sees knowledge as coming from experience, and interaction with others. Schwandt (1998) notes the democratic focus of constructivist enquiry and this concurs with my own perspective of knowledge in the context of this research project. All the teachers involved in this study have experience as classroom teachers; all are currently employed in primary schools in Ireland. Through their interaction, discussion and reflection during the

research phase, they helped to construct new ideas and knowledge. Constructivism can be considered as a direct contrast to positivism. A positivist approach would see knowledge as objective and not taking account of opinions or feelings. Positivism is traditionally associated with scientific method. In social research, positivism would seek to gather information and data based on observable facts; it might also seek to create and test a hypothesis. Positivists often seek to quantify their findings (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) where constructivists seek to produce reconstructed understanding of the social world (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). In taking a positivist approach in social research, the researcher is often situated outside of the process. I believe that this would not have been possible for this study as the gathering of data was an interactive dialogue between the teachers participating in the study and myself, as the researcher. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe the researcher in this type of naturalist approach as being a data-gathering instrument; the researcher's own listening skills and understanding of what is being said are central to the process, and transactional knowledge is valued. This describes well what I was setting out to achieve in conducting the interviews for this study; my aim was to listen, understand and interpret what was being said in a sharing or transactional exchange of opinion and knowledge. Lincoln and Guba (2000) see constructivism as having a relativist ontology, a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Figure 5 contrasts constructivism and positivism and illustrates how they differ on issues central to the research process.

Figure 5: Contrasting Issues in Positivism and Constructivism

Issue	*Positivism*	*Constructivism*
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Individual and collective reconstructions sometimes coalescing around consensus
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion – "building blocks" Adding to "edifice of knowledge"; generalizations and cause-effect linkages	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of "rigor": internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity	Trustworthiness and authenticity including catalyst for action
Inquirer posture	"Disinterested scientist" as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents	"Passionate participant" as facilitator of multi-voice reconstruction

Adapted from: Guba & Lincoln (2005, p196)

The key aspects of the above comparison are the concepts of what is accepted as the nature of knowledge, how the knowledge is gathered, its authenticity, and the researcher's position in the research gathering. This research study fits well with the constructivist approach as the knowledge created was constructed or co-created through conversations, dialogue, and collective or individual reflection. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:22) maintain that:

> All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial.

Given that this research is investigating teachers' own understanding of themselves as professionals, I believe that it would not be possible for me to remain 'outside' of the research process. I am a primary school principal and, therefore, bring my own experience and beliefs to this research study. Sachs (2001:158) notes that teachers' self-narrative is 'developed during their own schooling and then embedded and reinforced in the course of their professional lives in schools'. This was an important point for me as the researcher in this study to remember. Although I am now an administrative primary school principal, I began my professional life as a primary school teacher. I, therefore, can be assumed, as Sachs (2001) believes, to have developed views and perspectives during my own schooling which then became embedded and reinforced during my professional life in school. In interviewing primary school teachers, I might expect to encounter evidence of Sachs' point about teachers' self-narrative, in the responses given or from the points made by the interviewees; what was important in conducting the interviews was to be conscious that my own self-narrative could also be featuring, given my own immersion in the area being researched.

Similarly, I believe that the focus of my research: teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals, is not a concept that can generate objective data; the nature of the study itself is subjective. This aligns the research with Dilthey's (1927) concept of thinking about the social world through lived experiences:

> The way in which a lived experience is there for me is completely different from the way in which images stand before me. The consciousness of a lived experience is one with its

> nature; its being-there-for-me and what in it is there for me are one. The lived experience does not stand over against an observer as an object, but its existence for me is indistinguishable from what in it is there for me (Dilthey, 1927:139).

The research questions being explored in this study were: What is primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals? How do primary teachers perceive themselves as professionals? What professional issues are of concern to primary teachers? The focus, therefore, was on primary teachers' own 'lived experience' as teachers. This links to Weber's (1949:88) concept of *Verstehen* – the social meaning and understanding of people's actions in different contexts. Schwandt (1998) describes this as a desire to understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it:

> An abiding concern for the life world, for the emic point of view, for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor's definition of a situation, for Verstehen (Schwandt, 1998: 221).

This affirms the notion of knowledge as being constructed by the 'social actors' -the particular people, in particular places, at particular times whose social interaction creates phenomena which can be viewed and interpreted (Schwandt, 1998). For the primary school teachers being interviewed for this research, their description of themselves and their experiences as teachers becomes the lived reality for interpretation and verstehen.

Mason (2002), in arguing for the value of subjective research, draws together what she sees as the common features of qualitative research. She points to an 'interpretivist' philosophical position as the research seeks to interpret some experience, phenomenon or view. The method of data collection must be embedded in, and sensitive to, the context in which it is gathered. The data analysis must involve an understanding of the context and detail involved in the gathering of the data. This research study complies with these features of qualitative research. While not attempting to denigrate quantitative research or quantitative research methods, I believe that my choice of a qualitative study and qualitative method provide the correct approach for what I had chosen to study. The use of surveys, for example, which belong in the field of quantitative

methods, would not have provided the rich data which emerged from the qualitative interviewing method used. I concur with the view that:

> The choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context (Nelson et al 1992:2).

As I had chosen to research primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals, the questions being explored were based on people's own insights, experience and opinions in the context of their life as primary teachers. In that context, the choice of in-depth interviews appeared to be the method that would provide rich and reliable data that could be analysed as part of this research study.

4.3 Research Design

The aim of this study was to conduct qualitative research that would elicit individual primary school teachers' insights into, and concepts of, professionalism in order to create an understanding of how primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals. My plan was to conduct qualitative, semi-structured in-depth, individual interviews with a number of primary teachers. The choice of in-depth interviews fits well with the constructivist approach I had chosen to use for this research. Rubin and Rubin (2005:28) cite Charmaz and Mitchell (2001), and Hammersley (2001), in describing research interviews conducted within this paradigm as trying to:

> elicit interviewees' views of their worlds, their work, and the events they have experienced or observed. Rather than looking for the average and ignoring the specific, as positivists often do, interpretive constructionists look for the specific and detailed and try to build an understanding based on these specifics.

By conducting individual semi-structured in-depth interviews with a representative group of primary school teachers, I was not aiming to establish absolute truths, but rather to gain an insight into people's knowledge and understanding of themselves as primary school teachers. Many writers note the importance of ensuring that the data gathered in this way generates meaning. Huberman and Miles (1998:187), for example, list thirteen 'tactics', from descriptive to explanatory, and from concrete to abstract, that researchers use to generate meaning from

qualitative research. In relation to this study, the 'tactics' that were important were: noting themes that emerged in the interviews, and making contrasts and comparisons, in order to ensure that the data gathered generated meaning rather than just description. Blaikie (1993) points out that this type of knowledge can be limited by the fact that we cannot observe a reality; the knowledge or 'truth' is considered 'tentative' in that we can describe and discuss it in relation to theories and concepts. I am comfortable with this concept of knowledge in relation to this research, and also with the more radical position that:

> All knowledge of the world, but particularly the social world, is relativist in time and space; there are no absolute truths (Blaikie 1993:6).

This concurs with Bassey (1999:42) who believes that people have different views of what is real 'because of differences in perception, in interpretation and in language'. The advantage for me as the researcher in this study was that, as a primary school principal, I had experience of the 'world' being interpreted and familiarity with the language being used to describe it.

4.4 Interviewing as a Research Method

Dexter (1970:11) describes interviewing as 'the preferred tactic of data collection when ...it appears that it will get better data or more data at less cost than other tactics'. The 'less cost' element of Dexter's description was not particularly relevant to my decision to use interviews as a method; I believe that for this study the choice of in-depth interviews allowed for the generation of 'better data' as the interviews were conducted in an open-ended way which ensured that points raised by interviewees could be developed and explored. This would not have been possible if I had chosen to use, for example, surveys or structured interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2005:4) describe in-depth interviews as:

> conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion. The researcher elicits depth and detail about the research topic by following up on answers given by the interviewee during the discussion.

This is an accurate description of how I hoped to conduct my interviews with the primary school teachers who participated in this study. I was, however, mindful of my position as a primary school

principal conducting interviews with primary school teachers and the possibility that my own cultural assumptions could be a factor in how I interpreted what was being said. Rubin and Rubin (2005) claim that:

> those who follow the interpretive constructionist approach recognise that researchers also make cultural assumptions that influence what they ask and how they construe what they hear.....researchers do need to be cautious lest they fail to hear the meaning of what the interviewees have said because their own cultural assumptions get in the way (Rubin and Rubin 2005:29).

For Gergen (1999:50), a researcher must be aware of his/her own cultural assumptions so that these can be suspended, if necessary, in order to understand another person's view. Ribbins (2007:208) states that we interview people 'to explore their views in ways that cannot be achieved by other forms of research'. I believed that, in choosing in-depth interviewing as my research method, I would elicit 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and insight from primary school teachers who were happy to spend time sharing their knowledge in this constructivist and interpretive form of data gathering. I was aware that the possibility of cultural assumptions on my part could be an issue as I am a primary school principal and would, therefore, have personal views or experiences of the interviewees' professional world. The decision not to include any primary school teachers with whom I had worked, either as a teaching colleague or as a principal, was made in this context of cultural awareness; it was also to eliminate any bias that might occur in my interpretation of situations described by interviewees. I felt that if I already knew the interviewees as current or former colleagues, it would be impossible for me or the primary school teachers being interviewed, to explore topics with the level of openness required for a research study. I was also conscious that interviewees might feel uncomfortable expressing an opinion if they were already aware, from personal or professional experience, of my own view or stance; I did not want to create a situation where interviewees were apprehensive about giving the 'wrong' answer. In order to maintain or create some element of 'distance', while clearly remaining in an 'insider' position as researcher, I included only primary school teachers with whom I had never worked and who were not known to me, either personally or professionally, before this research study. Reflexivity is an important element in a study such as this one where I, as researcher, am part of

the world in which the study is based. Morrison (2007) sees the acknowledgement of the researcher's presence in the process as a positive element which:

> allows researchers to reflect upon, and even celebrate, their key roles as contributors to, and participants in, the principles of their educational research projects (Morrison, 2007:32).

Nevertheless, I felt that it was important to record all interviews, using a digital voice recorder, to enable me to listen for meaning as I transcribed the interviews afterwards and also to reflect upon what had been said. Relying solely on written notes from the interviews would not have provided an accurate enough record for later analysis and would have impeded the natural flow of the interviews as conversations. All participants were asked for permission to voice record the interviews. I did make some notes during the interviews; these were mainly aide-memoires for me to return to a particular point or to note when a question had not been asked.

Ribbins (2007) lists four types of interviews: *verbal questionnaires*, which are closed response interviews where all answers are predetermined. The interviewee is required to choose the response that best suits. This type of verbal questionnaire can also be called a structured interview and would not have been suitable for this research study as it would not have allowed the interviewees to elaborate on the issues raised. The second type of interview is the *semi-structured interview* where the interviewer has a schedule of themes, topics, or questions, drawn up as a guide for the session. The interviewee is not restricted in the way he/she would be with verbal questionnaires. Ribbins (2007:210) notes that:

> if it is possible to undertake only a series of one-off interviews in a research project, this semi-structured format is the best approach to take.

The interviews conducted for this research study could be described as semi-structured as they were based on a schedule drawn up beforehand. All the interviewees were asked about the same topics; some elaborated more on particular points which led me to further explore the issues raised. The schedule of topics or themes provided the starting point for discussion of each area.

The third type of interview is the *discussion* which involves an open and flexible agenda; topics are broadly identified beforehand but the interview is conducted based on the notion that what comes up for discussion is included. This is sometimes referred to as a guided interview and can be used in interview sessions with more than one interviewee. I used an approach similar to this in a session with a group of six teaching friends as part of the process of drawing up the schedule for the interviews. I felt it would be of value to have a discussion about teacher professionalism with teachers who were not part of the research study; this allowed me to be more aware of self-narrative or embedded views that might be apparent in my research interviews later. The fourth type of interview, according to Ribbins (2007), is the *chat*; this is an unplanned interview and is generally informal and flexible. A researcher may find that issues or topics of interest arise in this interaction but there would be no agenda for the chat and no recording of it. This type of interview was not an option for this research study as I believed that there were particular topics to be explored in order to generate data and construct knowledge; an informal chat would not have provided the rich data needed for the study.

It is worth looking at Rubin and Rubin's (2005) depiction of the two dimensions of qualitative interviewing in order to see where the interviews conducted for this research study fit. (See Figure 6).The first dimension is the interviewer's questions, and whether they are broad or narrow in focus. A broadly focused interview would be open-ended and unstructured; the interviewer might, or might not, move on to semi-structured or focused questions. A narrowly focused interview would concentrate on a specific piece of information; the interviewer's questions would focus on eliciting information or clarification. Rubin and Rubin's second dimension in qualitative interviewing is the purpose of the questions: are the questions to elicit meanings and understandings or to describe events and processes?

The interviews conducted for this research study are difficult to place on Rubin and Rubin's table, below; they appear to fit in the In-Between category on both dimensions i.e. in the Oral histories, and Organisational culture section. Oral history interviews are used to piece together how events have shaped or influenced people (Rubin and Rubin, 2005); there is an element of this in the interviews conducted for this research study. Organisational culture interviews focus on work groups, shared behaviours, and the moral aspects of behaviour; again, there are elements of these in the interviews conducted for this research.

Figure 6: Qualitative Interviews: The Two Dimensions

	Narrowly Focused Scope	In-Between	Broadly Focused Scope
Focused Mainly on Meanings and Frameworks	Concept Clarification	Theory elaboration	Ethnographic interpretation
In-Between	Exit interview	Oral histories Organizational culture	Life history
Focused Mainly on Events and Processes	Investigative Interviewing	Action research Evaluation research	Elaborated case studies

H.J.Rubin and I.S.Rubin, Qualitative Interviewing; the Art of Hearing Data, Sage Publications (2005:5)

Looking in more detail at Rubin and Rubin's (2005) work introduces two more interview types: topical interviews and cultural interviews. There are aspects of both of these which could be considered relevant in describing the interviews conducted for this study. Topical interviews seek to explain situations by piecing together facts. Questions asked in a topical interview are more directed as the researcher tries to find pieces of information that will allow him/her to put together a picture of what happened. The researcher is more active in the interview as he/she directs the questions, and uses more judgement in writing up the conclusions from the interview. In contrast, cultural interviews involve more active listening and less directed questions as interviewees are encouraged to elaborate and give examples. In general, cultural interviews do not have a pre-set agenda. The interviews conducted for this study would be more closely aligned with cultural interviews as I encouraged the primary school teachers interviewed to elaborate on and give examples of issues being discussed; however, there was a pre-set agenda in the sense that I had drawn up an interview schedule of themes or topics for discussion. There were also elements of topical interviewing evident as, at times, interviewees raised points that needed further clarification or explanation. The use of both 'styles' allowed for greater development of the data as it emerged and I was comfortable moving from one mode to another, as required. What is of interest, however, is how the interviews conducted for this research do not appear to fit neatly into any one category or dimension. If we use Rubin and Rubin's (2005) two-dimensional

representation (See Figure 6 above), the interviews conducted appear to belong in the in-between category. Similarly, if we explore Rubin and Rubin's (2005) description of topical and cultural interviews, there are elements of both of these in the interviews carried out for this research. Perhaps this merging of styles and format, while remaining within the broad category of qualitative interviewing, acknowledges that although the purpose of the interviews was to explore primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals, which implies subjective answers and opinions, at times it was necessary to ask closed questions to elicit specific information. This appears to contradict the approach I had chosen to use in conducting the interviews but indicates how, in seeking to understand or give meaning to what was said, a variety of interview styles was used.

Rubin and Rubin (2005:33) describe the interviewer and interviewee as 'in a relationship in which there is mutual influence'. Their 'responsive interviewing' (Rubin and Rubin 2005:30) is based on the interpretive constructivist philosophy; each interview is a conversation with an individual who has a different experience or different construction of that experience. The challenge for me as the researcher was to be open and flexible, to be aware of my own personal beliefs, opinions and possible biases, and to avoid imposing these on the interviewee. This fits with Ribbins' (2007) view that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone else's mind, and not to put things there. Geertz (1973) describes the writing up of the interview as the researcher telling his/her version of a person's understanding of experiences. I believe that in transcribing and analysing the interviews conducted, I was not just writing my 'version' but rather was writing what had been mutually or co-constructed during the interviews.

4.5 Ethical and Political Considerations

Cohen et al (2000) advise caution in conducting educational research as sensitive issues are likely to arise; this is particularly relevant in a research study where in-depth interviews allow for exploration and discussion of topics raised. Rubin and Rubin's (2005:33) description of interviews as 'a relationship in which there is mutual influence' raises an important point for ethical consideration. Rubin and Rubin (2005) note the deep ethical obligations a researcher assumes in developing the interview relationship, and the obligation to accurately report the findings without causing harm to others. Busher and James (2007:112) refer to this as the researcher's 'duty'. Sammons (1989) describes it as a commitment to honesty, while Pring (2000:143) writes about a

'respect for the dignity and privacy of those people who are the subjects of research'. I was conscious of these aspects of ethical obligations, and also of the need for integrity, in planning to conduct a study of primary school teachers. A researcher has a responsibility to carry out research in a way that ensures 'the professional integrity of its design, the generation and analysis of data, and the publication of results' (ESRC 2005:23). This would point to an ethical code of conduct for researchers. Zimbardo's (1984) definition provides a clear outline of such a code:

> Ethics embody individual and communal codes of conduct based upon adherence to a set of principles which may be explicit and codified or implicit, and which may be abstract and impersonal or concrete and personal (Zimbardo1984, cited in Cohen et al 2000:58).

The issue, however, is wider than just a code of conduct. Educational research can cause harm, hence Cohen et al's (2000) cautionary note in relation to conducting research in education. Figure 7 sets out the areas of research and the issues which are perceived as likely to cause harm:

Figure 7: Research likely to cause greater risk of harm to participants

Vulnerable groups – e.g. children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent relationship

Sensitive topics – e.g. participants' illegal or political behaviour, their experience of violence, their abuse or exploitation, their mental health, their gender or ethnic status

A gatekeeper normally permits initial access to members – e.g. ethnic or cultural groups, members of the armed forces or inmates and other members of custodial or health and welfare institutions

Deception or research conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is started

Access to records of personal or confidential information, including genetic or other biological information

Inducing psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or causing more than minimal pain

Intrusive interventions – e.g. the administration of drugs or other substances, vigorous physical exercise, that participants would not normally encounter in their everyday life

Source: Abridged from ESRC (2005, p.8)

This research study was not likely to cause harm to the participants involved. The most likely area from the above table in which it could cause harm was under the heading 'Deception'. It was important for me to establish full and informed consent from all participants before they became involved in this research study. Before beginning this process, I was required to receive approval for the study from the Research Ethics Committee in Dublin City University. The research proposal for this study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee in Dublin City University in July 2009; the study was deemed to be a low-risk study, and approval was granted to proceed (See Appendix A).

As the researcher, I believed that the main ethical issues involved for the primary school teachers who agreed to participate in this study related to respecting their privacy and anonymity, and not identifying the schools in which they taught. In seeking participants' informed consent, I was conscious of the importance of ensuring confidentiality in relation to any opinions expressed. The primary school teachers interviewed as part of this study were all voluntary participants and all were agreeable to being involved. However, Chadwick (2001) believes that there is a potential risk to any participant in a research study. Baez (2002:41) sees 'the notion of the sanctity and sovereignty of the individual' as the core concern when participants become involved in research. Cohen et al (2000) also note this concern and believe that informed consent is an essential aspect of involving participants in any research study. Voluntarism implies that participants have given 'their informed consent, free from coercion or bribery, to take part in a study' (ESRC 2005:7). Central to this, I believe, is clarity regarding what is involved in the research, what its objectives are, what participants will be required to do, how data will be gathered, stored and analysed and how the results and conclusions will be published. It is important to emphasise that participants may withdraw from the research at any stage. In order to ensure that all of these issues were dealt with in relation to my research, a Plain Language Statement was drawn up for presenting to participants, and an Informed Consent Form, outlining the various details, and requiring participants' signatures, was also used (See Appendix B and Appendix C). Both of these documents set out clearly what was involved in participating in this study and, I believe, demonstrated the integrity with which I planned to conduct my research. Kvale and Brinkman (2009:62) describe interviews as a 'moral enterprise' and, given that interviews were central to this research study, I was mindful of ensuring that the participants were treated with respect, honesty and integrity in the interviews themselves and also in my reporting and analysis of them.

My position as primary school principal needs to be noted in relation to this research as it places me in a position of power in relation to the interviewees, all of whom were primary school teachers. Busher and James (2007) raise this point of researchers being formally powerful people in an organisation and the effect it could have on participants' informed consent and willingness to openly discuss issues that could be controversial or revealing. I see this as very relevant to my research study and it was the main reason for choosing not to include any primary school teachers with whom I had worked, either as a teaching colleague or as principal, in this research. I believed that it would be unfair, in particular, to ask current members of the teaching staff in my school to participate in the research as they might have felt constrained in their freedom to give opinions, or could possibly have believed that, in expressing what might be perceived as controversial opinions, they could be 'harming themselves within the micro-political processes of their organisations' (Busher and James, 2007:113). Baez (2002) advocates the need for a new approach to, or a recharacterising of, confidentiality in relation to participants in research interviews; he believes that the practice of promising confidentiality to participants influences both the researcher's and the respondent's actions and can actually 'thwart transformative political goals' (Baez, 2002:38). I would agree that my decision not to include current or former colleagues in this research could be seen in the context of a political decision; however, I believe it also had an element of respect for the freedom of the people concerned and their right not to participate. In order to gather data and co-construct knowledge, I wanted interviewees to feel free to express opinions and describe experiences without having to worry about what I thought of their responses. I also wanted to avoid interviewees giving responses that they thought would please me; this was more likely to occur in the micro-political situation of me, as principal, interviewing members of my own teaching staff. I am happy that in choosing participants with whom I had no direct personal or professional connection, I made a wise and informed decision.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

In qualitative studies, reliability and validity are often considered using terms such as credibility and authenticity. A quantitative study might involve traditional methods of ensuring reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the ability to reproduce the same results when a study is repeated or replicated (Yin, 1994).

> If a measure, or indeed a series of measures when repeated give a similar result, it is possible to say that it has high reliability (Scott and Morrison 2006:208).

Lomax (1994) believes that, in this context, it is more difficult to work with subjective rather than objective data. This research study which relies on semi-structured interviews causes some difficulty in relation to the more positivist understanding of reliability. Reliability presumes a standardised 'instrument' which, in the case of semi-structured interviews, cannot be guaranteed. The nature of the qualitative interviews conducted for this research was a collaborative conversation in which the primary school teachers being interviewed expressed opinions, feelings and ideas about their own experiences. This natural interaction between the interviewees and myself, the researcher, points to Kitwood's (1977) and Cohen and Manion's (1994) concerns about the over-emphasis on reliability in interviews limiting the validity of the interview themselves. In order to be valid, the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee must reflect the actual interaction without being tied tightly to a set script. 'In proportion to the extent to which 'reliability' is enhanced…, 'validity' would decrease' (Kitwood, cited in Cohen et al, 2000:124). Lomax (1994) sees validity as being able to make a plausible case for one's research claims and cautions researchers about becoming 'too obsessed with the notion of validity' (Lomax, 2007: 168). I accept that validity is a concept most often associated with a positivist approach to research but would not be prepared to dismiss it as not relevant in relation to this research study. Validity tells us 'whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe' (Bell, 1999:104). Many writers, including Denzin and Lincoln (1998), while acknowledging the importance of validity within a positivist paradigm, find it inappropriate for interpretive qualitative approaches. For Denzin and Lincoln (1998:415), validity is not an absolute concept, it is 'the researcher's mask of authority, which allows a particular regime of truth...to work its way on the world'. Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) prefer the term trustworthiness:

> Where traditional verifiability rests on a rational proof built upon literal intended meaning, a critical qualitative perspective always involves a less certain approach characterised by participant reaction and emotional involvement. Some analysts argue that validity may be an inappropriate term in a critical research context, as it simply reflects a concern for acceptance within a positivist concept of research rigour... Trustworthiness...is a more

> appropriate word to use in the context of critical research (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998: 287).

I see trustworthiness as part of the ethical considerations involved in this research study. This research study belongs in the field of qualitative research and uses semi-structured interviews as its method of data gathering. Tests of reliability and validity in relation to this research, therefore, raise issues such as authenticity and credibility (Flick, 2002), which relate to Kincheloe and McLaren's (1998) concept of trustworthiness. In order to ensure that the qualitative interviews conducted for this study did not 'fall short of the rigorous standards of probity that are required' (Busher and James, 2007:106), all participants were given a transcript of their interview and asked to reflect on whether it was an accurate portrayal of what they had to say; this provided for a level of authenticity and credibility which I believe was important in the study. It also provides an element of what Cohen and Manion (1994) call internal validity, or what Scott and Morrison (2006) refer to as respondent validation. I felt this was a worthwhile exercise and ensured that I had accurately reflected what had occurred in each interview session.

4.7 Focus Group

Before beginning this research study, I made the decision to use a group of teaching friends to explore the topic in an informal way. None of these would be participants in the research study itself. My objective in drawing together a group at this preliminary stage was to gather information and opinions in relation to what could be looked for and included in my research. This group discussion could be viewed as 'pre-test' in terms of the research process and can be described as a group interview. Group interviews have been used in social research as far back as Bogardus in 1926. Fontana and Frey (2005:703) note that:

> Today, all group interviews are generically designated *focus groups*, even though there is considerable variation in the nature and types of group interviews.

Figure 8 illustrates the various types of group interviews or focus groups that can be used; I would see the group discussion held at this early stage of my research as fitting the category of Brainstorming in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Types of Group Interviews and Dimensions

Type	*Setting Purpose*	*Role of Interviewer*	*Question Format*	*Purpose*
Focus group	Formal, preset	Directive	Structured	Exploratory, pre-test
Brainstorming	Formal or informal	Nondirective	Unstructured	Exploratory
Nominal/Delphi exploratory	Formal	Directive	Structured	Exploratory, pre-test
Field, natural	Informal, Spontaneous	Moderately nondirective	Very unstructured	Exploratory Phenomenological
Field, formal	Preset In field	Somewhat directive	Semi-structured	Phenomenological

Frey and Fontana (1991:184)

The purpose of my group was exploratory in that we were exploring what issues could or should be included in my research. While the group fits into the category of brainstorming, in that we were exploring ideas and topics and my role was generally non-directive during the discussions, I did have a directive role as I outlined the purpose of the group discussion. The group could also be described as nominal (See Table 8) as it was conducted 'pre-test' i.e. before the research phase began, and it was structured at times as we sought to identify headings or themes to be included in the research study. Van de Ven (1972) also uses the term nominal group to describe a session where people gather to brainstorm ideas for research purposes. While the notion of gathering a group to discuss what might be included as topics for exploration in the interviews has undertones of a positivist approach, I found this a very useful stage in my research study as it provided insights for the schedule drawn up for use in the individual interviews conducted later. Focus groups are often perceived merely as an easy-to-organise and inexpensive research technique (Stokes and Bergin, 2006); there are, however, important points to consider in using focus groups. The group must be facilitated or moderated to ensure that the group interaction 'works' and that

conversation is not inhibited by participants feeling too distant from others in terms of life experience etc (Greenbaum: 1988); a level of heterogeneity (Hisrich and Peters, 1982:12) is also important to facilitate a wider range of perspectives. I was happy with the interaction and varying opinions in the focus group session; all participants contributed to the discussion. They could all be considered 'experts' (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990:53) as their views and opinions were based on their familiarity with the phenomenon and their everyday experience of it.

4.8 Sample

This research study consisted of in-depth interviews with 10 primary school teachers. Taking Rubinstein's (1994) view that there are no hard and fast rules about sample size, and Miles and Huberman's (1994) acceptance that qualitative research relies on small numbers with the aim of studying in depth and detail, participants for this research study were selected using purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling, also called purposeful sampling (Ezzy, 2002), was used to ensure a richness of data. Purposive sampling (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), involves selecting participants according to criteria determined by the research purpose and also guided by the unfolding data (Tuckett, 2004). Purposive sampling is used when the research being conducted does not seek to produce results that are representative of the whole population; samples are selected based on criteria such as diversity and symbolic representation. This research study was seeking to explore primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals; the objective was to gather quality data through in-depth face to face interviews. Practical issues such as time constraints and participants' availability precluded having a large number of participant interviews. A target of 15 participants was initially set, with an understanding that sampling would continue until no new information was forthcoming, or nothing new was being heard (Ezzy, 2002, Higginbotham et al, 2001). This information redundancy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is similar to data saturation (Patton, 2002) and presumes that data analysis and data collection will be carried out concurrently, allowing for constant comparison of data and, hence, an informed decision regarding data saturation (Rose and Webb, 1998). Cutcliffe and McKenna (2002) see this movement back and forth between data, emerging themes and interpretation as indicating saturation 'grounded in the empirical confidence attained from repeatedly comparing data to additional data' (Tuckett, 2004:56).

Ritchie and Lewis (2003:79) list the various ways in which purposive sampling can be used; these include homogeneous sampling, heterogeneous sampling, extreme case sampling, typical case sampling, critical case sampling, and stratified purposive sampling. Stratified purposive sampling allows the researcher to select cases which are part of the group being studied, in this case primary school teachers, but who vary in terms of characteristics, in this case gender, number of years teaching etc.; the diversity and symbolic representation of the sample provides the opportunity to generate data which can be analysed for its recurring or different themes. I chose to use this type of sampling as I believe it allowed me to include a broad number of variables within a relatively small sample. Initially, and following brainstorming with the nominal group, as outlined above, I drew up a Sample Matrix (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) which included criteria such as male/female teachers; rural/urban schools; less/more than 10 years' teaching experience (10 year point is of interest as the Revised Curriculum, explained in the historical background section of this study, was introduced in 1999. Teachers with less than 10 years' teaching experience would not have experience of the 'old' way; this might or might not have provided a different perspective of teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals); DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools; and private schools. My aim in selecting participants for interview was to ensure that I included all of the variables listed in the sample matrix (Appendix D) in order to include as much diversity and symbolic representation as possible (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

4.9 Selection of Participants

As already noted, I made a conscious decision not to include any of the teaching staff in my own school, or any former members of staff, in my selection of participants. I noted Kincheloe's (2001:683) point that interpretive research is very much:

> an interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] own history, biography, gender, social class....and by those of the people in the setting.

I was concerned that if current or former teaching colleagues were being interviewed for this study, it would be difficult to establish the roles of interviewer and interviewee (Gorden, 1987). There were two aspects to this concern: firstly, I was aware that, as principal, I am part of the school community but hold a power role which might influence teachers' comfort level or freedom to express opinions. Scheurich (1995:241) describes an interviewer as 'a person, historically and

contextually located, carrying unavoidable conscious and unconscious motives, desires, feelings, and biases'. As 'the boss' conducting interviews, I did not want to have interviewees merely giving answers that they thought I would want to hear. Secondly, as we work together as a school community, we interact and communicate every day. This can create a cultural area (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) which means that we, without consciously realising it, 'come to share some meanings, some ways of judging things' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997:172). This, I felt, could impact on the data produced as there could be an inherent bias in interviewees' answers, reflecting what had come to be accepted as the norm in our own school setting.

Using the sample matrix, as described above, allowed me to discuss what I was looking for in terms of interviewees. The technique used to generate a list of participants for interviewing was snowball sampling (Matthews and Ross 2010, and Busher 2005). Colleagues and teaching friends suggested names of possible participants. I added a stipulation that I would prefer participants to be people whom I did not know; this was to avoid any assumptions or judgements which might exist in terms of cultural lenses (Schutz, 1967:74).This is similar to how, in hermeneutics, prior understandings or prejudices can influence the interpretive process. A list of possible participants was drawn up and applied to the sample matrix so that all variables were covered. This generated 12 interviewee names, rather than the proposed 15. Initial informal contact was made by the person who had nominated the participant to enquire if he/she would be willing to participate in a research study. Once participants had expressed interest in the project, I contacted them in writing inviting them to participate in the study, and explaining what would be involved (See Appendix E for Invitation to Participate).

4.10 Conducting the Interviews

Gubrium and Holstein (1997) describe interviewing as not just a neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers but rather a collaboration, an active process that leads to a mutually created story. This mutual creating was an important element of the interviews conducted for this study. I was conscious that I wanted the primary school teachers being interviewed to reflect on their own experiences and also to consider and explore areas they perhaps had not reflected on previously, all in the context of gaining an understanding of primary teachers' concept of themselves as professionals. Ribbins (2007:215) maintains that for research interviews to generate rich and reliable data, they must be managed effectively. For the

researcher, this means knowing what you want to find out, and asking the right questions. The three broad research questions I was asking were:

> What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?
> How do primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals?
> What professional issues are of concern to primary school teachers?

In order to explore these research questions, I drew up an interview schedule, as recommended by Ribbins (2007:215) because 'good schedules make for good interviews'. An interview schedule initially lists all the things that a research interviewer could ask, and is then reduced to the questions that a researcher must ask (See Appendix F for Interview Schedule).

The questions asked are also important in ensuring that rich data is generated. A variety of question types were used in the interviews conducted. Closed questions were used to establish factual details about how long the participants had been teaching, the type of school they were teaching in, and whether or not they had acquired further qualifications since the completion of their initial teacher education (ITE). Open questions are 'at the core of qualitative interviewing' (Ribbins, 2007:215) and formed the main part of the interviews conducted for this research; they included questions about how the primary school teachers interviewed saw themselves as 'professional'. Follow-up questions are used in research interviews to probe for further detail, or to clarify something that has been said. Follow-up questions were used in the interviews for this study to allow interviewees to elaborate on some of the issues raised, or to clarify points such as what the primary school teachers being interviewed meant when they used the term 'professional'. At times, I also used follow-up questions to recap on what had been said; this was used particularly in relation to answers or points made about The Teaching Council. All interviewees had strong opinions to express at different stages of the interviews and it is clear from the transcripts that my role was, at times, to merely actively listen, and to acknowledge with 'verbal nods' of encouragement to continue. At other points in the interviews, I had a more active role as I clarified what I was asking, or asked more probing questions to further develop or explore what had been said. What is evident from the tapes and the transcripts is that the interviews were conducted as two-way conversations and the interviewees took time to describe, sometimes in vivid detail, particular examples to elaborate on what we were discussing. This added richness to

the data being gathered. In the first two interviews conducted, it is evident from the transcripts that I stayed very close to 'the script' and, at times, did not probe for further detail as easily as I did in the later interviews. I would say this reflects my own growing confidence and familiarity with the interview schedule as I continued to interview participants. There is also a noticeable change in how I asked the questions; the early interviews contain several questions beginning with 'Do you think..?' I clearly corrected or amended this to more open 'How have you..?' and 'What are ..?' type of questions. I would say that this indicates an awareness of what was working as a 'good' question and what was not.

Ribbins (2007:216) notes the importance of 'getting the relationship right' in order for the interview to go well. Establishing rapport with the interviewee is seen as part of managing the relationship. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe this as managing the different stages of the interview. The first stage is about introducing oneself and the topic and, more importantly, establishing trust and confidence to allow the interview to proceed to the second stage. The second stage involves asking more difficult or challenging questions. The third and final stage is less intense and the interviewer begins to wind down the questions and conclude the conversation. I felt that in most of the interviews conducted for this research, I established good rapport quickly with the interviewee by chatting informally as we set up for the interview sessions; informal chat focused on neutral topics such as the weather, the journey to the agreed venue etc rather that anything that would form part of the actual interviews. During most of the interviews, there are moments of laughter which indicate that the atmosphere was good humoured and that rapport had been established. Only one of the interviews conducted sounds somewhat stilted; the answers are short, even in the second stage of the interview, and there is little elaboration on any of the issues raised. The sense from both the recording and the transcript is that this was a reluctant interviewee; I did not check afterwards whether the interviewee had agreed to participate under duress as I felt it might influence my analysis of the data from that particular interview. This interviewee was 'recruited' in the same way as all of the other participants and was given an Invitation to Participate, A Plain Language Statement, and An Informed Consent, which was signed before the interview took place.

Ribbins (2007:216), in discussing the relationship involved in interviewing, stresses that the interviewer while maintaining good rapport with the interviewee must observe a neutral stance in

relation to what is said during the interview. I was conscious that this was important, and, therefore, concentrated on providing both verbal and non-verbal signals to demonstrate that I was actively listening to what was being said in each interview without appearing to judge or disapprove of any opinions expressed. However, all of the interviewees were aware that I am a primary school principal; it was not an issue *per se* but possibly precluded having a totally 'neutral' stance as I was clearly an insider researcher and known to be in a position of power or authority, albeit not in any of the schools in which the interviewees were teaching.

I recorded all of the interviews conducted, using a digital voice recorder. According to Ribbins (2007:216), recording interviews is essential because 'recording generates data, without data there is no research'. For the interviews conducted for this research study, I used a digital voice recorder; I was happy to use the digital voice recorder as it proved to be unobtrusive and people appeared to forget about it once the interview got going. This allowed for a natural flow to occur as the interviews proceeded. All participants were asked to give consent beforehand to the voice recording of the interviews; all agreed. I took occasional notes during the interviews of points that struck me e.g. hesitation over particular questions, or, in one case, an apparent misunderstanding of what was being asked. Stockdale (2003) acknowledges the usefulness of digital voice recorders in providing quality recordings which facilitate transcription for data analysis.

The transcription of the interviews conducted was both time-consuming and informative. The interviews themselves lasted approximately 45 minutes each; transcribing each one took considerably longer. Ribbins (2007) acknowledges that interviews vary in quality and that not all interviews are 'good'; nevertheless, he stresses the importance of retaining the voice recordings of the interviews so that, even if not everything has been transcribed initially, the researcher can return to the recordings for later transcription to generate data that may not have appeared of interest or particular relevance in the first analysis. I did transcribe all of the interviews conducted as I felt an ethical responsibility to afford each of the participants the courtesy and respect of not disregarding something that had been said merely because I thought at the time that it was not 'good'. For Ribbins (2007:219), researchers should, where possible, transcribe their own interviews as it creates a familiarity with, and immersion in, the material; this leads to 'the generation of a level of knowledge of their content unmatched by any other method. Such knowledge comes into its own when analysing and writing up the study'. For this research study, all interviews were

transcribed as soon as possible after the interviews took place; any notes that I made during the interview sessions were added; a copy of the transcript was forwarded to each interviewee; the voice recordings were stored in a safe, as outlined in the Informed Consent, and would be destroyed on completion of the research study.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research method and design of the study and has explained how methodology, which is influenced by epistemology, guides the method used in research. It placed this research study in the qualitative field and explained its constructivist approach to creating knowledge which fits well with the aim of the study which was to gain an insight into primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. The choice of semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection was explained in the context of knowledge being co-constructed by the 'social actors' involved. My objective was to hear firsthand from primary school teachers what their feelings and opinions were in relation to their understanding of themselves as professionals. The in-depth qualitative interviews conducted were seen as affording an opportunity to ask questions, to listen and hear what was being said, and to gather rich data.

The ethical and political considerations associated with an educational research study were discussed; the study was deemed to be low risk and not likely to cause harm. The issue of a researcher holding a power position was dealt with in relation to the choice of participants. The decision not to include primary school teachers with whom I have worked was explained and it eliminated any micro-political issues that might have occurred. The main issue for me as the researcher conducting the interviews was to ensure the integrity of the interviews themselves and the transcripts. Reliability and validity were considered in relation to qualitative studies; the concept of trustworthiness was acknowledged as relevant with its focus on authenticity and credibility. The purposive sampling used to generate as much diversity and symbolic representation in what was a small sample was explained, and the conducting of the interviews themselves was described in detail. 'Getting the relationship right' in the interviews was presented as important in ensuring that the interviews 'worked'.

The next chapter presents the findings of the interviews conducted as part of this research study, and describes how thematic statements were extracted from the raw data to form themes for analysis and discussion.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered as part of this research study. It describes how the data were gathered during semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 primary school teachers who had agreed to participate in this research. The chapter describes the process used to analyse the data and describes how thematic statements were extracted and then reduced to form four themes. The themes are discussed individually and reference is made to how they relate to Locke's (2004) classical triangle of professionalism. The fourth theme, which looked at what being a professional means to primary school teachers, considers the Teaching Council and its impact on primary school teachers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key points raised.

5.2 Data Gathering

The interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured and were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a face to face setting. The interviews were audio recorded in order to facilitate a conversational flow and to allow for accurate transcription of the interviews later; I felt that relying on written notes would impede the flow of conversation and would also provide a less thorough account of what had been said. Gorden (1992:7) described interviewing skills as 'a higher order combination of observation, empathic sensitivity, and intellectual judgement'. In order to use these higher order skills, I felt that it was important to be, literally, hands-free and able to maintain eye contact as the interviews progressed and points of interest were explored and discussed. Recording the interviews also allowed me to listen to, and reflect upon what had been said, at a later stage as I transcribed the interviews. This was important in establishing the 'trustworthiness' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:76) of the data. The interviews sought to explore primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. The key questions I wanted to answer were:

> What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?
>
> How do primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals?
>
> What professional issues are of concern to primary school teachers?

In order to ensure a detailed analysis of the data, it was essential to be able to constantly revisit the material; an accurate transcription of the recorded interviews allowed me to re-read the interview data as often as required in order to analyse what had been said. I also listened to the taped recordings again when necessary if I wanted to check for emphasis or emotion. Constantly reviewing the data gathered was an important part of the data analysis phase of the research. Morse (1994) describes the continuous and investigative aspect of data analysis as a creative and on-going process:

> Data analysis is a process that requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation, and acute recall. It is a process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious, of recognising the significant from the insignificant, of linking seemingly unrelated facts logically, of fitting categories one with another, and of attributing consequences to antecedents. It is a process of conjecture and verification, of correction and modification, of suggestion and defence. It is a creative process of organising data so that the analytic scheme will appear obvious (Morse, 1994:25).

Morse's (1994) description of the process of data analysis provides a good summary of how the interviews conducted for this research study were analysed. It was necessary to piece together the data, to recognise what was significant, and to fit categories one with another. The process was slow but informative as the data were organised, and knowledge emerged. The process used to analyse the data is outlined below; it fits with my epistemological position, as described earlier in this study, where knowledge is understood to involve:

> description rather than prediction, induction rather than deduction, generation rather than verification of facts, construction rather than enumeration, and subjective rather than objective knowledge (Cohen et al, 2000:139).

In conducting the interviews, I was conscious that as the researcher, I should have a respect for and curiosity about what people would have to say and also make a 'systematic effort to really hear and understand' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995:17). My role in analysing the data generated in the interviews was not that of a miner digging deep in a search for essential meaning (Kvale, 1996); it was to interpret the knowledge that had been constructed during the interview. For Berger and

Luckmann (1966), this is the social construction of reality, while Lyotard (1984) would describe it as giving local meaning to the knowledge generated. Dey's (1999) advice that a researcher's own preconceptions can bias the interpretation of data was a point worth noting for this research study. As a primary school principal interviewing primary school teachers it was important for me to be aware of the possibility that my own preconceptions could cause me to draw conclusions from the data. Gilovich (1993) notes the risk of researcher bias in stating that:

> Once we suspect that a phenomenon exists, we generally have little trouble explaining why it exists or what it means. People are extraordinarily good at ad hoc explanation. (Gilovich, 1993:21)

This was a legitimate concern for me in conducting the interviews and in the data analysis as the interviewees and myself could be considered to have similar worldviews. Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced their 'constant comparison' method of on-going analysis to encourage researchers to move away from 'theory generated by logical deduction from *a priori* assumptions' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:3); their approach was to let the data emerge without any preconceived framework or structure. Strauss and Corbin (1998:12) later described this process thus: 'The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data'. While planning to elicit data grounded in practical knowledge and experience, I did not use an unstructured approach to data gathering. The interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured and covered broad themes which were explored in depth during the interview sessions; in order to analyse these, I chose to use an inductive analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) where the findings would emerge as themes, derived from my continued study of the raw data (i.e. the interview transcripts). This method of analysis is aligned more closely with the Generic Inductive Qualitative Method (GIQM) rather than Glaser and Strauss's (1967) Grounded Theory (GT). A GIQM approach to data analysis differs from a GT approach in that GIQM focuses on themes and interpretation whereas GT focuses on developing theoretical categories. In analysing the data for this research study, my aim was to explore the themes that emerged from the interviews conducted, to compare these from one interview to another, and to interpret the rich data generated; I felt that the choice of a GIQM approach was appropriate.

The issue of power relations is discussed in an earlier chapter of this thesis; it is, however, worth noting again briefly here. My position as a primary school principal interviewing primary school teachers could be considered as a relationship where there is a power imbalance. Busher and James (2007) highlight the risk of formally powerful people conducting research within an organisation; they believed that a researcher who holds a position of power may influence the participants' willingness to raise or discuss issues that might be considered controversial. I was mindful of this possibility and chose not to include any primary school teachers with whom I had ever worked, in the sample for this study. I believed that it would be unfair, in particular, to ask current members of the teaching staff in my own school to participate in the interviews for this research as they might have felt constrained in their freedom to give opinions, or where they held what might be considered controversial views, that they could feel that they were 'harming themselves within the micro-political processes' (Busher and James, 2007:113) that exist in organisations. All of the primary school teachers interviewed as part of this research study were aware that I was a primary school principal; I signed each invitation to participate in the study with my name and designation. I also mentioned it in my informal introduction to each interview as I explained my own background and interests. Fontana and Frey (2005:707) note the importance of how a researcher presents him/herself to interviewees; they see it as casting oneself in a role that 'leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has a great influence on the success of the study'. I believe that in acknowledging my position as a primary school principal before conducting each interview, I was being open and honest, and ensuring that interviewees were aware of my 'position of power'.

5.3 Data Theming

The interviews conducted for this research study explored broad areas or themes of interest. In preparing for the interviews, an initial list of questions was compiled for use; this was found to be too restrictive and structured and was likely to impede the sharing of ideas and opinions. An interview schedule was then drawn up outlining areas or themes for discussion (See Appendix F); these focused on areas that had emerged in the literature as of interest and worth exploring in seeking to answer the central research question: 'What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?'. Kvale (1996:88) describes this setting out of the topic to be explored as 'thematizing' and, along with Van Manen (1990), believes that through well-planned

questioning, the interviewees construct the meanings of what is being explored and discussed. For Kvale,

> The interviewer does not uncover some pre-existing meanings, but supports the interviewees in developing their meanings throughout the course of the interview (Kvale, 1996:226).

In seeking to generate rich data, I was conscious that the quality of the interview itself could determine the quality of the data elicited. I was, therefore, careful to maintain the flow of each interviewee's story (Schensul et al, 1999:141) by not interrupting unnecessarily, and I endeavoured to maintain a positive interaction with the interviewees (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) during the sessions by using non-verbal cues to indicate active listening and by using probing questions to encourage interviewees to elaborate on points when necessary. I emphasised before beginning each interview that I was not looking for particular answers, and that there were no right or wrong answers.

Thomas (2006) maintains that when using a generic inductive approach the evaluation objectives will guide the data analysis by identifying themes and topics to be investigated; the findings, however, are not predetermined: they emerge from the analysis itself. In relation to this study, that would mean that the research question which sought to explore primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals would lead to the raw data from the interviews being analysed to identify themes to be further analysed and interpreted; from this, the findings would emerge. Ezzy (2002) distinguishes thematic analysis from content analysis which sets out predefined categories, while thematic analysis 'allows categories to emerge from the data' (Ezzy, 2002:83). A theme's function is to allow a set of data to be categorised into 'an implicit topic that organises a group of repeating ideas' (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003:38). A theme could be described as:

> an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent [patterned] experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000:362).

Saldana (2009) believes that using a thematic approach to data analysis is appropriate for almost all qualitative studies; I believe it was a suitable choice for this study as it facilitated an in-depth analysis of the data gathered. Before beginning thematic analysis, I used a basic descriptive coding method to allow me to record in an easily-identifiable way the particular attributes or characteristics of each interviewee. This coding was carried out to ensure that any patterns that might emerge from the data in relation to the themes being analysed could be checked for significance in terms of particular interviewee attributes such as gender, length of teaching experience, type of school etc. These attributes were not, in fact, of particular significance in much of the final data analysis and interpretation with the exception, perhaps, of primary teachers working in DEIS (disadvantaged) schools who appeared to show a greater awareness of the role of collaboration with teaching colleagues. This point is discussed later in this chapter. It was, however, useful to have the demographics of the interviewees available for comparison purposes on particular points; an example of this is given in the discussion on initial teacher education, under the theme of Becoming a Teacher, where two interviewees express very similar views of their college course despite a gap of more than twenty years between their respective teacher education programmes. There did not appear to be differences of opinions or experience based purely on the gender of the interviewees.

5.4 Initial Coding

Initial coding of the interviews was carried out solely to identify the descriptive information pertaining to each interviewee. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) refer to this type of coding as context or setting codes. This type of coding is used as part of the management and organisation of the data and provides a means of recording the demographic characteristics of the interviewees. I felt it was important to note the teaching experience of the primary teachers I interviewed as it might prove to be significant in their personal accounts and opinions. Other factors or attributes that could also be significant were the gender of the interviewees; the qualifications they had obtained as part of the process of becoming a primary teacher; and the type of schools they had taught in. As each interview was completed, I used attribute coding (Saldana 2009) to describe the relevant characteristics of the person who had been interviewed. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this as descriptive coding. Its purpose was firstly to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees and their schools, as outlined in the Plain Language Statement and the Informed Consent document provided to each participant before the interviews (see Appendix B and Appendix C). Each

interviewee was assigned a number (1-10) for identification purposes, and designated male (M) or female (F). Each interviewee's qualification was noted: most had a minimum of a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), which was coded (A); those who had a Bachelor of Arts plus a postgraduate diploma were coded (B); interviewees with a Masters degree were coded (C); no interviewee had a Doctorate. The teaching experience of the interviewees was categorised in relation to the number of years teaching (3-30), the type of school involved (Urban or Rural school), the size of school (Small, Medium, Large), the gender of the pupils (Boys, Girls, Mixed), and the category of school (Ordinary Mainstream, DEIS, Private). All of the interviewees were teaching in recognised primary schools in Ireland; none of the interviewees taught in Special Schools. The code generated for each interviewee was formatted as follows: interview number, male or female interviewee, type of qualification, number of years teaching, urban or rural school, small/medium/large school, school type and category. This attribute coding was done manually. A sample of the coding is: 6FB3RSMD, indicating Interview number 6; female interviewee; B.Ed plus postgraduate diploma qualification; 3 years teaching experience; rural school; small school; mixed gender school; DEIS (disadvantaged) school. See Appendix G for full attribute coding details.

5.5 Thematic Statements

Each interview recording was transcribed and then read through several times to refresh my memory and sense of how the interview session had progressed. I found the constant re-reading of the transcripts to be an important element of preparation for extracting thematic statements. Extracting thematic statements (Saldana, 2009: 145) involves searching the raw data, which in this study would be the interview transcripts, for statements that represent the main points or observations of the research. I conducted this thematic extraction manually by highlighting statements on the printed transcripts. These were then given a broad label in the margin to facilitate comparison and later reduction. This constant 'handling' of the data is recommended as it 'gets additional data out of memory and into the record; it turns abstract information into concrete data' (Graue & Walsh, 1998: 145). The first stage analysis of the interviews elicited 34 thematic statements which were then compared and reduced to 15, by combining some into headings that encompassed more than one thematic statement, or by eliminating statements that did not appear to feature significantly in other interview transcripts. Following this, the next stage of analysis was to reduce the categories to what appeared to be the key themes emerging from the data; this produced 4 themes which are analysed in this chapter. The process of extraction

and reduction can be viewed as metasummary and is similar to metasynthesis in that it involves a combination of data coding and theming. Thorne et al (2004) describe it as:

> Not a method designed to produce oversimplification; rather it is one in which differences are retained and complexity enlightened. The goal is to achieve more, not less. The outcome will be something like a common understanding of the nature of a phenomenon, not a consensual worldview (Thorne et al, 2004:1346).

Thorne et al's (2004) description fits well with the aim of this study which was to explore primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals; examining the interview data for emergent themes was central to gaining an understanding of what was said. The areas focused on in the interviews included teacher education, qualifications, knowledge and skills, continuing professional development, characteristics of a 'good' or effective teacher, challenges for teachers, the moral dimension of teaching, teacher autonomy, accountability, collaboration, The Teaching Council, making a difference, the learning environment, concerns teachers have, motivation for becoming a primary teacher, and the best things about being a primary teacher. Following thematic extraction and reduction, four main themes were identified: Becoming a Teacher; Autonomy and Accountability; The Extended Role of the Teacher; and Being a Professional. These themes are discussed in detail below and are considered in the context of Locke's (2004) classical triangle of professionalism. Locke (2004) posited that there are three key elements: knowledge, autonomy, and altruism which form what he describes as the classical triangle of professionalism. Hoyle and John (1995) had earlier used similar headings: knowledge, autonomy and service, in their analysis of the professions. I felt it was worthwhile to use these three concepts in the analysis of the data from this study as they provide a framework for interpretation and comparison.

5.6 Theme 1: Becoming a Teacher

The first theme to emerge from the data was designated 'Becoming a Teacher'; it can be considered as similar to the knowledge attribute of Locke's classical triangle of professionalism as it encompasses some of the same areas. In exploring the theme of becoming a teacher, four main areas emerged; these were: Initial Teacher Education; Learning 'on the job'; Collaboration; and Continuing Professional Development. These areas are dealt with individually here.

5.6.1 Initial Teacher Education:

The primary teachers interviewed for this research study had all completed an initial teacher education programme and had graduated with a degree qualification. All had a minimum of a B.Ed, or B.A plus Postgraduate qualification; they were, therefore, deemed to be qualified primary school teachers. **I**nitial teacher education is the first of the 'Three **I**s' mentioned in the literature on teacher education and development, as outlined in the literature review chapter of this thesis. There was an acknowledgement from the interviewees that having completed an initial teacher education programme did not mark the end of the learning required to 'become a teacher'. Acquiring a gateway qualification such as the B.Ed, can be viewed as part of the process of acquiring a body of knowledge – one of the acknowledged requirements of a profession. In response to my question: 'In what way would you consider yourself to be a professional?' I was surprised to find that some interviewees mentioned their qualification first. Responses included:

'First of all, we studied for 3 years to get our degree' (Int. 4)

'With my qualifications behind me' (Int. 7)

'Firstly, I am professionally qualified; I have done my degree and postgraduate studies' (Int. 9)

'Because a person is qualified; because you're trained' (Int. 10)

I saw this as an indication of awareness that having a recognised qualification was one element of being a professional. I had not anticipated this immediate recognition of having a qualification as an integral part of being a professional and was surprised at the apparent ease with which the interviewees posited 'having a qualification' as central to being a professional. The question was asked early in each interview before any discussion or elaboration on what being a professional might mean. I felt it was significant that there was awareness among the interviewees of the role of having a qualification in being a professional. For the majority of primary school teachers in Ireland this would be the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). It was evident, however, from the primary school teachers interviewed that they believed there was still a significant amount of learning to be done, despite successfully completing the initial teacher education programme, and that having a degree did not mean that people knew how to teach. There was a clear sense of having to learn 'on the job'. Opinions included the following:

'We are very green and very raw coming out of college …not until you are *in situ*, actually doing the job that you develop the skills' (Int. 2).

'I would think that my education started the first week after I left; what we got in college didn't prepare you for it in any way' (Int. 3).

I noted these responses as of significance in relation to the ages of the two interviewees quoted; one had graduated 9 years ago while the other had graduated 30 years ago; both had B.Ed qualifications. Their opinions appeared to reflect similar views of lack of preparedness for teaching among graduates from the initial teacher education programme. This was a strong theme during the interviews and clearly was not a phenomenon that was either new or old, given the differing age profile but similar opinions of the interviewees. There was an apparent general acceptance by the interviewees that their initial teacher education was insufficient in preparing them for teaching; most believed that they learned to teach when they took up their first teaching position. This presents a picture of 'on the job' learning as central to becoming a teacher.

5.6.2 Learning 'on the job':

There was general agreement that having acquired a degree did not mean that teachers knew how to teach when they took up their appointments in schools; learning 'on the job' appeared to be the acknowledged method for newly-qualified teachers to acquire and develop both skills and confidence. This stage in the path to becoming a teacher could be viewed as **I**nduction, the second '**I'** in the continuum of teacher education. Interviewee 1 described himself as having 'a good base coming out of college' and then 'picking up things, like in any job' once he was appointed to a teaching position. Some of the 'on the job' learning mentioned by interviewees included non-teaching areas such as: paperwork (Int. 1); how to mark the roll book (Int. 3); dealing with parents (Int. 5 & 7); and time management (Int. 8). Other areas deemed to be learned 'on the job' included personal skills such as confidence (Int. 9); being open to others' suggestions (Int. 6); patience (Int. 4); and defusing arguments (Int. 1). The more specific teaching-related areas mentioned included: classroom management (Int. 4 & 6); curriculum planning (Int. 7); and behaviour management (Int. 6). Despite strong agreement that learning 'on the job' was a vital part of learning to be a teacher, what emerged from the interviews was a sense of needing to put into practice the skills that may already have been acquired as part of the initial teacher education programme. Despite interviewee statements that the college programme did not really prepare people for starting to

teach (e.g. Int. 2 & 3), there was no real evidence of this in the interviews; what was portrayed was a sense of newly qualified teachers having to actually be in a classroom situation in a 'real' sense, rather than on teaching practice, to acquire the experience and the confidence that ensues to really 'be a teacher'. The given examples of 'on the job' learning were often administrative functions (Int. 3: how to mark the roll book); interpersonal skills (Int. 1: defusing arguments); organisational skills (Int. 8: time management); and personal traits (Int. 4: patience). Other than 'marking the roll book', these examples are not actually related to a teaching situation; they are more indicative of a newly-appointed employee in any work environment feeling somewhat at a loss as he or she takes up a first appointment. One interviewee expressed this quite clearly:

'I definitely think you pick up things, I suppose like in any job, from the experience you gather' (Int. 1).

The discussions about becoming a teacher, learning to teach, and how prepared or unprepared teachers felt they had been following their initial teacher education programme, focused mainly on what Sockett (1993) calls pedagogical knowledge; other writers refer to this as craft knowledge. Both terms are understood to mean a teacher's grasp of how to actually teach, rather than knowledge of a particular subject or subject matter. No interviewee raised the issue of subject knowledge (Sockett 1993); references to subjects were in the context of sharing resources, such as websites that were found to be useful for particular topics being taught (Int. 8).The concerns about being unprepared or 'very green and very raw coming out of college' (Int. 2) all focused on not feeling able or ready to teach rather than not knowing the subject matter. The points made about learning from other more experienced teachers also focused on skills rather than subject knowledge. Interviewees talked of 'watching other teachers … and adapting and changing' (Int. 6) and noted that:

'an awful lot of it comes from experience. The course you cover in college is going to help as well but the skills of classroom management and of what works best will come through experience' (Int. 4).

This emphasis on pedagogical knowledge appears to imply that what primary teachers view as the body of knowledge required for the 'job' is about the skill or craft of teaching. Leggatt (1970) and MacDonald (1995) write about knowledge exclusivity as one of the hallmarks of a profession.

Robson (2006) believes that the knowledge involved in teaching may be perceived to be more common sense or everyday knowledge and, thus, may not be as highly regarded as the more scientific knowledge of other 'higher' professions. The data in this study did not indicate a perception of knowledge exclusivity; teachers appear to be aware that there is a particular type of knowledge or skill required to teach but there was no sense of viewing this knowledge as esoteric, as suggested by Leggatt (1970). There was no sense either that the body of knowledge was merely common sense; what emerged was awareness that teaching requires particular skills that can be learned, following grounding in the basic knowledge, through experience and from observing others' practice. From September 2012, the initial teacher education programmes in the colleges will become 4-year programmes, rather than the current 3-year programmes, to allow additional time for students to develop and become reflective practitioners; there will also be an extended placement in primary schools to allow students to spend more time observing and learning good practice from practising primary teachers. This concurs with the Teaching Council's vision of developing teachers as 'reflective, enquiry-oriented, life-long learners' (Teaching Council, 2011:9); it will be interesting to see in the future how newly qualified primary teachers describe their preparedness for teaching following the longer initial teacher education programme. An additional year added to initial teacher education also negates Saracho & Spodek's (2003) classification of teaching as a 'lower' profession, based on the length of time involved in the programme of preparation.

5.6.3 Collaboration:

In discussing areas such as classroom management, curriculum planning, and behaviour management, there was clear recognition of the need for experience to develop these areas; learning from other teachers was presented as a key element of this development. For some of the primary school teachers interviewed, this learning from other more experienced teachers was their understanding of collaboration. To collaborate is defined as 'to work jointly on an activity or project' (Oxford English Dictionary); in the interviews I conducted for this research, I asked interviewees what part collaboration plays in their teaching. (See Appendix F: Interview schedule). Interviewees saw collaboration as important, with responses describing collaboration as 'Very important' (Int. 10); and as having a 'Huge impact' (Int. 2). Interviewees went on to discuss what were, I felt, two distinct areas: the first referred to the 'learning on the job' aspect where teachers talked about: 'learning from people there on the job' (Int. 2); 'learning from their experience' (Int.

3); and 'valuing their expertise' (Int. 6). In essence, this is probably not collaboration in the truest sense but could be viewed as a form of mentoring; in that sense, teachers acknowledged the importance in their early years of learning from their more experienced teaching colleagues. The second area raised in discussions about collaboration reflected what I would understand as a more generally accepted meaning of the concept, in the sense of working jointly on activities or projects. The evidence of this collaboration was clearer in relation to areas such as curriculum planning; interviewees regarded collaboration as a central part of this aspect of teaching. Examples of collaboration included:

'Working with a learning support teacher, the Maths Recovery teacher….team teaching' (Int. 2).

'We've made concerted efforts to share resources, and with the advent of technology, we have even put together a staff website which is only accessible to staff members. On that, we collate stuff so when someone in Infants comes across a link we put it on…If, the next year, that teacher is in Second class, they are leaving behind the things they thought were good, and it is there accessible to the next teacher' (Int. 8).

These responses provide specific examples of collaboration and indicate how teachers see themselves working with and sharing knowledge and resources with colleagues in an ongoing and fairly structured way. Others simply mentioned 'getting ideas and giving ideas' (Int. 3) as their experience of collaboration which seemed to paint a picture of informal and less structured collaboration

There was evidence, however, of some interviewees acknowledging that there was not 'as much time as I would like for it' (Int. 7) or that it did not really happen in primary schools where there was just one class at each level, as evidenced in the comment:

'But our school is a single stream so you wouldn't really be collaborating' (Int. 4).

The latter comment appears to imply that collaboration occurs only between teachers who teach the same class level; this was not the general view of collaboration among those interviewed but I found it interesting that there was a lack of awareness of the concept of or potential for whole school collaboration. One further view of collaboration was as a mechanism for ensuring that teachers covered the same material in classes of the same level; an interviewee noted that she

and her 5th class teaching colleague always plan together what they will cover in class and set for homework. She stated that:

'That kind of collaboration reassures parents and kids and then also makes it look like it is a staff working together. You look more cohesive; you look like you're on top of things so I think everyone else will take it that you are' (Int. 8).

I felt this was portraying a type of accountability exercise which did not necessarily fit with my own concept of collaboration as working together in the sense of sharing knowledge, talent and expertise. Accountability is discussed later in this chapter but the point is worth noting here in relation to collaboration; it appears to point to public perception as important to teachers in terms of work covered in each class.

One further point of interest was the emphasis placed on collaboration by the interviewees who were teaching in *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) schools*. The primary teachers interviewed who were teaching in DEIS schools saw collaboration as central to their teaching, and not merely in relation to passing on information about how to handle a particular class, or sharing resources. They portrayed collaboration as an essential aspect of their teaching. One interviewee spoke about working with a learning support teacher, the Maths Recovery teacher, and also team teaching; these are specific examples of primary teachers collaborating in their 'job' as teachers. An interviewee described the teachers in her school as being:

'Very open… always talking to one another; on the internet looking up information; reading; doing summer courses; and sharing their knowledge. You have to keep adapting and changing' (Int. 6).

Another pointed out that:

'In a given year, you could be collaborating with so many different people…You're not stand-alone; you need to be working with people all the time' (Int. 9).

These particular teachers appeared to have a greater awareness, or perhaps just more practical experience, of collaboration with colleagues as part of teaching. Even in transcribing these interviews, I could feel the collegial aspect of what was being described; it contrasted sharply with the interviewees who had spoken of no collaboration in single stream settings. It was not clear

whether the ethos of the DEIS schools was the influencing factor in creating this apparent collegiality and collaboration or whether other factors such as the staff themselves were the main instigators; the point being made was clear: 'You're not stand-alone' (Int. 9).

Interviewee 6's description of looking up information, doing summer courses, and generally sharing information could also be considered part of continuing professional development which is the final area discussed in this first theme 'Becoming a Teacher'.

5.6.4 Continuing Professional Development:

Continuing professional development (CPD) is generally understood to mean courses, workshops and seminars which teachers attend in order to further develop their knowledge, skills and competence. In terms of the 'Three **I**s' of teacher education, CPD would belong under the heading of the third '**I**' - **I**n-Career development.

Primary school teachers are not required to attend any courses once they have completed their initial teacher education programme, acquired their degree, and successfully completed their first year *ar promhadh*, under the inspection of the Cigire (See Chapter 2:22 for an outline of the probationary year and the inspection process for newly qualified teachers). For most primary teachers, CPD takes place in the form of week-long summer courses for which they are granted 3 days extra personal leave (EPV) during the following school year. All primary teachers who were teaching in Ireland at the time of the introduction of the Revised Curriculum (1999) received a significant amount of in-service courses as the new approaches and methodologies were outlined to full staff groups over 3-4 years. This was an exception to the normal practice of CPD and continued in blocks of 2-day programmes until a decision was taken by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to discontinue the practice. Interestingly for this research study, two of the interviewees were facilitators who presented some of the staff training programmes on the Revised Curriculum; this was not a factor in their selection as participants for the study. Both of these interviewees completed specific training courses as part of their preparation for presenting the programmes to other primary school teachers; these courses included presentation skills as well as sessions on teaching methodologies, and strands and strand units of the Revised Curriculum. Both interviewees considered their involvement in the presentation of the programmes, under the auspices of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) which has since become the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), as of great benefit to

their own teaching when they returned to their classrooms. Interviewee 2 believed that she had become 'more effective as a teacher' and also more confident in her decision-making; the time she spent as a PCSP facilitator provided her with new experiences in education and 'with this experience comes the autonomy that you can make decisions for yourself' (Int. 2). Interviewee 8 described her experience as a facilitator as 'invaluable'; she noted that, on her return to classroom after her time as a PCSP facilitator, she was a 'very different teacher... not teaching the same way' and more likely 'to stop and re-think the way I was doing things' (Int. 8). This appeared to be an unexpected benefit for the teachers involved; their role as facilitators was to introduce groups of primary school teachers to the 'new' methodologies and approaches associated with the Revised Curriculum. Their own practice was clearly changed and improved by the experience of guiding other teachers; I saw this as evidence of the important role that reflection on practice plays in CPD. Both of these interviewees had improved their own classroom practice through their work outside of the classroom; this would illustrate Schön's (1983) belief in the importance of improving practice through reflection on and in action.

Apart from the two teachers involved in PCSP presentations, there was a variety of levels of CPD in evidence. Teachers who had completed one-week summer courses admitted that their motivation for doing the course was often the EPV days they would receive. There was no evidence of interviewees seeing these courses as upskilling or professional development; the choice of course appears to have been governed by factors such as course venue, presentation dates, availability of places, cost, and in some, but not all, cases course content and personal level of interest. Interviewees were not particularly uncomfortable admitting their apparent lack of emphasis on personal CPD in their choice of summer courses. Interviewee 5 stated that she usually 'just ended up doing an on-line one'; the convenience of completing the course at home in the interviewee's own time rather than having to actually attend a course was seen as 'much handier' (Int. 5). This struck me as an area worth investigating further as for many primary teachers it is their only exposure to CPD. The apparent lack of any sense of professional development among primary school teachers in relation to summer courses is significant. Summer courses are clearly not perceived by primary school teachers as CPD. Interviewee 4 stated that she had never pursued any further qualifications or completed any courses - 'just summer courses', illustrating how summer courses are viewed as something other than CPD. If CPD is to be posited as an essential element in the professional life of teachers, it will require a more structured

approach in terms of content and progression but also in relation to how primary school teachers view their own CPD. What was evident from the interviews conducted for this research was that, in contrast to most professions, CPD was not viewed as essential upskilling for the primary school teachers interviewed. There was no sense of CPD being viewed as a requirement for primary school teachers in general. Despite that, however, a number of those interviewed had undertaken courses and further study. For some, the decision to undertake further study appeared to have been driven by the needs of the school or class, as evidenced in the comment: 'You know, you say: hang on a minute, we have to do something' (Int. 2). This was particularly in evidence in relation to Learning Support or Resource teaching. One interviewee had completed a training course in Reading Recovery, as she was working in a DEIS school where literacy levels were well below national norms; the school had made the decision to implement the Reading Recovery programme and the interviewee volunteered to complete the training programme. I saw this as a willingness to undertake further learning where there was an identified need for new knowledge; the interviewee saw it as something she was happy to do. Another interviewee completed an on-line course in Learning Support; this was a personal choice on her appointment to a Learning Support position as the interviewee felt that she 'had to' as she 'hadn't a clue really' (Int. 6). This appeared to demonstrate openness to upskilling or new learning where a primary school teacher was motivated by her own perception of her lack of knowledge in a particular area rather than external pressure to acquire new knowledge and skills. These decisions to undertake further study could be considered as needs-driven in the sense that the primary school teachers involved decided that they needed more knowledge to be effective in their particular roles. Other interviewees had completed Postgraduate Diplomas, one in Gaeilge and one in Art, and one interviewee had returned to college and completed a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Higher Diploma (H.Dip.) with a view to becoming a second level teacher. This interviewee, having completed the H.Dip, returned to primary school teaching, due to a lack of prospects at second level. Finally, two of the interviewees had Masters level qualifications; both Masters were in academic subjects - one in history, one in science; these interviewees appeared to have been motivated by personal interest in the degree subjects, rather than by a need to acquire further knowledge and skills. These interviewees spoke of their enjoyment of the courses and noted that: 'the lecturers were fantastic!'(Int. 7)

What is evident from this exploration of CPD is that there is no structured pattern to primary school teachers' approach to CPD. The PCSP provided set programmes which all primary teachers were required to attend as part of the introduction of the Revised Curriculum; apart from that, participation in CPD appears to be somewhat haphazard, with the attraction of EPV days and convenience proving to be factors in course selection and participation. However, there appears to be a strong level of interest among primary school teachers in acquiring further formal qualifications, as indicated by the number of Postgraduate Diplomas (2) and Masters (2) among the interviewees; I saw this as a high number in a study such as this one which is using a small sample. Perhaps the fact that formal qualifications attract a financial reward was relevant in the interviewees' decision to pursue further qualifications; this was not mentioned by any of the interviewees in relation to their further qualifications and I did not think to ask specifically if it had been a factor. In direct contrast to those who had acquired additional formal qualifications, were interviewees who had completed no summer courses or other courses that would constitute CPD. This indicates an inconsistency in attitude and practice among primary teachers in relation to CPD; it was difficult to identify what lay behind the clear differences in primary schoolteachers' attitudes to CPD.

5.7 Theme 2: Autonomy and Accountability

A second theme which emerged in the data was designated as 'Autonomy and Accountability'. This theme can be considered as two separate but related issues; they are discussed together here as they appeared to be closely linked in most interviewees' responses. How primary school teachers use the body of knowledge they have acquired as they become teachers points to the question of their own autonomy; how primary school teachers use that autonomy raises the issue of accountability.

5.7.1 Autonomy:

Autonomy, as the second element of Locke's (2004) classical triangle, refers to a person's freedom to determine his/her own actions, behaviour, etc (Collins Dictionary). Autonomy is recognised in the literature as an important aspect of being a professional. The primary school teachers interviewed for this study generally described autonomy in the context of the classroom which could be considered as personal autonomy within a school setting. There was awareness that

teachers can be autonomous in their decision making in the classroom based on having an accepted knowledge base; for some of the interviewees, this autonomy was exercised in the context of collaborative school colleagues.

My understanding of what personal autonomy would mean for primary school teachers is being able to make decisions in relation to what happens in a classroom – what is taught, how it is taught, and the general organisation of classroom life. The literature review chapter of this study describes primary school teachers as having autonomy within the context of the whole school; the majority of primary schools in Ireland have a *Plean Scoile* which sets out the curriculum to be covered for each class level each year, and also outlines school organisational policies and procedures. Primary teachers' autonomy would, therefore, be in relation to how the agreed material is to be covered within individual classroom settings.

As I began to discuss autonomy in the interviews conducted for this study, some of the interviewees asked me to explain what I meant by autonomy; while this surprised me, it did not impede further discussion as it was evident that while they may not have been familiar with the term itself, the interviewees had a clear understanding of the concept as they elaborated on what they perceived as their autonomy. The majority believed that they had autonomy; some were very clear that the autonomy was within a whole school context and 'to the plan' (Int. 4) which clearly referred to the Plean Scoile, the agreed programme of work for individual schools. Others described their autonomy as 'in a collaborative environment, with planning meetings with colleagues' (Int. 2), and 'in consultation with the principal and other teachers' (Int. 9). I felt that the autonomy being described was a limited one as interviewees mentioned having to always 'consult with the principal' (Int. 6); it also appeared to vary and would depend 'on what kind of an ethos is in the school' (Int. 10). This seemed to contradict what interviewees initially said in response to being asked if they had autonomy; most had stated that they had autonomy, but then appeared to be unable to give specific examples that could illustrate this. A review of the transcripts of the interviews showed that many of the interviewees had, in fact, qualified their answers with 'Yes, but..!'. This was interesting as it showed that while there was an awareness of how primary school teachers had autonomy, there was also an acknowledgement that for many of the primary school teachers being interviewed, the autonomy was limited by the school system or organisation. There were exceptions to this, as evidenced in one interviewee's belief that he had autonomy in the classroom as 'the Department is a very distant horizon' (Int. 3), and another who

stated: 'I would not spend so much time on things sometimes, if it was taking away from a class where we needed to spend a lot of time on Maths, say. But I just figure a way around it and I am happy with that. And I'll stand by it; if there was any problem, I'd stand by it' (Int. 7). This was an example of a primary school teacher believing that she had autonomy to make decisions in relation to what was being taught, and how it was covered, in her class; her statement that she would 'stand by it' indicates an acceptance of the responsibility that goes along with exercising that autonomy. Macpherson et al (1999) and Moller et al (2000) are among the writers who see teacher professionalism as greatly dependent on factors such as teachers' level of discretion and control over work, as well as their ability to access resources, and being included in school decisions. I felt that what many of the interviewees in this study described as autonomy was a limited version of autonomy; there was a sense of being included in school decisions but mainly in the context of how it would influence or determine choices being made in relation to work to be covered, which appeared to limit individual teacher discretion or control. No interviewee mentioned access to resources as part of their autonomy; it did not appear to be perceived as part of being autonomous.

Only one interviewee stated that she did not have autonomy; she saw this as a good thing and believed that:

'For a teacher's own safety, they nearly shouldn't be autonomous; then whatever decisions you make, if you have collaborated with someone else, you are not putting yourself out there and going to be the direct target for anything negative that might come, in the future, about a decision that you made' (Int. 8).

I found this to be almost fearful in its portrayal of autonomy and its consequences; it could also be taken as a view that autonomy is directly linked to accountability. This interviewee believed that there is less autonomy in primary school teaching now than there was when she began teaching over 14 years ago when primary school teachers 'did what they did inside their own four walls; they weren't answerable to anybody' (Int. 8). It is not clear what caused this apparent change in perceived levels of autonomy; perhaps it reflects a greater awareness of accountability in primary schools in recent years.

5.7.2 Accountability:

Accountability is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the requirement to justify actions or decisions. Accountability was a point of considerable discussion during the interviews conducted for this research study. There was a variety of opinions in relation to the question asking if teachers were accountable, and, if so, to whom? Several of the interviewees believed that there is no accountability in primary teaching; some spoke at length about underperforming teachers and believed that this was a central issue in relation to accountability. This interpretation of accountability as predominantly related to performance was interesting. Interviewee 2 stated that there was no accountability in primary school teaching and that 'Working with someone who is there in a permanent capacity and is highly ineffective, you can move them around, put them into a different area. You can try to get them to improve or whatever but, at the end of the day, if they are still failing, there is nothing you can do' (Int. 2). She described this as 'Frustrating, so frustrating'. This pointed to an expectation than teachers should be accountable in terms of reaching acceptable standards in their practice; the underlying opinion appeared to be that they were not. Interviewee 10 was adamant that she had 'taught with too many bad teachers. There is no accountability' (Int. 10). One interviewee (Int. 2) described a scenario which had occurred during a Whole School Evaluation (WSE): the Cigire conducting the WSE agreed that the teacher in question was 'extremely ineffective' but stated that his 'hands were tied' and there was nothing he could do; he finished by telling the Principal that he would not put it in the WSE report 'because it would blacken the school'. The interviewee believed that this illustrated a lack of accountability; she felt that it was 'not fair' and that 'If an inspector can't do it, and the Principal can't do anything, who are you responsible to? (Int. 2) These teachers appear to equate accountability with teacher performance which points to an understanding of accountability as an external concept. External accountability would usually be associated with performance checks; in primary schools in Ireland, this would be part of the WSE process, as outlined in the historical background chapter of this thesis. One interviewee responded to the question about accountability by replying:

'Well, we did a WSE a while ago; is that one form of it? But sure that only happens every 7 years or so' (Int. 4).

The frustration for these interviewees appears to be the apparent lack of consequences for teachers not performing or not reaching an acceptable standard, and the long gap between

'inspections'. One interviewee claimed that 'We all know teachers who shouldn't be in the job' (Int. 7). External accountability implies that standards are set and then performance is measured against a checklist of agreed levels. I believe that the point being made by the interviewees was that if teacher performance is being checked using the WSE model, unsatisfactory performance must elicit consequences. An inspection 'every 7 years or so' (Int. 4) is regarded as too infrequent, and there is no real accountability if an inspector can decide not to include a mention of under-performance by a teacher, in case it would 'blacken the school' (Int. 2). Interviewees described this perceived lack of accountability in relation to teacher performance as 'frustrating' and 'very annoying' (Int. 10).

The emergence of teacher performance as the main issue in accountability was interesting; primary school teachers clearly believe that individual teacher performance must be monitored and, if it is found to be substandard, consequences or interventions are expected. I had expected that the discussions around accountability would focus more on primary school teachers being accountable to Boards of Management, the DES and other statutory agencies such as the National Council for Special Education (NCSE); I was somewhat surprised at the immediate focus by interviewees on underperforming or ineffective teachers. This was even more surprising when considered in relation to the views expressed by interviewees regarding the role of the Teaching Council; there did not appear to be confidence that the Teaching Council would manage this aspect of accountability. This is explored further in this chapter under the heading of the fourth theme 'Being a Professional'. What appeared to be missing from the interview discussions was any sense of primary school teachers recognising their own accountability on a day to day basis as professionals with a recognised body of knowledge and an acknowledged degree of autonomy, justifying their own decisions and choices in the primary school classroom; accountability appeared to be regarded as something to be monitored by others. I had expected a greater awareness of primary school teachers, having exercised their autonomy and made informed decisions, being responsible for the consequences. What emerged instead was an absence of the personal aspect of accountability, and in its place a frustration that the external view of accountability described by interviewees lacked professional consequences.

The concept of accountability as intrinsically, rather than extrinsically, motivated arose in the interviews in relation to roles that primary teachers adopt or fulfil; this is discussed next in this chapter under the heading of the third theme 'The Extended Role of the Teacher'.

5.8 Theme 3: The Extended Role of the Teacher

This is the third theme that emerged from the interviews conducted for this study and it can be aligned with third element of Locke's (2004) classical triangle of professionalism: altruism. Interviewees showed an awareness of the different roles they assume as part of being a teacher but also had an acceptance of themselves as role models for their pupils. There was a sense of interviewees regarding themselves as always 'in role' in their capacity as primary school teachers. Klaasen and Maslovaty (2010) described teachers who focus only on subject matter as failing in their pedagogical task; Veugelers and de Kat (2003) stated that education always involves the teaching of values. The primary school teachers interviewed for this study showed a similar perspective, as evidenced in their statements:

'we are conveying values the whole time….It is up to us to model the kind of values that we think lead to a happier society' (Int. 3).

'Even the way you are treating them; in that very basic level you are teaching them or showing them how you think people should be treated so you've got to be a very strong role model and very aware of it' (Int. 7).

This concurs with Sockett's (1993) belief that teaching is connected with human betterment and 'invested with moral considerations' (Sockett 1993:90); his use of the term 'professional virtue' to describe qualities that he maintained were embedded in the social practice of teaching suggests that altruism is an inherent element of teaching. There was evidence of altruism in the interviewees' description of this aspect of teaching. One teacher spoke of having to be 'morally aware that you are serving the children' (Int. 9), while another believed that: 'We have a duty to instil in the kids good morals and values' (Int. 2); these opinions fit with Hoyle and John's (1995) concept of the service attributes of a profession but could also be considered as identifying an area of teaching that is not 'taught' as part of the teacher education programme. The body of knowledge or expertise associated with teaching appears to include this 'soft' knowledge (Becher: 1989) that is apparently accepted by primary teachers as part of doing their job. In his research into pastoral care, Norman (2002) found that the majority of teachers believed that pastoral care was part of their job; the primary teachers interviewed for this study seemed to concur as they spoke of: 'Holding the children's needs as core' (Int. 2), of 'Taking on extra roles: part-time social worker and health care worker' (Int. 3), and 'letting the children have a voice' (Int. 10). One

teacher stated that: 'Sometimes you're the one that makes a difference' (Int. 8). I believe that these views place primary school teachers' personal qualities or attributes as fundamental to teaching; all of the interviewees gave examples where being fair, showing respect, sharing, being open were central to what was being 'taught'. These primary school teachers saw this as part of their role and 'very much part of the job' (Int. 9). The male teachers had a particularly strong view on the importance of their input into children's life:

'A lot of them come from homes where there is no male figure; they'd look up to you so you'd be trying to be a good role model' (Int. 9).

'Sometimes you are the only male in a kid's life and that is a huge responsibility. You know you have to model the things that fathers should be modelling in order to give the kid some kind of chance' (Int. 3).

'We have an obligation to give and to show good moral leadership' (Int. 1).

I see this as wider than just the school setting; the male primary school teachers felt a responsibility to fulfil a role that they believed was missing in particular children's lives in order to help children to have 'some kind of chance' (Int. 3). This is, in fact, assuming a role in society rather than just in the school community and is an indicator of how a primary school teacher's influence and intervention extends beyond the classroom. The interviewees did not appear to regard this aspect of the job as an extra; it was presented in the interviews as an accepted part of teaching. One interviewee stated that: 'We're not just delivering a lecture' (Int. 10). Another acknowledged the importance of the role in children's lives:

'They're underprivileged, disadvantaged and other things too, so I say that this is a hugely important job' (Int. 7).

In general, what emerged was an acceptance that primary school teaching is more than just passing on information and subject matter; the personal, social and life skills of the pupils were also considered to be part of what was being 'taught'. One interviewee noted that teachers are not the only role models in pupils' lives as they are exposed to role models on television, in the community and at home; the teacher's role was to 'build self-worth and self-efficacy' in the children (Int. 8).

What is clear from the data is that primary school teachers fulfil many roles in their capacity as teachers; at times the discussions moved between being a role model and the extended role of the primary school teacher without any sense that these might be considered as two discrete areas. One interviewee summarised by saying: 'You're a role model, a social worker, and *in loco parentis'* (Int. 10); what each of these assumed roles has in common is its focus on the good of the child. This reflects the professional ideal of service which was evident in the literature where Sockett (1993), for example, posited that teachers' commitment to education is similar to doctors' Hippocratic Oath, and lawyers' commitment to justice. The primary teachers interviewed appeared comfortable in their diverse roles; there was no evidence of unwillingness to adopt or fulfil roles that could be perceived as more than 'just teaching'. This reflects the findings of Broadfoot & Osborn (1988), and Osborn et al (2000), who found that wanting to help to 'better 'children was the core motivation for teachers. This is in keeping with Sockett's (1993) view of the moral complexity of teaching:

> Teaching is not an act or activity but it is primarily a role created by individual men and women teachers, by traditions, by moral and other theories, by particular school cultures, by parents, children, politicians, and so forth. The teacher can never simply 'teach' in the sense that a knitter knits (Sockett, 1993:90).

Being of service to colleagues also featured in the interviews, with one example given as:

'I think I am a role model for other staff in that I lead the way in doing Reading Recovery, the extra training, taking on new things, being flexible' (Int. 2).

This affirms the collaborative aspect of teaching but also adds an element of leading colleagues by example which can be viewed as altruistic and also as evidence of Hoyle's (1980) 'extended professionality' where teachers work collaboratively as part of a broader vision of constantly improving teaching.

5.9 Theme 4: Being a Professional

This is the fourth theme to emerge from the interviews conducted for this research study. It encompasses many of the areas covered in the three themes discussed above and also elaborates on some of the other issues that were raised in relation to being a professional primary school teacher. Wenger (1998:162) describes teachers' professional identities as 'rich and complex

because they are produced in a rich and complex set of relations of practice'; this was evident from the interviews conducted for this research study. Interviewees' own lists of what made them professionals included day to day issues such as: 'lesson planning and being prepared' (Int. 1), 'punctuality, personal appearance, dress sense' (Int. 2), 'attitude' (Int. 3), 'having full responsibility for these children' (Int. 4), 'being professional in my approach to any of the children' (Int. 5), 'being organised in my planning … and confidentiality' (Int. 6), 'the way I conduct myself with the parents' (Int. 7), 'my decision-making… and taking on board all the changes' (Int. 8), 'being paid a good wage' (Int. 9), and 'how you handle kids, how you handle parents, and how you handle other teachers' (Int. 10). These could be considered routine parts of being a primary school teacher but writers such as Hurst and Reding (2000) note these 'specific behaviours', including appearance, punctuality, using proper language, and building relationships with colleagues, as behaviours that exhibit professionalism. Hoyle (1980) describes this as portraying professionalism through the quality of one's practice. In listing these typical primary school teacher 'functions' as part of being a professional, the interviewees were recognising and acknowledging what is accepted in the literature as an integral part of teacher professionalism. There was also recognition of the need for self-awareness and self-evaluation as teachers spoke of 'endeavouring to better your own teaching so that you are bettering the kids' (Int. 2) which appeared to merge both the knowledge attribute of having to constantly upskill and develop, with the altruistic attribute of wanting to 'better the kids'. This was echoed in other comments such as:

'I am very much a learner myself; I learn every day as the children do. I am very open-minded, always trying to be positive, and looking at myself to improve' (Int. 2)

'You're constantly re-evaluating where you're at, where the kids are at. You're using the most up-to-date, or the most relevant of what you know of you, of the children, and of the curriculum, and then coming to the best decision on how to mediate that' (Int. 8).

I believe this reflected an attitude of people who are not merely 'doing their job' and it concurs with the view in the literature that commitment (Beck and Murphy, 1996), discretionary judgement, care for students, and professional judgement (Hargreaves and Fullan:1998) are accepted by primary school teachers as part of being a professional.

The primary school teachers interviewed for this study spoke at length about ways in which they considered themselves to be professionals and, while the majority of the points made appeared to centre on the classroom or school, I felt that it was important to address what it means to be a professional in the wider context of professional identity. Tucker (2004) cites several factors, including prevailing discourses, expectations, and experience as impacting on professional identity while Moloney (2010) sees 'the development, understanding, sharing and implementation of core principles …at the heart of professional identity' (Moloney, 2010:172). In this context, the Teaching Council could be expected to feature as it is the professional body, established in 2006, to regulate the teaching profession and to promote professional standards in teaching. During the interviews, I asked each primary school teacher what impact the Teaching Council had had, and what they believed the Teaching Council's role was. While some interviewees initially replied that they did not know what the Teaching Council's role was, some did use phrases such as 'to improve the professionalism of teachers' (Int. 1), and 'they're the regulatory body' (Int. 2) and spoke about the need for 'rogue teachers' to be dealt with (Int. 1) and 'weeding out the people who are ineffective' (Int. 2), 'monitoring and eliminating unqualified teachers' (Int. 8) and 'working with teachers who are not performing' (Int. 9). This indicates an awareness of the statutory role of the Teaching Council as a regulatory body but appears to focus on just one aspect of the Council's role – dealing with ineffective or unqualified teachers. Garda vetting (Int. 6) was also mentioned as a function carried out by the Teaching Council. The tone of the responses to the questions about the Teaching Council in general was negative. The constant issue that was raised was that primary school teachers are required to pay an annual fee to the Teaching Council but they believed that they did not benefit from the Council. Some interviewees were adamant that the Teaching Council had 'no impact' (Int. 6), 'should be abolished' (Int. 3), and was of 'no benefit' (Int. 8). Two interviewees asked if I could explain to them what the Teaching Council actually did. Having a statutory organisation to represent a profession's interests, standards and development is considered part of the professionalisation process; it is interesting, therefore, to note the negative attitude of the interviewees to the Teaching Council. The Teaching Council's vision states that:

> The Teaching Council will be at the heart of teaching and learning, promoting, supporting and regulating the teaching profession. It will serve the best interests of education, in partnership with other interested parties, by being an authoritative, respected voice for

> the profession and a guardian of teaching standards, establishing best practice at all stages on the continuum of teacher education (Teaching Council, 2011).

The primary school teachers interviewed for this study did not convey an awareness of this vision. There was a sense that the Teaching Council would be expected to deal with teachers who were unqualified, or ineffective, but this was the only specific function that featured at length in the discussions; it was spoken of in an aspirational way – a hope that the Teaching Council would 'do something about ineffective teachers.' (Int. 2). I believe that the notion of the Council as an 'authoritative, respected voice for the profession' has not yet been assimilated by primary school teachers. The primary school teachers I interviewed were clearly not well-disposed towards the Teaching Council; they viewed it as an organisation that did not appear to serve any purpose other than to collect an annual fee. I was taken aback at the level of negativity and the strong language used in criticising the Teaching Council; one interviewee described it as 'the most unpopular organisation in the country since the Black and Tans' (Int. 3). What was evident was a genuine sense of upset and anger at an organisation that appeared to serve no useful purpose for primary school teachers. I noted the repeated 'What do they do?' as indicative of the urgent need for the Teaching Council to communicate its vision, its raison d'être, its purpose and its value to primary school teachers as there is clearly a gap between what the Council claims to do and what primary school teachers perceive it doing. For an organisation that purports to be at the heart of teaching and learning, the Teaching Council clearly has a problem to address as members do not appear to support its continued existence. Some of the interviewees believed that the Council should be abolished as it served no purpose. From the point of view of being a professional, it could be considered unusual to place no value on the Teaching Council; however, I felt that what may actually have been at the core of what was being said was that primary school teachers already perceive themselves as professionals and see no need for an organisation such as the Teaching Council. The interviewees in this study presented a picture of primary school teachers as people with a very good understanding of what it means to be a professional primary school teacher; their perception of the Teaching Council as an unnecessary body appeared to reflect an attitude of 'Why would we need it?'; I saw this as an important point for the Teaching Council to address.

5.10 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the interviews that were conducted with 10 primary school teachers as part of this research study. The interviews generated a considerable amount of data as

the interviewees discussed their understanding of what it means to be a professional primary teacher. Four themes were presented. The first theme 'Becoming a Teacher' acknowledged the importance of having a qualification as part of being a professional but recognised the need for further learning as primary school teachers continued to develop their skills with guidance from their teaching colleagues. The second theme 'Autonomy and Accountability' looked at examples of primary school teachers being autonomous and found that, for the majority, autonomy appeared to be determined by school planning and organisational policies. Accountability was generally viewed as an external concept with the WSE acknowledged as the main 'measure' for this. The third theme considered 'The Extended Role of the Teacher' and identified the many roles routinely adopted by primary school teachers as part of 'doing their job'; the altruistic aim of wanting to better children's lives was found to be a factor in primary school teachers' willingness to adopt 'extra' roles. The fourth theme 'Being a Professional' identified examples of being a professional primary school teacher, and considered how the Teaching Council, the professional representative body for teaching, impacted on primary school teachers. The general perception of the Teaching Council was found to be a negative one.

The next chapter discusses the findings and their implications and makes recommendations for the future.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the research by reviewing the key findings, and noting the implications and limitations of the study. It continues with a look at the contribution the study can make to current knowledge, and concludes with recommendations for further study.

This study set out to explore primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals. I am a primary school principal and can, therefore, be viewed as having an insider position in this research as I would have 'situational' knowledge of teachers and teaching. I saw this as a positive aspect to conducting the research as I had a tacit understanding of the situations and context described by the interviewees, as I attempted 'to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). From an ontological point of view, this research is constructivist in that the primary school teachers interviewed were part of the social construction of ideas developed and explored. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe the researcher in this type of naturalist study as being a data-gathering instrument where the researcher's own listening skills and understanding of what is being said are central to the process, and transactional knowledge is valued. This conveys an accurate picture of how I gathered the data in in-depth interviews with the participants. Holstein and Gubrium (2004: 141) noted that this type of approach to interviewing means that both the interviewer and interviewee are active and that 'Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled into the interview encounter'. The co-operative and co-constructive aspect of creating knowledge in this way reflects my own epistemological view of knowledge as subjective rather than objective, which was appropriate for conducting this research study.

The key questions I wanted to answer were:

> What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?
> How do primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals?
> What professional issues are of concern to primary teachers?

The interviews conducted with 10 primary school teachers provided the data for this study. Following the interviews, thematic statements were extracted from the raw data and grouped together as 4 themes: Becoming a Teacher; Autonomy and Accountability; The Extended Role of the Teacher; and Being a Professional. These themes are presented in the previous chapter and provide an insight into primary school teachers' understanding of the issues being discussed. I now return to what was the starting point of this research: my question 'What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals?' to consider what has been discovered.

6.2 Key Findings

The main point to emerge from the research was that there is an awareness among primary school teachers of what is meant, in the traditional sense, by 'being a professional'. There was recognition that having a qualification was central to primary school teachers' concept of what being a professional meant. In terms of actual practice, there was clear frustration that there was no intervention when teachers were found to be unsatisfactory. This indicated that having acceptable standards to maintain was important to primary school teachers as professionals. The emerging view from the interviews was that if primary school teachers are not competent, then there should be some consequences or interventions. The view that 'if an inspector can't do it, and the Principal can't do anything' (Int. 2) reflected a frustration for teachers who had no difficulty in stating that 'We all know teachers who shouldn't be in the job' (Int. 7). This point has implications for the Teaching Council in its capacity as guardian of teaching standards; primary school teachers clearly want to see procedures in place and acted upon in relation to teachers who are not reaching agreed standards. Whether consciously or not, this points to an acceptance that maintaining standards in teaching is part of being a professional primary school teacher. I found this interesting as it placed interviewees' conception of teaching in the technocratic-reductionist field, as described by Codd (1997), where the criterion of good practice is competence, rather than in the professional-contextualist field where the altruism and integrity of wanting to make a difference, which was a strong theme in the interviews, would be considered central. For me, this presented a contradiction in primary school teachers' perspective on what being a professional means. Taking a technocratic-reductionist view of teaching places competence at the core of good practice, and the associated accountability would be based on contractual compliance rather than professional commitment; from a pedagogical point of view, the aim for teachers in this

technocratic-reductionist approach would be to produce and attain specific learning outcomes. This approach is described by Brennan (1996) as a corporate management model, emphasising:

> A professional who clearly meets the corporate goals, set elsewhere, manages a range of students well and documents their achievements and problems for public accountability purposes. The criteria of the successful professional in this corporate model is of one who works efficiently and effectively in meeting the standardised criteria set for the accomplishment of both students and teachers, as well as contributing to the school's formal accountability processes (Brennan, 1996: 22)

This is a stark contrast to interviewees' descriptions of the extended roles they assume as part of being a primary teacher. Much of what emerged in these descriptions was allied closely with what Sockett (1993) described as 'professional virtue', as interviewees talked about 'letting the children have a voice' (Int. 10), 'being morally aware that you are serving the children' (Int. 9), 'building the children's self-worth and self-efficacy' (Int. 8) and 'Holding the children's needs as core' (Int. 2). These descriptions fit with Osborn et al's (2000) view of wanting to help to 'better' children as the core motivation in teaching. This reflects a professional-contextualist concept of teaching where the criterion of good practice is integrity, and the pedagogical aim would be to enable the development of diverse human capabilities. It was difficult to understand how the primary school teachers interviewed could reconcile two apparently contradictory concepts of teachers as professionals. The evidence of the altruistic desire to 'better' children was clear and was acknowledged and accepted by interviewees as part of their job; alongside this was an emphasis on the importance of performance standards and competence, to be measured 'externally', with frustration expressed by interviewees at the lack of consequences for non-competence. The general acceptance of external measures of accountability is worth noting. Interviewees appeared to have no difficulty with the expectation that they should reach agreed standards in their teaching; the issue of contention was the lack of accountability in ensuring that these standards were adhered to. Autonomy, another attribute associated with the professions, was exercised in a somewhat controlled sense; interviewees had the freedom to make decisions in relation to their teaching, but this was done within the system set in place in each individual school and could be seen as limited in its scope. This contrasts to Brennan's (1996) view that as part of being a democratic professional:

> A teacher has a wider responsibility than the single classroom...it includes contributing to the school, the system, other students, the wider community, and collective responsibilities of teachers themselves as a group and the broader profession (Brennan, 1996:4)

The interviewees in this study did not appear to have a sense of their autonomy in this way.

In relation to the knowledge base associated with teaching, the initial teacher education programme was seen as providing a base, but the pedagogical or craft knowledge, as described by Sockett (1993) and others, was perceived to be acquired through learning in the classroom situation and through observation of, and support from, more experienced teaching colleagues. In that sense, there was awareness that being a teacher involved ongoing learning; the examples given by teachers who had chosen to upskill or acquire new expertise, particularly in the areas of Learning Support and Resource teaching, were evidence of primary school teachers' willingness to continue to learn. I felt that the key point to note in this was the lack of a structured approach to this continued learning; the teachers involved had clearly chosen to complete particular programmes because they saw the need for more expertise in their own school situation. This appeared to contrast sharply with other interviewees whose main criterion in choosing to attend courses during the summer holidays was the 3 EPV days available following proof of completion. I respected the honesty of interviewees in admitting this as their influencing factor in choosing summer courses but realised in analysing the interviews afterwards that it was not, in fact, an issue that the primary school teachers involved were in any way embarrassed about or reluctant to admit: the perception was that summer courses are often just completed for the days off they facilitate during the following school year. There are two issues worth noting here: the first is the casual attitude of primary school teachers to the summer courses. A tradition clearly exists that has allowed the practice of 'doing a course' to get the 3 EPV days, to continue without any sense of a system or structure, and also without any review of the contribution the courses make to primary school teachers' practice. During the interviews conducted for this research, primary school teachers spoke of their role in serving and helping to 'better' children; the professional commitment was evident in the examples given of the many 'extra' roles that are willingly assumed by primary school teachers in meeting the needs of their pupils. The practice of completing a course, often chosen for its 'handiness', to facilitate 3 EPV days during the following

year, does not appear to demonstrate the same professional commitment. It is difficult to see how this casual approach to courses and the ensuing implications for schools as they facilitate EPV days, without substitute cover, could be considered professional. Again, this demonstrates a contradiction in primary school teachers' concept of being a professional. The second issue in relation to summer courses is that they can be viewed as a missed opportunity for primary school teachers on an individual basis and for the teaching body as a whole; the scope for providing meaningful CPD is evident. For the primary school teachers who had chosen to complete specific programmes, such as Reading Recovery, to meet the needs of their pupils, it appeared to be a personal choice or decision rather than something that was set down or requested. The question that could be asked in further studies on this issue is: what would happen in a school where there was a recognised lack of expertise in a particular area but no willingness on staff to pursue further learning programmes to address how to meet that need?

The lack of a structured system or framework for primary school teachers to continue to learn and immerse themselves in new approaches to learning could be viewed as allowing teachers to fall behind in their own learning. There was no reluctance among interviewees to continue learning; several had acquired formal postgraduate qualifications simply because they wanted to, while others, in identifying gaps in the expertise in their schools, acquired the further qualification associated with the course they had undertaken. I would suggest that the whole area of primary teachers' continued learning and professional development requires careful consideration as it is clearly lacking in both approach and direction; an overall system that facilitated ongoing learning and development for all primary school teachers would provide an opportunity for professional development for all rather than the current haphazard situation. The willingness of primary school teachers to undertake courses to further their knowledge in specific and needs-based areas could be viewed as evidence of the spirit of altruism associated with being a professional; however, the more obvious examples of altruism were in the extended roles adopted by primary school teachers. Osborn et al's (2000) finding that the core motivation for teachers was their desire to help to 'better' children is evidenced in interviewees' talk of wanting, for example, to give children 'some kind of chance' (Int. 3) and believing that they could, through their role as teachers, make a difference in children's lives. This placed interviewees' concept of teaching in the professional-contextualist field where integrity would be considered as the criterion of good practice, in contrast to the earlier emphasis on competence, above, which showed a technocratic-

reductionist view. There was no sense of awareness of this apparent contradiction in beliefs. The altruistic aspect of primary school teachers was most evident in the almost nonchalant acceptance by themselves that they filled many roles in children's lives; interviewees spoke of being social workers, being health care workers, being *in loco parentis*, building self-worth in the children, holding the children's needs as core, and also showing good moral leadership. This reflected Sockett's (1993) concept of 'professional virtue' as embedded in the social practice of teaching; interviewees did not describe these as 'extras': they were merely mentioned as part of the job that primary school teachers do. This brought to mind Aristotle's (1980:143) concept of 'phronesis' as a characteristic of a practically wise person. Primary school teachers are, in fact, demonstrating phronesis as their way of 'being': they 'see' situations and respond by doing what needs to be done. This is practical wisdom in practice and, while it is clearly of value in helping children, it may be adding to the perception of the knowledge involved in teaching as everyday knowledge or common sense, a point that featured in the literature. Continuing to develop this practical wisdom through what Biesta (2009:188) describes as 'the lens of educational values and ideals' is what primary school teachers appear to do, often unconsciously, and without realising that it is part of how they themselves are 'being' professional.

In showing their knowledge of many of the concepts associated with being a professional, or by giving examples that demonstrated these, the primary school teachers interviewed were clearly well informed on the issues being discussed. What they could not see, however, was what part the Teaching Council had in their professional lives. The Teaching Council sets out its role and functions in its various publications and aims to be 'an authoritative, respected voice for the profession and a guardian of teaching standards'; based on the interviews conducted for this research study, this is an aspiration that has yet to be achieved. There was no recognition of perceived authority in relation to the Teaching Council, and there was no sense that the Council was a respected voice; what was consistent through all the interviews was a lack of any awareness of what the Teaching Council was actually doing, and a frustration that all teachers were required to pay an annual fee to an organisation that appeared to serve no purpose in the professional lives of teachers. This indicates a gap between what the Teaching Council believes it is doing, and the perception of the people it was set up to represent. I would regard this as a concern that will need to be addressed by the Teaching Council which, despite its aim to be 'at the heart of teaching and

learning', is not seen as playing any part in the professional lives of primary school teachers. The Teaching Council, I am sure, will be unhappy with this portrayal of itself.

6.3 Implications of the Study

This research study has provided an insight into primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals and has raised issues that are of concern to teachers themselves. The two main issues that emerged as needing attention are the apparent lack of consequences for teachers that are not teaching to an acceptable standard; and the absence of any regard among teachers for the Teaching Council and its role as the regulatory body for the teaching profession. Both issues need to be explored further, with a wider group, to address the concerns raised.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

This study involved in-depth interviews with 10 primary school teachers; it can be viewed, therefore, as a small sample study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the study and this is recognised as a sampling method for use when the research is not seeking to produce results that are representative of the whole population but rather to provide diversity and symbolic representation. Qualitative interviewing is recognised as 'the gold standard of qualitative research' (Silverman, 2000:291) and I am happy that it was suitable for this research study; I acknowledge, however, that it has limitations in what Fontana and Frey (2005:714) refer to as 'the tremendous, if unspoken, influence of the researcher as author'. My position as insider researcher is discussed in Chapter 4 and I was conscious that in analysing the data that I was not merely writing my 'version' of the interviews. Triangulation is generally accepted as a method of cross-checking data to establish its validity; it was not used in this study due to the single method data collection. Instead, the trustworthiness (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998) of the data was established by providing transcripts of the interviews to the interviewees so that they could reflect on whether the interviews were accurately portrayed. This respondent validation is recognised as providing internal validity for research studies (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

6.5 Contributions of the Study

This study has highlighted a variety of issues that can be considered as of value. The first is that primary school teachers present themselves as having a strong sense of what it means to be a

professional: they demonstrate a knowledge base that can be further developed with experience and learning; they show clearly how the altruism of wanting to help children to better themselves is at the core of teaching; and, while not necessarily exercising autonomy in a wide sense, there is a recognition of autonomy in teaching. The study identifies some interesting contradictions in primary teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals, particularly in their acceptance of a technocratic-reductionist view of competence, which contrasts starkly with the professional-contextualist concept evident in their altruistic approach to the extended roles they assume in pupils' lives. In relation to CPD, the need to examine the current haphazard 'system' is clear; the challenge may be to change what has become an accepted tradition of 'doing a course', any course, in order to have 3 EPV days in the following school year. And finally, in relation to the Teaching Council, the study has identified a clear gap that the Council must address if it is to be at the heart of teaching and learning; primary school teachers do not perceive the Teaching Council as having a role in their understanding of what it means to be a professional.

6.6 Recommendations for Further Study

This study has shown that primary school teachers continue their learning and professional development on an *ad hoc* basis; there is no system currently in place that provides a path for CPD for primary school teachers. I would recommend that this issue be explored to establish what is needed and to identify ways in which primary school teachers can be involved in their own continuing professional development; the study revealed an enthusiasm for continued learning as primary school teachers completed further education courses sometimes related to their own school needs, and sometimes merely out of interest in an area. Harnessing this openness to learning into a more organised structure of different pathways to recognised professional development would ensure the continued development of primary school teachers as professionals. The study has also identified how the Teaching Council is viewed as a negative presence for primary school teachers; I would recommend that this strongly held belief should be explored to determine whether the issue is one of PR or whether there is a real need to reconsider the role and function of the Council and its aspiration to be the respected voice for the profession.

6.7 Summary

This study set out to explore primary school teachers' understanding of what it means to be a professional. The key question being asked was: What is primary school teachers' understanding of themselves as professionals? Two further questions were added: How do primary school teachers perceive themselves as professionals? and: What professional issues are of concern to primary school teachers? The study has been a valuable learning experience for me as a researcher, and as a primary school principal; I have spent time exploring the issues that arose during the interviews conducted for this study and have found that primary school teachers have a very sound knowledge of the key concepts associated with professionalism. Locke's classical triangle of professionalism provided a useful framework for considering the data, as it brought together the three key areas of knowledge, autonomy and altruism around which much of the data was themed.

For me, the most interesting part of the study was the emergence of contradictions in primary school teachers' own concepts. The most intriguing one is the contrast between the professional-contextualist approach evident in the teachers' commitment to helping the children – a role that extended beyond the classroom, and the technocratic-reductionist approach presented in the interviewees' approval of external measures of performance and competence, clearly expressed in their frustration that non-competence did not appear to have consequences for the under-performing teacher. To see the strong altruistic commitment to 'making a difference' in children's lives co-exist with the corporate management model of performance management was both interesting and unexpected.

Primary school teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) is an area that needs attention as interviewees showed a lack of any structured approach to CPD. While this was disappointing, it indicated the lack of an overall system and the tradition of poor practice, rather than an obvious unwillingness on the part of primary school teachers to engage in CPD.

The Teaching Council was the focus of a considerable amount of negativity and is clearly not yet 'at the heart of teaching and learning' as it aspires to be. The gap between what the Council believes it is doing and what primary school teachers perceive is wide; it will be interesting to monitor changes that occur in the future, either in primary school teachers' perception of the

Council, or in the Teaching Council's presentation of itself as the professional body representing teachers.

References

Akenson, D.H. 1970. The Irish education experiment: The national system in the nineteenth century. London: Routledge & Kegan.

Akenson, D.H. 1975. A mirror to Kathleen's face. London: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Aristotle 1980. The Nicomachean Ethics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Arthur, J. 2003. Professional value commitments. *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 51(4), pp.317-319.

Auerbach, C. F. and Silverstein, L.B., 2003. Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis. New York: New York University Press.

Baez, B. 2002. Confidentiality in qualitative research: reflections on secrets, power and agency. *Qualitative Research*, 2 (1): pp. 35-58

Bassey, M. 1999. Case Study Research in Educational Settings. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bateson, G. 1972. Steps to an ecology of mind. New York: Ballantine.

Batten, M., Marland, P. and Khamis, M. 1993. Knowing How to Teach Well: teachers reflect on their classroom practice. *ACER Research Monograph, 44.* Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Beck, L. G. and J. Murphy. 1996. The four imperatives of an effective school*.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Becher, B. 1989. Sustainability Assessment: A Review of Values, Concepts, and Methodological Approaches. Washington: World Bank.

Beckett, D. and Hager, P. 2002. Non-formal learning: mapping the conceptual terrain. A consultation process. Leeds: University of Leeds.

Bell, J. 1999. Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science. 3rd ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. 1966. The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge. New York: Anchor Books.

Bernard, T. 1809. Of the Education of the Poor. Virginia: Books International Incorporated.

Biesta, G. 2009. Values and ideals in teachers' professional judgement. *IN:* Gewirtz, S., Mahony, P., Hextall, I. and Cribb. A. (eds.) *Changing Teacher Professionalism: International trends, challenges and ways forward*. UK: Routledge.

Blaikie, N. 1993. Approaches to Social Enquiry. Cambridge: Polity Press

Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. 2007. Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods. *5th* ed. Boston: Pearse Education

Bourdieu, P. 1973. Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. *IN:* Brown, R. (ed.) *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change.* London: Tavistock.

Bowen, D. 1978. The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800-70. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Boyatzis, R.E. 1998. Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Breathnach, P. 2000. The teacher: professional or technician? *Issues in Education,* 5, pp.29-34.

Brennan, M. 1996. Multiple Professionalism for Australian teachers in the information age? *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research association, New York, April.*

Broadfoot, P. and Osborn, M. 1987. Teachers' Conceptions of their Professional Responsibility: some international comparisons. London: Routledge.

Broadfoot, P. and Osborn, M. 1988. What professional responsibility means to teachers: national contexts and classroom constants. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9 (3), pp. 265-287.

Brown, S. And McIntyre, D. 1993. Making Sense of Teaching. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Burke, A. 1992. Teaching: Retrospect and prospect. *Oideas 39*.

Busher, H. and James, N. 2007. *IN:* Briggs, A.R.J. & Coleman, M. (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Calderhead, J. and & Robson, M. 1991. Images of teaching: Student teachers' early conceptions of classroom practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education 7*(1), 1-8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(91)90053-R

Carleton, W. 1836. Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry, Volume II. London: William Tegg.

Carleton, W. (with D. J. O'Donoghue) 1896. Autobiography. London, Downey & Co.

Carter, S. and Little, M., 2007. Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10). Sage Publications.

Chadwick, R. 2001. Informed consent in genetic research. *IN*: Doyal, L. and Tobias, J. (eds.) *Informed Consent in Medical Research*. London: BMJ Books

Charmaz, K. and Mitchell, R.G. 2001. Symbolic interactionalism and ethnography. *IN:* Atkinson, P. et al (eds.) *Handbook of ethnography* . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.160-174.

Codd, J. 1977. Knowledge, qualifications and higher education: a critical view. *IN:* Olssen, M and Morris Matthews, K (eds.) *Education policy in New Zealand: the 1990s and beyond.* Plamerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press, pp. 130-144.

Cohen Zacek, J. 1967. The Lancastrian School Movement in Russia. *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 45(105), pp. 343-367.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. 1994. Research Methods in Education. London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion L. and Morrison, K. 2000. Research Methods in Education 5th ed. London: Routledge Falmer.

Commission on Higher Education 1960-67. Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1967.

Coolahan, J. 1981. Irish Education: Its History and Structure. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Coolahan, J., (ed.) 1994. Report on the National Education Convention. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Coolahan, J. 2003. Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers: Country Background Report for Ireland, *National University of Ireland, Maynooth*, April 2003.

Coolahan, J. 2004. The Historical Development of Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland *IN:* Burke, A. (ed.) *Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect*. (SCOTENS), 2004.

Coolahan, J. 2007. A Review Paper on Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland. *Paper prepared by Professor John Coolahan for the Teaching Council*, December 2007.

Coolahan, J., Hussey, C. and Kilfeather, F. 2012. The Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. *Report of the Forum's Advisory Group. Dublin* April 2012.

Corcoran, T. 1916. State policy in Irish education. Dublin: Fallon.

Corcoran, T. 1931. The Civil Law and Irish education. *The Irish Monthly, 59(700).* *http://www.jstor.org/stable/20513113.* [Accessed on 03 November 2011]

Corcoran, T. 1932. The Clongowes Record, 1814-1932. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Costello, J. 1985. "Eileen Flynn v Sister Mary Anna Power et al" Decision 1985, Irish Reports (1985) pp.337-343.

Creswell, J. 2009. Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cubberley, E.P. 1920. The History of Education. Boston: Kessinger Publishing.

Cutcliffe. J. and McKenna. H. 2002. When do we know what we know? Considering the truth of research findings and the craft of qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 39, pp.611-618.

Davies, R. and Ferguson, J. 1998 Professional or competent? The roles of higher education and schools in initial teacher training. *Research Papers in Education*, 13(1), pp.67-86.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Handbook of Qualitative Research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y.S. 1998. Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y. 2005. (eds.) The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Education, 1971. Curaclam na Bunscoile - Teacher's Handbook, Parts 1 and 2. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Department of Education, 1984. The Report on the In-Service Education of Teachers. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science 1992. Green Paper on Education for a Changing World. Dublin: Government Publications Office.

Department of Education and Science 1995. White Paper on Charting Our Education Future. Dublin: Government Publications Office.

Department of Education and Science, 1999. The Primary School Curriculum. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science 2005. Guidelines for Probationary Teachers in Primary Schools. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science, 2005. Guidelines for Probationary Teachers in Primary Schools. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Skills, 2011. Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. Dublin: Stationery Office.

DeSantis, L. and Ugarriza, D.N. 2000. The concept of theme as used in qualitative nursing research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research.* 22(3), pp.351-372.

Dewey, J. 1904. The relation of theory to practice in education. *IN:* Holmes, M.J., Keith, J.A., and Seely, L. (eds.) *The relation of theory to practice in education* (Second Yearbook of the national Society for the Study of Education, Part II). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dexter, L.A. 1970. Elite and specialized interviewing. Northwestern University Press.

Dey, I. 1999. Grounding Grounded Theory: Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry. San Diego: Academic Press.

Dilthey, W. 1927. *Gesammelte Schriften* (7). Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften.* [The construction of the historical world in the human sciences] Herausgegeben von Bernhard Groethuysen.

Dilthey, W. 1989. *Introduction to the human sciences. Selected works* (1). Makkreel, R. A. and Rodi, F. (trans. & eds.) Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dilthey, W. 2002. *The formation of the historical world in the human sciences. Selected works* (3) (Makkreel, R. A. and Rodi, F. (trans & eds.) Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dowling, P. J. 1935. The Hedge Schools of Ireland. Dublin: Talbot Press.

Dowling, P.J. 1968. The Hedge Schools of Ireland. Cork: Mercier Press.

Downie, R. 1990. Professions and professionalism. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. 24(2), pp.147-159.

Drudy,S. and Lynch, K. (1993). Schools and Society in Ireland. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Drudy, S. 2000. The teaching profession at a time of change: vistas and challenges for the future. *Issues in Education, 5, pp. 1-12.*

Drudy, S. 2001. Education as the pivot of change? Challenges for Ireland in the twenty-first century. *Irish Educational Studies*, 20(Spring), pp.1-20.

Durkheim, E. 1973. Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education. New York: Free Press (Originally published in 1925).

Education Act 1998. Act number 51 of 1998. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Englund, T. 1996. Are professional teachers a good thing? *IN:* Goodson, I.F. and Hargreaves, A. (eds) *Teachers Professional Lives*. London: Falmer Press, pp75-87.

ESRC. 2005. Research Ethics Framework. Economic and Social Research Council, Swindon, UK: ESRC .

Ezzy, D. 2002. Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation. London: Routledge

Flexner, A. 1915. Is social work a profession? *IN: Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections.* Chicago: Hildman Printing.

Flick, U. 2002. An Introduction to Qualitative Research. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H. 2005. From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement. *IN*: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research 3rd ed.* London: Sage. pp. 695-727.

Frey, J.H. and Fontana, A. 1991. The group interview in social research. *Social Science Journal,* 28, pp. 175-187.

Fullan, M. 1991. The New Meaning of Educational Change. London: Cassell.

Furlong, J., Barton, L., Whiting, C. and Whitty. G. 2000. Teacher education in transition. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gaden, T.G. 1988. Professional Attitudes. *Irish Educational Studies* 7(1).

Geertz, C. 1973. The interpretation of cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Gergen, K.J. 1999. An invitation to social construction. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwatzman, S., Scott, P. and Trow, M. 1994. The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and research in Contemporary Societies. London: Sage.

Giddens, A. 1990. The Consequences of Modernity. Cambridge: Polity.

Gilovich, T. 1993. How We Know What Isn't So: The Fallibility of Human Reason in Everyday Life. New York: The Free Press.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A.L. 1967. The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Goodlad, J.I. 1994. Educational renewal: better teachers, better schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gorden, D. F. 1987. Getting close by staying distant: Fieldwork with proselytizing groups. *Qualitative Sociology*, 10(3), pp.267-287.

Gorden, R. 1992. Basic interviewing skills. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Graue, M. E. and Walsh, D.J. 1998. Studying children in context: Theories, methods, and ethics. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greenbaum, T.L. 1988. The Handbook for Focus Group Research. Lexington: D.C. Health and Company.

Guba, E. G. 1990. The alternative paradigm dialog *IN*: Guba E.G. (ed.) *The paradigm dialog*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 17-30.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y.S., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research *IN:* Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.105-117.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1989. Fourth Generation Evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 2005. Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. *IN:* Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S.(eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. London: Sage.

Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. 1997. The new language of qualitative research. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hager, P. and Gonczi, A. 1991. Competency-based standards: a boon for continuing professional education? *Studies in Continuing Education,* 13(1)1991, pp.24-30

Hager, P.E. 1959. Nineteenth Century Experiments with Monitorial Teaching. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 40(4), pp. 164-167.

Hammersley, M. 2001. Ethnography and realism. *IN: Emerson, R.M. (ed.) Contemporary field research* 2nd ed. Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.

Hansen, D. 2001. Exploring the moral heart of teaching. Towards a teacher's creed. New York: Teacher's College press.

Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 2000. Sociology themes and perspectives 5th ed. London: Harper Collins.

Harding, S. 1987. Is there a Feminist Method? *IN*: Harding, S. (ed.) *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. 1998. What's worth fighting for in education: Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. 1996. Teachers' Professional Lives: aspirations and actualities. *IN:* Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. 1998. *What's worth fighting for in education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hargreaves, D. 1995. Beyond collaboration: critical teacher development in the post modern age *IN:* Smyth, J. (ed.) *Critical Discourse on Teacher Development*. London: Cassell.

Hargreaves, D. 1998. Creative Professionalism. The role of teachers in the knowledge society. London: Demos.

Hart, S. and Marshall, D. 1992. The question of teacher professionalism. Chicago, IL: The University of Illinois.

Hay McBer, 2000. Research into Teacher Effectiveness A Model of Teacher Effectiveness. UK: Government Publication.

Higginbotham. N. et al. 2001. Health Social Science: A Transdisciplinary and Complexity Perspective. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hilferty, F. 2005. Teacher professionalism defined and enacted: A comparative case study of two subject teaching associations. *Doctoral thesis,* University of Sydney.

Hillery, P. 1961. *Dáil Ēireann Debate Vol. 191 No. 5.* Dublin: Houses of the Oireachtas.

Hisrich, R.D. and Peters, M.P. 1982. Focus group: an innovative marketing research technique. *Hospital and Health Services Administration. 27(4), pp.8-21.*

Hodkinson, A. 2009. Key Issues in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. London: Sage.

Holstein, J.A, and Gubrium, J.F. 2004. The active interview. *IN:* Silverman, D. (ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* 2nd ed. London: Sage, pp.140-161.

Hood, J.C. 2007. Orthodoxy vs. Power: The Defining Traits of Grounded Theory *IN:* Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* 2007. London: Sage.

Hoyle, E. 1980. Professionalization and deprofessionalization in education. *IN:* Hoyle, E and Meggary, J.E. (eds.) *The professional development of teachers.* London: Kogan Page, pp.42-57.

Hoyle, E. 1982. The professionalization of teachers: a paradox. *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 30(2), pp. 161-171.

Hoyle, E. and John, P.D. 1995. Professional knowledge and professional practice. London: Cassell.

Huberman, A.M. and Miles, M.B. 1998. Data management and analysis methods *IN* Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.

Hurst, B. and Reding, C. 2000. Professionalism in teaching. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

InTouch 2008. Issue No.99, December 2008 edition. Dublin: Irish National Teachers' Organisation.

Irish Education Inquiry, 1827. Report of the Commissioners for the Board of Education 1824-1827. London: HMSO.

Israel, J.I. 2002. Radical Enlightenment. Oxford: University Press.

Israel, J.I. 2010. A Revolution of the Mind. Princeton: University Press.

Itzin, C. and Newman, J. (eds.) 1995. "Gender, Culture and Organisational Change: London. Routledge.

Johnson, T. 1972. Professions and Power. London: Macmillan.

Johnston, J. 1969. Hedge Schools of Tyrone and Monaghan. *Clogher Record*, 7(1), pp.34-55.

Kanuha, V.K. 2000. “Being” Native versus “Going Native”: Conducting Social Work Research as an Insider. *Social Work 45(5)* pp.439-447.

Kennedy, A. 2007. Continuing professional development (CPD) policy and the discourse of teacher professionalism in Scotland. *Research papers in Education* 22 (1) pp. 95-111

Kincheloe, J. and McLaren, P. 1998. Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research *IN* Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. London: Sage. pp. 303-342

Kincheloe, J.L. 2001. Describing the bricolage: Conceptualising a new rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7, pp.679-692.

Kitwood, T. 1977. Values in adolescent life: towards a critical description. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bradford.

Klaassen, C. and Maslovaty, N. (eds.) 2010. Moral Courage and the Normative Professionalism of Teachers. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Kvale, S. 1996. Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kvale, S. and Brinkman, S. 2009. Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Lancaster, J. 1804. Improvements in Education, As It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community: containing a short account of its present state, hints towards its improvement, and a detail of some practical experiments conducive to that end. New York: Isaac Collins and Son.

Lancaster, J. 1805. Improvements in Education, As It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community, 3rd ed. London: Darton and Harvey.

Lecky, W.E.H. 1892. The History of Ireland. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

LeCompte, M.D. and Schensul, J.J. 1999. Designing and conducting ethnographic research: Ethnographer’s Toolkit. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Maria Press.

Leinhardt, G. 1990. Capturing craft knowledge in teaching. *Educational Research, 19(2), pp.18-25.*

Leggatt, T. 1970. Teaching as a profession. *IN:* Jackson, J.A. (ed.) *Professions and professionalization.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Lieberman, M. 1956. Education as a profession. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Lincoln, Y. and Denzin, N. 1998. The Landscape of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E.G. 2000. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences *IN:* Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 163-188.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba. E. 1985. Naturalistic Inquiry. London: Sage Publications.

Locke, T. 2004. Reshaping classical professionalism in the aftermath of neo-liberal reform. *English in Australia,* 139, pp.113-121.

Lomax, P. 1994. Standards, criteria and the problematic of action research. *Educational Action Research: An International Journal*, 2 (1), pp. 113-125.

Lomax, P. 2007. Action Research *IN:* Briggs, A.R.J. and Coleman, M. (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*, 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Lortie, D. 1975. School Teacher: a sociological study. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Lotz, J.B. 1963. Person and ontology. *Philosophy Today*, 7, pp.294-297.

Lyotard, J.F. 1984. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mac Mahon, B. 1992. The Master. Dublin: Poolbeg.

MacDonald, K.M. 1995. The Sociology of the Professions. London: Sage Publications.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. 1999. Designing qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mason. J. 2002. Qualitative Researching. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Matthews, B. and Ross, L. 2010. Research Methods: A practical guide for the social sciences. Harlow, UK: Pearson.

Mauthner, N.S. and Doucet, A. 2003. Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. *Sociology: Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 37(3), pp.413-431.

Maynooth College Act, 1795. George III, Chapter 21.

Macpherson, I., Aspland, T., Brooker, R. and Elliott, R. 1999. Places and spaces for teachers in curriculum leadership. Sydney: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

McCann, Patrick 1997. The Teacher: Professional Competence and Personal Life. *Parent & Teacher,* Dublin

McEvoy, J. 1991. A Statistical Survey of Co. Tyrone 1802. Belfast: Friar's Bush Press.

McKenna, Canon J.E. 1920. Parishes of Clogher. Volume 1. Enniskillen: Fermanagh Herald.

McNamara, G. and O'Hara, J. 2008. Trusting Schools and Teachers: Developing Educational Professionalism through Self Evaluation. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Mertens, D.M. 2003. Mixed models and the politics of human research: The transformative-emancipatory perspective. *IN:* Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (eds.) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in social and behavioural research.* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage pp.135-166.

Miles. M. and Huberman. A. 1994. An Expanded Source Book: *Qualitative Data Analysis*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Milliken, J. 2001. Surfacing the micropolitics as a potential change frame in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 23(1) pp. 75-84.

Moller, G., Pankake, A.M., Huffman, J.B., Hipp, K.A., Cowan, D. and Olivier, D. 2000. Teacher leadership: a product of supportive and shared leadership within professional learning communities. *Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April.*

Moloney, M. 2010. The dilemma for pedagogues in delivering policy objectives. *European Early Childhood Care and Education Research Journal.*

Moore, H.K. 1904. An unwritten chapter on the history of education being the history of the society for the education of the poor of Ireland generally known as the Kildare Place Society. London: Macmillan.

Morrison, M. 2007. What do we mean by educational research? *IN* Briggs, A.R.J. & Coleman, M. (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*, 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Morse, J.M. 1994. 'Emerging from the data': The cognitive processes of analysis in qualitative inquiry. *IN:* Morse, J.M. (ed.) *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 22-43.

National Conference Report 1922. *IN:* Hyland, A., and Milne, K., (eds.) 1992 *Irish Educational Documents*, Volume II. Dublin: Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE).

National Programme Conference 1922: *National programme of primary instruction.* Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Nelson, C., Treichler, P.A. and Grossberg, L. 1992. Cultural Studies: An introduction. *IN:* Grossberg, L., Nelson, C. and Treichler, P.A. (eds.) *Cultural studies*. New York: Routledge, pp.1-16.

Norman, J. 2002. Educational Underachievement: The Contribution of Pastoral Care and School Chaplaincy. *Irish Educational Studies, 21.* Dublin: ESAI.

Norman, J. 2002. Pastoral Care in Second Level Schools: The Chaplain. A Research Report. Dublin: CRRE, Mater Dei Institute, DCU.

Norman, J. 2002. Teacher Professionalism: The Pastoral Dimension, *IN: Oideas 50,* Dublin: Government Publications.

Nowotny, H. Scott, P. & Gibbons, M. 2001. Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Nowotny, H., Scott, P. and Gibbons, M. 2003. *'Mode 2 Revisited: The New Production of Knowledge'*. *Minerva*, 41.The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp.179-194.

Ó Brolcháin, P. 1922. Quoted in *The Irish School Weekly,* 11 February 1922, p.127.

Ó Buachalla, S. 1988. Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland. Dublin: Wolfhound Press.

OECD, 1965. Investment in Education. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD, 1991. Review of Irish Education. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD, 1991. Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers – Country Background Report for Ireland. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD, 2003. Review of Higher Education in Ireland. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD, 2005. Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD, 2010. PISA 2009 at a Glance. Paris: OECD Publishing.

O'Riordan, E. 1983. Thoughts on Primary Education in Ireland. *The Crane Bag*, 7(2), pp. 51-57.

Ó'Súilleabháin, S. 1986. Towards our professional identity. *IN:* Hogan. P (ed.) *Willingly to School?: Perspectives on Teaching as a Profession in Ireland in the Eighties.* Dublin: Educational Studies Association of Ireland.

Osborn, M., McNess, E., Broadfoot, P., Pollard, A. and Triggs, P. 2000. What teachers do: changing policy and practice in primary education. London: Continuum.

Oxford English Dictionary (Concise), 11th Edition, Revised. (2009) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ozga, J.T. and Lawn, M.A. 1981. Teachers, professionalism and class: a study of organised teachers. London: Falmer Press.

Page, G.T. and Thomas, J.B. 1977. International dictionary of education. London: Kogan Page.

Parsons, T. 1954. Essays in sociological theory. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Patton. M. 2002. Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. London: Sage.

Peters, R.S. 1966. Ethics and education. London: Allen and Unwin.

Plunkett, H. 1904. *Ireland in the New Century*. mhtml:file://C:\Documents and Settings\TEMP\Desktop\UCC_Stuff\Part 5 of Ireland [Accessed on 18 October 2011].

Pring, R. 2000. Philosophy of Educational Research. London: Continuum Press.

Rayman, R. 1981. Joseph Lancaster's Monitorial System of Instruction and American Indian Education, 1815-1838. *History of Education Quarterly*, 21(4), pp. 395-409.

Reay, D. 1998. Micro-politics in the 1990s: staff relationships in secondary schooling. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 13(2), pp. 179-196.

Reeves, J. 2007. Inventing the Chartered Teacher, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 55 (1) pp. 56-76.

Report of the Commissioners for the Board of Education Inquiry 1809-1812, (1813) Volume V. London: HMSO.

Reports of commissions and committees on Irish education: 1791; 1812-13; 1837; 1848; 1870.

Ribbins, P. 2007. Interviewing in educational research: conversations with a purpose. *IN:* Briggs, A. and Coleman, M. (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Sage Publications, pp.207-224.

Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. 2003. (eds.) Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers. London: Sage.

Robson, J. 2006. Teacher Professionalism in Further and Higher Education: Challenges to culture and practice. UK: Routledge.

Rose. K. and Webb. C. 1998. Analyzing data: maintaining rigor in a qualitative study. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8(4), pp. 556-562.

Rowntree, D. 1981. A dictionary of education. London: Harper and Row.

Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I.S. 1995. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I.S. 2005. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rubinstein, R. 1994. Proposal writing. *IN:* Gubrium. J. and Sankar. A (eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research.* London: Sage, pp. 67-81.

Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher Professional Identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 16(2) pp.149-161.

Sachs, J. 2003. The activist teaching profession. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Saldana, J. 2009. The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. London: Sage.

Salmon, D. 1913. Monitorial System. *IN:* Monroe, P. (ed.) *A Cyclopedia of Education IV,* pp. 296-384.

Salmon, V. 1975. John Brinsley: 17th Century Pioneer in Applied Linguistics. *Historiographia Linguistica*, 2(2), pp. 175-189.

Sammons, P. 1989. Ethical issues and statistical work. *IN:* Burgess, R.G., (ed.) *The Ethics of Educational Research*. London: Falmer Press.

Saracho, O.N. and Spodek, B. 2003. Studying Teachers in Early Childhood Settings. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishers.

Sardar, Z. 2000. Professionals who lost their virtue. *New Statesman*, 10 July 2000, pp.25-27.

Schensul, S.L., Schensul, J.J. and LeCompte, M.D. 1999. Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Scheurich, J. 1995. A postmodernist critique of research interviewing. *Qualitative Studies in Education* (8) pp. 239-252.

Schön, D. 1983. The Reflective Practitioner. New York: Basic Books.

Schutz, A. 1967. The phenomenology of the social world. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Schwandt, T.A. 1998. Recapturing moral discourse in evaluation. *Educational researcher*, 18 (8), pp.11-17.

Schwandt, T.A. 1999. On understanding understanding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(4), pp.451-464.

Schwandt, T.A. 2001. Dictionary of qualitative inquiry. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scott, D. and Morrison, M. 2006. Key Ideas in Educational Research. London: Continuum Press.

Sexton, M. 2007. Evaluating teaching as a profession – implications of a research study for the work of the Teaching Council. *Irish Educational Studies*. 26(1), pp.79-105.

Shafritz, J.M., Koeppe, R.P. and Soper, E.W. 1998. The facts on file dictionary of education. New York: Facts on File.

Shulman, L.S. 1986. Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: a contemporary perspective. *IN:* Wittrock, M.C. (ed.) *Third Handbook of Research on Teaching.* New York: NY, Macmillan.

Shuttleworth, M. 2011. Science and the Enlightenment – Part I. Experiment-Resources.com. *Science and Enlightenment*. [Online]. Available from: http//www.experiment-resources.com/science-and-enlightenment.html [Accessed 03 November 2011].

Sihon, D.A. 1983. The reflective practitioner: how practitioners think in action. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Silverman, D. 2000. Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook. London: Sage.

Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A. and Shacklock, G. 2000. Teachers' work in a globalising economy. London: Falmer Press.

Sockett, H. 1993. The Moral Base for Teacher Professionalism. New York: Teachers College Press.

Stewart, D.W. and Shamdasani, P.N. 1990. Focus Group. Theory and Practice. Sage: Newbury Park.

Stockdale, A. 2003. An Approach to Recording, Transcribing, and Preparing Audio data for Qualitative Analysis. Available from www2.edc.org/CAEPP/audio.html [Accessed 17 November 2011].

Stokes, D. and Bergin, R. 2006. Methodology or "methodolatry"? An evaluation of focus groups and depth interviews. *Qualitative Market Research 9(1), pp.26-37.*

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1998. Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Teachers' Private Lives Must Remain Private: Employment Equality Bill in *ASTIR,* Dublin: February 1997 p.5.

The Stanley Letter. Retrieved from: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Stanley_Letter.

The Teaching Council Act. Act number 8 of 2001. Dublin: Stationery Office.

The Teaching Council. Annual Report 2009/2010.

The Teaching Council, 2011. Registration Handbook 2011.

The Teaching Council, 2011. Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education.

The Teaching Council, 2012. Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, 2nd Ed.

Thomas, D.R. 2006. A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), pp. 237-246.

Thorne, S., Jensen, L., Kearney, M.H., Noblit, G. and Sandelowski, M. 2004. Qualitative metasynthesis: Reflections on methodological orientation and ideological agenda. *Qualitative Health Research* 14(10), pp.1342-1365.

Tomlinson, J.R.G. 1978. A profession in its relationship to society. *British Dental Journal,* 144(11).

Toms, A. 1984. Teaching as a moral craft. New York: Longman.

Tucker, S. 2004. Youth working: Professional identities given, received or contested? *IN:* Roche, J., Tucker, S., Thomson, R. and Flynn, R. *Youth in society* (ed), London: Sage Publications. pp. 81-89.

Tuckett. A and Stewart. D. 2004. Collecting qualitative data: Part 1 Journal as a method: experience, rationale and limitations. *Contemporary Nurse*, 16(3), pp. 240-251.

Van de Ven. A.H. and Delbecq, A.L. 1972. The nominal group as a research instrument for exploratory health studies. *American Journal of Public Health* 62, pp.337–342.

Van Manen, M. 1990. Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Veugelers, W. and deKat, E. 2003. Moral task of the teacher according to students, parents and teachers. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 9(1), pp.75-91.

Wall, M. 1969. The decline of the Irish language. *IN:* Ó Cuiv, B. (ed). *A view of the Irish language.* Dublin: Stationery Office, pp. 81-90.

Weber, M. 1949. The Methodology of the Social Sciences. New York: Free Press.

Wenger, E. 1998. Communities of Practice. Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker*, http://www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lss.shtml. Accessed November 30, 2011.

Whitty, G. 1997. Marketization, the State and the reformation of the Teaching Profession. *IN:* Halsey, A. et al. (ed.) *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, A.M. and Irurita, I.F. 1998. Therapeutically conducive relationships between nurses and patients: An important component of quality nursing care. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 16(2), pp.36-44.

Williams, K. (2000) Professions and Professionalism: The Case of Teaching. *IN: Issues in education* Dublin: ASTI.

Yin, R. 1994. Designing single and multiple case studies. *IN:* Bennett, N., Glatter, R. and Levacic, R. (eds.) *Improving Educational Management through Research and Consultancy*. London: Paul Chapman, OUP.

Appendix A

Research Ethics Committee: Notification Form for Low-Risk Projects and Undergraduate Dissertations

DCU Research Ethics Committee has introduced a procedure for notification to the committee of
1. low-risk social research projects, in which personal information that is deemed not sensitive is being collected by interview, questionnaire, or other means
2. dissertations on undergraduate programmes in all disciplines.

The committee requires researchers to concisely answer the following questions within this form (before the project starts):

Project Title: Primary Teachers as Professionals (= working title)

Applicant Name and E-mail: Bernadette O'Donovan (56111762)
bodonovan@ireland.com

If a student applicant, please provide the following:
Level of Study (Undergrad/Taught MSc/Research MSc/Phd): Ed. D
Supervisor Name and E-mail: James O'Higgins-Norman (James.Norman@dcu.ie)

Questions:

1. Provide a lay description of the proposed research:

My research study will focus on the area of professionalism in the context of primary teachers. I want to explore the concept of professionalism and see how it can be applied to primary teachers.

Some of the issues I will consider are: teachers' own perception of themselves as professionals; public perception of teachers and teaching in a professional context; teachers as 'experts' in the traditional definition of professionals; how teachers' own values may contribute to their perception of themselves as professionals.

In conducting my research, I am aware that I am an 'insider' as I am a primary school Principal; this should allow me to understand the issues raised and discussed but should not influence my findings. I do not intend to include teachers from my own staff in my selection of participants for interview.

I hope that the study will be of interest to teachers themselves. It should also be of use, given the current Department of Education & Science proposal to introduce a system of assessing teacher competence; competence is traditionally seen as one aspect of professionalism.

2. Detail your proposed methodology:

I will interview approximately 15 primary teachers from a variety of schools; I plan to include urban, rural, large, small, DEIS (disadvantaged); Educate Together; and private schools.

Interviews will be semi-structured and will take approximately 40 minutes per session. Interviews will be audio-taped to facilitate a more natural exchange of views. I will transcribe

the interviews afterwards. Participants will be given an informed consent form to complete (copy attached). Audio-tapes and interview transcriptions will be destroyed by me following completion and submission of the research project.

Analysis of the interviews will be done with reference to the literature review which I will complete before scheduling interviews. Should 'new' issues or material emerge during the interviews, I will return to the literature review to expand or develop points raised.

3. Detail the means by which potential participants will be recruited:

I will not interview teachers from my own staff. Teachers will be contacted by a written invitation to participate in my research (copy attached). Choice will be governed by school type to ensure a representative cross section. I expect to have to positively discriminate towards male participants to ensure they are represented; the majority of primary school teachers are female but I believe my research would be incomplete without an input from male teachers.

My initial contact with schools will be through the Principal (via Irish Primary Principals' Network –IPPN, if necessary). My first priority will be to compile a list of schools to meet the criteria of my study; the next step will be to enlist the participation of teachers. Teachers participating will not necessarily be known to me nor do I want Principals to nominate 'suitable' candidates. I hope that, having identified a school, my invitation to participate will be responded to by at least one teacher. In the event of more than one teacher volunteering to participate, I will choose the first candidate to respond or the candidate that 'fits' a required category.

4. How will the anonymity of the participants be respected?

The sample size for this project will be relatively small; every effort will be taken to ensure the privacy and anonymity of participants. Teachers and schools will not be named or identified: teachers will be referred to as Teacher X, Y etc; schools will be given fictitious names. Biographical details, if relevant, will be included in the following format: number of years teaching experience; qualifications etc. School details will be presented as: rural/ urban location; school type etc.

5. What risks are researchers or participants being exposed to, if any?

No risk greater than any encountered in everyday life is anticipated due to involvement in this research. Data and information gathered will be treated as confidential and will be stored securely during the lifetime of this study. There will be no public access to the audio-tapes of the interviews. Confidentiality of information, while promised, is subject to legal limitations and, in the event of a subpoena or a Freedom of Information claim, protection cannot be guaranteed.

6. Have approval/s have been sought or secured from other sources? No

7. Please confirm that the following forms are attached to this document:

Informed Consent Form Yes
Plain Language Statement Yes

If not, explain why:

NB – The application should consist of one file only, which incorporates all supplementary documentation. The completed application must be proofread and spellchecked before submission to the REC. All sections of the form should be completed. Applications which do not adhere to these requirements will not be accepted for review and will be returned directly to the applicant.

The administrator to the Research Ethics Committee will assess, on receiving such notification, whether the information provided is adequate and whether any further action is necessary. Please complete this form and e-mail to fiona.brennan@dcu.ie

Please note: Project supervisors of dissertations on undergraduate programmes have the primary responsibility to ensure that students do not take on research that could expose them and the participants to significant risk, such as might arise, for example, in interviewing members of vulnerable groups such as young children.

In general, please refer to the Common Questions on Research Ethics Submissions for further guidance on what research procedures or circumstances might make ethical approval necessary (http://www.dcu.ie/internal/research/questions_ethics_submissions.pdf)

Appendix B

Plain Language Statement

I. Introduction to the Research Study

The Research Study is entitled: Primary Teachers as Professionals

The study is part of the requirement for the completion of the Professional Doctorate Programme in Dublin City University.

The research will be conducted by myself, Bernadette O'Donovan, (bodonovan@ireland.com) under the supervision of Dr. James O'Higgins-Norman, School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.

II. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require:

Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by me for approximately 40 minutes; the interview will focus on relevant theories, ideas and opinions in the context of primary teachers and professionalism.

With your permission, I will audio-tape the interview. The tape-recording will be transcribed for analysis by me, following the interview.

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study:

No risk greater than any encountered in everyday life is anticipated due to involvement in this research.

IV. Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study:

No direct benefit, in the form of inducement or otherwise, is attached to participation in this study.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data:

Data and information gathered will be treated as confidential and will be stored securely during the lifetime of this study. There will be no public access to the audio-tapes of the interviews. Confidentiality of information, while promised, is subject to legal limitations and, in the event of a subpoena or a Freedom of Information claim, protection cannot be guaranteed.

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period:

Audio-tapes and transcripts of the interviews will be stored securely by me for the duration of this research study; they will be destroyed on completion of the final research project.

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:

Participation in this research study is voluntary; you may withdraw your participation at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the research study have been completed.

VIII. Any other relevant information

The sample size for this project is relatively small; every effort will be taken to ensure the privacy and anonymity to which you are entitled. Teachers and schools will not be named or identified: teachers will be referred to as Teacher X,Y,Z, etc; schools will be given fictitious names. Biographical details, if deemed relevant, will be included in the following format: number of years' teaching experience; qualifications, etc. School details, if deemed relevant, will be presented as: rural/urban location; school type, etc.

If you 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 C

Informed Consent Form

I. Research Study Title

This research study is entitled Primary School Teachers' Understanding of Themselves as Professionals.

The research will be conducted by myself, Bernadette O'Donovan, under the supervision of Dr. James O'Higgins-Norman, School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. The study is part of the requirement for the completion of the Professional Doctorate Programme in DCU.

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore how Primary School Teachers perceive themselves as professionals.

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

Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by me, for approximately 45 minutes; the interview will focus on relevant theories, ideas and opinions in the context of you as a teacher. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview.

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

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*
Are you aware that your interview will be audio taped?	*Yes/No*

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Participation in this research study is voluntary; you may withdraw your participation at any time. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the Research Study have been completed.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data

Data and information gathered will be stored securely. There will be no public access to the audiotapes; these tapes will be destroyed by me on completion of the final research project. Confidentiality of information, while promised, is subject to legal limitations and, in the event of a subpoena or a freedom of information claim, protection cannot be guaranteed.

VI. Any other relevant information

The sample size for this project will be relatively small; every effort will be taken to ensure the privacy and anonymity of participants. Teachers and schools will not be named or identified. Teachers will be referred to as Teacher 1, 2, 3 etc; schools will be given fictitious names. Biographical details, if relevant, will be included in the following format: number of years teaching experience; date of appointment; qualifications etc. School details, if deemed relevant, will be presented as: Number of staff; rural/ urban location; school type etc.

VII. Signature:

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

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10
Male	√		√						√	
Female		√		√	√	√	√	√		√
>10 Years Teaching			√	√				√		√
<10 Years Teaching	√	√			√	√	√		√	
Urban School	√	√	√	√			√		√	
Rural School					√	√		√		√
DEIS School		√				√			√	
Private School							√			

Appendix E

Invitation to participate in research study

A Chara,

I am currently undertaking a research study with the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, in part fulfilment of the Professional Doctorate Programme. I am inviting you to participate in my research project which is entitled ***Primary School Teachers' Understanding of themselves as Professionals***. The purpose of this study is to explore how Primary Teachers perceive themselves as professionals. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. James O'Higgins-Norman, School of Education Studies, Dublin City University.

The study will involve being interviewed by me for approximately 45 minutes. The time and venue for the interview will be agreed with you beforehand; I am happy to meet you in your school, if necessary.

Your participation in this research is voluntary; please feel free to choose not to participate. If you have any questions about the research, please contact me by e-mail at bodonovan@ireland.com. If you agree to take part in this research, I will ask you to sign a consent form at the interview. The consent form will outline what is involved in the interview, how it will be recorded, how the data will be stored and who will have access to any information given. DCU's Research Ethics Committee has a set protocol for researchers; this study will comply with those rules.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will agree to participate in this study.

Le meas,

_____

Bernadette O'Donovan
Principal

Appendix F

Interview Schedule

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Tell me about your school – type, size etc.
3. What class do you teach?
4. Why did you become a teacher?
5. How would your pupils describe you as a teacher?
6. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
7. In what way do you consider yourself to be a professional?
8. What is the biggest challenge in teaching?
9. What motivates you to stay in teaching?
10. What is most important for you as a teacher?
11. What is the best thing about teaching?
12. Are there particular skills? knowledge? that a teacher has to have?
13. Where did you learn to be a teacher?
14. Are you still learning?
15. What in-service or CPD have you done?
16. What kind of collaboration have you experienced in teaching?
17. Is there accountability in teaching? How?
18. Do you see a moral dimension in teaching? Explain.
19. Does your personal life ever cross over into your teaching life? Or vice versa?
20. How much autonomy does a teacher have? Examples?
21. What is your feeling about the idea of teaching as 'vocation'?
22. What changes have you seen in education since you began teaching?
23. How has the Teaching Council impacted on your life as a teacher?
24. What is the role of the Teaching Council?
25. Anything you want to add?

Appendix G

Attribute Coding

Interview Number	M/F	A/B/C	# of Years	U/R	S/M/L	B/G/M	M/D/P
1	M	A	7	U	L	B	O
2	F	A	9	U	M	M	D
3	M	A	30	U	L	B	O
4	F	A	29	U	M	B	O
5	F	A	5	R	S	M	O
6	F	B	3	R	S	M	D
7	F	B	6	U	S	M	P
8	F	C	14	R	L	M	O
9	M	C	9	U	L	B	D
10	F	B	28	R	L	M	O

Legend:

Interview Number	**1 - 10**
Gender	**M**ale or **F**emale
Qualifications	**A**=B.Ed.; **B**=BA & H.Dip; **C**=Masters
Number of years teaching experience	**3-30**
School Setting	**U**=Urban; **R**=Rural
School Size	**S**=Small; **M**=Medium; **L**=Large
School Type	**B**=Boys; **G**=Girls; **M**=Mixed
School Category	**O**=Ordinary Mainstream; **D**=DEIS; **P**=Private