

**DECONSTRUCTING
EVALUATION
IN
EDUCATION**

(The Case of Ireland)

**A thesis presented to Dublin City University
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

By

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July 2013

Volume 1 of 2

DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

- (1) To Peter Daley, former principal of Our Lady's College, Belfast, who with extraordinary belief in mind and heart, generously and unstintingly gave his wisdom, time, and advice during the formation of this study. RIP.
- (2) I would like to thank God and depending on form, possibly luck for helping me receive a good education. This accomplishment was most certainly not due to the gift of intelligence or wisdom. Rather, it was due to the simple fact that I was lucky enough not to be born into a family that, although not wealthy by any means, did not live in extreme social deprivation like many children in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI) and elsewhere. In consequence I would like to dedicate this thesis to the 200,000 children in the ROI and the 100,000 children in NI who live in poverty and who, in spite of insurmountable odds play no hand act or part in the grand experiment and design of educational mal practice and still manage to attend school on a regular basis.
- (3) Finally, I would also like to dedicate this study to the countless number of people (principals, inspectors, family, colleagues, fellow researchers and friends) who's courtesy, generosity and respect shown to me at all times, although values to which I aspire, did not expect to receive to the extent by which it was given. Indeed, to voluntarily and altruistically go out of ones way to assist an unknown novice researcher with no power and influence (see chapter 2) are traits I will endeavour to replicate in whatever avenue life has chosen for me.

For these feats alone, my awe knows no bounds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank. To Joe O'Hara for his advice, support and challenging suggestions for improvement and quality and also for attempting to answer my plethora of e-mails even if they were sent with the Subject Heading: "Urgent help required-please respond asap" at various hours of the day. To Gerry McNamara for his advice, knowledge and research on evaluation policy and practice. Also, to Peter Ribbins for his advice on my endless (and quite possibly annoying) questions on all matters relating to leadership, power and influence. I would also like to thank, Sennan, Billy, John and Siobhan for their lectures, of which, undoubtedly shaped the course of this study.

To the many principals and inspectors in the ROI and NI that participated in the study. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy working and indeed non-working schedules and also for your honesty on all things evaluation. To Harold Hislop, Chief inspector, Republic of Ireland and Stanley Goudie, Chief inspector, Northern Ireland for allowing me to interview inspectors in your departments.

To, in alphabetical order, Professor John Anderson, Miss Elizabeth Armour, Oliver Mooney and Dr. Paddy Shevlin for sharing their unique and forward thinking knowledge and perceptions on the present and future direction of evaluation policy and practice in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. Indeed, in recognition and hindsight, it would not have been possible to complete this research if it was not for the unselfish support of those mentioned during various stages of the research.

To my absent friends near and far (Thank you). On that matter, I would also like to sincerely thank Kieran Creaner for being left with the onerous task of giving up his time to proof read the study and also, making various and challenging suggestions for improvement.

To my siblings, Sean, Michael, Finbar and Rosemarie.

To my father Tom Brown for suggesting that I should not always persist on chasing the money and instead should chase something useful and worthwhile to do with my life.

To my mother, Maria O'Broin for trying to instil in her children the importance of respecting diversity and also, the importance of trying ones best to strive to be unassuming and humble and also to strive towards treating everyone equally regardless of occupation, creed, socio economic status, or ethnicity. Your memory haunts me still.

To my children Fiachra and Ailís for making this life "fun and fantastic".

Finally, to my wife Audrey for taking on extra parental duties and in consequence, laterally putting the kiln and sketch pad away for a few years in order to facilitate the completion of this study. My unending and endless thanks.

I have not, lightly, decided to take the course I have taken. I know the consequences which may follow my action. The honesty of my motives will be attacked by able men; my aims will be called in question; ridicule and doubt will be cast upon the wisdom of my insistence in striving to realise the declared objectives.

(Noel Brown, 1951)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines school evaluation policy and practice in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and seeks to articulate how the education community can respond to finding a balance between school self-evaluation and inspection as a moral and social discourse for quality in education. The author presents a review of the literature on the varying concepts of quality in education and how these complementary and at times contradictory concepts of quality have managed to influence the school evaluation frameworks of most countries. Using an extended version of Nevo's (1995) dialogue model of evaluation, the author examines the challenges of trying to find a balance between school self-evaluation and inspection. Finally, an analysis of the systems of school evaluation in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is described. The author utilised a concurrent multi-phase mixed methods strategy that consisted of an all island survey of every school principal in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Semi-structured interviews were also carried out with a sample of school principals and inspectors in order to elucidate further the questionnaire responses and recommendations for improvement. Findings suggest that, although there are many similarities between the systems of school evaluation in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; there are also differences in terms of how to ensure that evaluation is used as both a benchmark and promoter for quality in education.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Associate Assessor
ACCS	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
ALC	Area Learning Communities
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BOM	Board of Management
C2K	Classroom 2000
CIROI	Chief Inspector Republic of Ireland
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CVA	Contextual Value Added
DESNI	Inspectorate of the Department of Education (Northern Ireland)
DESROI	Department of Education (Republic of Ireland)
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DI	District Inspector
EE	External Evaluation
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate (Northern Ireland)
FSM	Free School Meals
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HOD	Head of Department
IE	Internal Evaluation
INTO	Irish National Teachers Organisation
JMB	Joint Managerial Board
NAPDP	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

NI	Northern Ireland
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRSD	Performance Review and Staff Development
QA	Quality Assurance
RI	Reporting Inspector
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SSID	Secondary School Information Disk
TQM	Total Quality Management
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VFM	Value for Money
WELB	Western Education Library Board
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
WSE-MLL	Whole School Evaluation Management Leadership and Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background

As we traverse the borderless knowledge economy of the twenty-first century, heightened awareness of the quality of leadership, teaching and learning in compulsory-level education has become a topic of national and international concern. This is no surprise given the belief in many Western countries that education in the form of human capital is ‘the key to economic growth and to people’s ability to earn a living’ (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [2011]). Old-world economic practices, such as labour and manufacturing, are being replaced by other key determinants for economic success, such as knowledge and innovation. Concomitant to the role the school plays in the economy is the belief that education should not only be used as a catalyst for economic growth, but that it also

seeks to prepare children not just for working life, but for life as a whole. Education that focuses narrowly on work available today would soon be obsolescent. The purpose of education is to develop the whole person, aesthetic, artistic, physical, moral, and spiritual. (Bruton 2011, p.3)

Other key aspects of a healthy society, such as citizenship, identity and well-being, are also seen as ‘crucially important dimensions of what schools, teachers and principals regard as important, increasingly against a rising tide of regimes of accountability’ (Sugrue 2008, p.40). However, regardless of the various epistemological stances on the primary role the school plays in society, it would be reasonable to suggest that among most stakeholders involved in education, ‘improving the micro efficiency of the school has been viewed as a means of addressing some of the macro-problems of the state and society’ (MacBeath 1998, p.47). The increased interest in the quality of teaching and learning in compulsory-level education also resonates well with Guthrie’s (1984, p.790) assertion that ‘only when the results will be costly in financial or personal terms, our reflectiveness is proportional to the importance of the issue’.

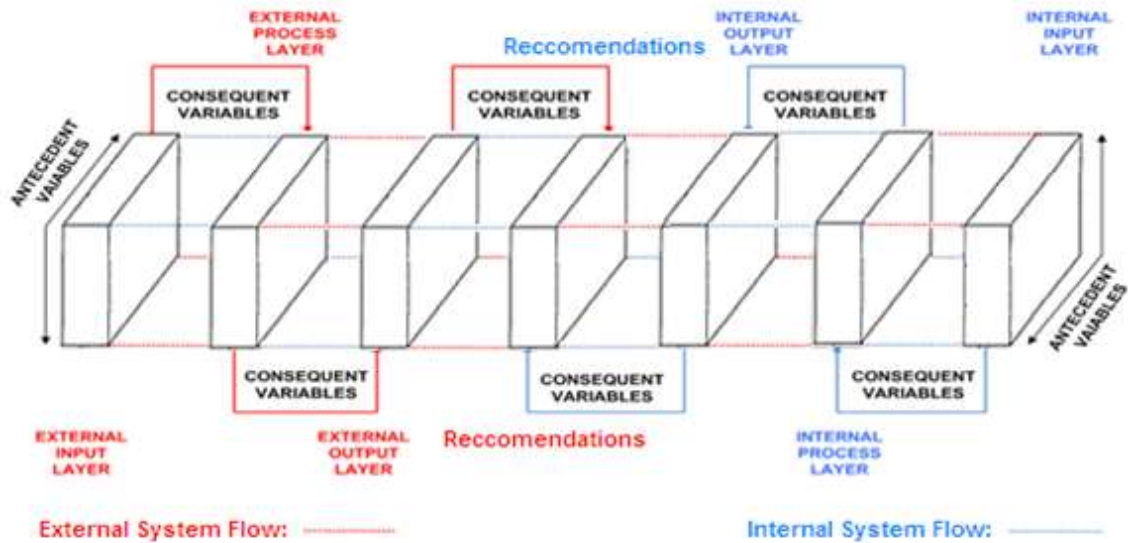
In the last century, one global solution to improving the quality of leadership, teaching and learning in compulsory-level education appeared to be primarily built around an externally driven model for school improvement, more commonly referred to as *improvement through inspection*. However, the systems of accountability embedded into most countries’ educational frameworks have not been above criticism.

While adversaries of educational accountability believe that external evaluation in the form of school inspection is nothing more than an echo of Bentham (cited in Etzioni 2010, p.393) who states, 'the more strictly we are watched, the better we behave'. On the other hand, proponents of accountability in education believe that school inspection is an endorsement of 'the legal obligation to respect the legitimate interests of others affected by decisions, programs, and interventions' (Considine 2002, p.21).

In this century, a new blended system of evaluation has emerged in which 'many countries show a trend towards transferring more responsibility to the school and away from external inspectorates' (Gulikers et al. 2010, p.1). In line with neoliberal ideologies and the decentralisation agenda in many countries, 'the emphasis on teacher accountability transfers the onus for effective schooling onto teachers whilst allocating a primarily regulatory and monitoring role to the state' (Morley and Rassool 2000, p.169). This system of accountability and effectiveness, which is essentially an allogamy of internal and external evaluation with 'school self-evaluation running parallel to whole-school evaluation conducted by the inspectorate' (McNamara et al. 2002, p.209), has become the dominant mode of evaluation at all levels of education in most countries, and Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) are no exceptions.

Although the rapid pace of acceptance for this model of evaluation is in part fuelled by an ever-increasing drive for standardisation, decentralisation and cost effectiveness, its increased acceptance may also be attributed to the belief that when treated as interconnected units, both systems of evaluation will reduce the perceived shortcomings of the other, creating a systematic flow of information. The theoretical assumption is based on the assertion that each component of the system of internal/external evaluation is interdependent with other component parts (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Internal/external evaluation system flow. (Source: Brown 2011, p.23, fig 4).



It is perceived that the evaluative relationship between the state and schools will lead to richer evaluations, resulting in more meaningful internal/external recommendations that will subsequently direct future strategic development planning initiatives within the school. However, because of the interconnectedness between each layer in the system, antecedent variables associated with each layer have the potential to be either mutually beneficial or mutually detrimental to the effectiveness of other layers within the system. Therefore, ‘reconciling these imperatives has become a goal of most school evaluation systems, with what degree of success, it is perhaps too early to say’ (McNamara and O’Hara 2008a, p.101).

Given the extent to which this model of evaluation has become embedded into the evaluation frameworks of most countries, it is important that research deconstruct the factors related to the successful implementation and integration of this model. This research uses a multi-phase mixed-methods case study to investigate the factors related to the coexistence of internal (IE) and external evaluation (EE) in two countries, NI and the ROI, which seem to have adopted what is commonly referred to as ‘the new relationship with schools (NRWS)’ (Miliband 2004). Based on this information, recommendations will be made regarding the successful integration of IE and EE into one cohesive unit for school improvement.

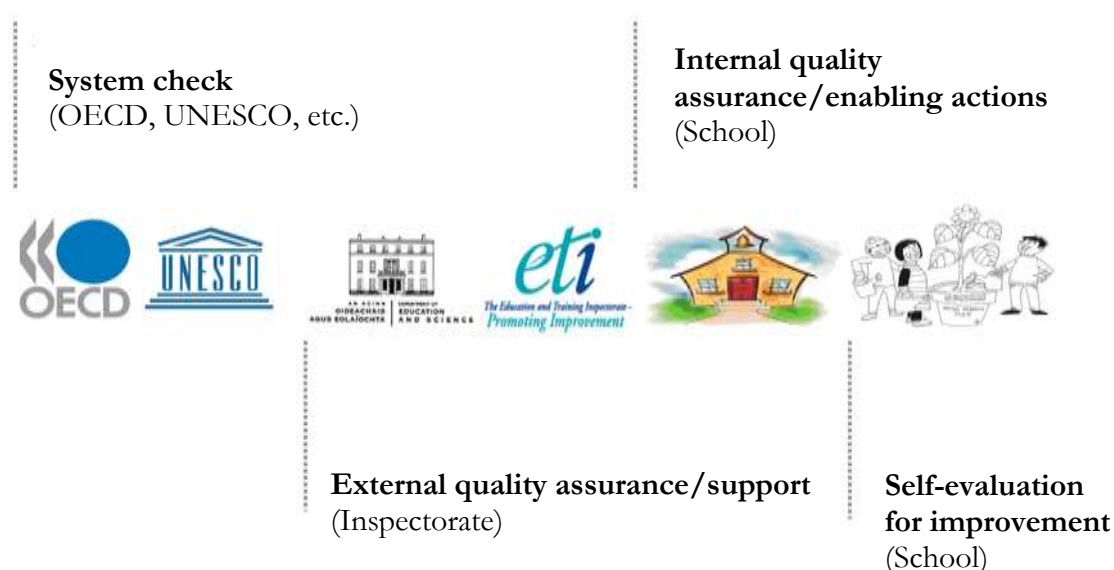
1.2 Rationale for the study

At this point, it seems pertinent to ask the question: Why study factors related to the successful integration of internal and external evaluations in education using a comparative international education methodology? Reflecting on Sadler's (1900 cited in Bereday 1964, p.307) oft-cited question, 'how far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?' The benefits of using comparative education studies stem from the belief that this field of educational research has the potential to contribute to 'the improvement of educational policy and practice world-wide and advances in theoretical work relating specifically to education and to the social sciences more generally' (Crossley 1999, p.249). Further to the point made by Crossley (1999), 'Another reason for studying other societies' education systems is to discover what can be learned that will contribute to improved policy and practice at home' (Arnove 2012, p.6). Indeed, the author affirms that 'educational borrowing' has been practiced for many centuries.

One of the earliest examples of educational borrowing occurred in A.D. 607, when the Japanese court sent a mission to China to study the empire's education system. According to Tesuya Kobayashi, one outcome of this visit was the establishment of Japan's first national school system. At the turn of the twentieth century, Japanese education authorities looked to the West for guidance as they attempted to modernize their school system. In turn, countries such as China and Thailand found the Japanese model to be appropriate in their attempts to develop economically without abandoning their cultural traditions. (Arnove 2012, p.6)

Inevitably, the use of 'educational borrowing' has resulted in policy makers and other agents of change either developing or adapting elaborate evaluation systems where 'the government of country x explicitly "borrows" policy y from country z, legitimising it with reference to the attractiveness of country z, and playing on the desire for externalisation in a globalising world' (Crossley and Schweisfurth 2009, p.457) (see Figure 2) to make schools more effective.

Figure 2: Sample of stakeholders involved in educational evaluation.



One such example of ‘educational borrowing’, a frequently used practice in many education systems, can be seen in the Department of Education and Skills, Republic of Ireland’s (DESROI) draft strategy to improve literacy and numeracy standards. In this document, a benchmarking data analysis tool referred to as ‘Schools Like Ours’ is prescribed as allowing a school to ‘have access to its own data as well as the data from the “matched” schools’ (DESROI 2010, p.41). In 2007, the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Education also developed a benchmarking module called ‘Schools Like Ours’. Its purpose is also to ‘find similar schools to any selected school’ (DESO 2007, p.4) using any combination of the available indicators such as similar demographics but higher achievements.

However, the field of comparative education studies is not without its critics. These criticisms typically stem from the observation that certain large-scale comparative studies pay very little attention to context, culture and feasibility, where ‘the former functions to limit critique and innovation while the latter permits them to promote general recommendations across diverse populations’ (Samoff 2012, p.85). Sugrue (2008, p.41) argues that ‘such marginalisations or exclusions are never identified as distinctive features of a system that may have something of particular importance to say. Rather such differences are ignored’. This perspective resonates with Samoff (2012) when referring to the pursuit of globalising educational standards through the process of measurement and comparison of student assessment results across countries.

Although they claim sensitivity to the unique characteristics of specific national and local settings, by design those assessments seek to use and thereby institutionalize internationally particular assumptions about both the content and the process of learning and teaching. The results of the assessment measures may contribute to improving the quality of education in some settings, but their more powerful role is to undermine the educational philosophy that associates effective learning with education objectives and measures that are debated and decided locally. (Samoff 2012, p.69)

However, if this research were studied in isolation, such research could over or possibly, under-estimate the impact of, or factors relating to, the successful integration of educational evaluation in education. As Coe (2009) states, 'it is well known in the evaluation literature that studies without a comparison group tend to over-estimate effects'. (p.367). In line with this statement, valid comparisons are necessary to gauge the actual success rate of a programme or initiative. In this study, the comparison relates to the extent to which both regions have moved towards realising the terms required for IE and EE coexistence. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to investigate the faults or merits of IE and EE separately. Nor, given the myriad of antecedent variables that directly or indirectly effect school improvement, does the study attempt to ascertain the effect of either IE or EE on all populations in all countries and naively propose a grandiose educational version of Boyle's Law that can be used to ascertain the effect of a region's evaluation system on school improvement.

Indeed, further to this point, while the Finnish education system is quite frequently used as an exemplar of best practice for the quality of teacher self-evaluation and education, Pasi Sahlberg in an interview with Rubin (2013) highlights the complexities relating to the transfer of educational policy and practice among countries.

I make it very clear that the Finnish school system cannot be transferred anywhere else in the world. Many of the successful aspects of Finland's education system are rooted deep in our culture and values, which are different from those in the U.S. For example, high levels of trust in people and institutions, pursuit of equality and fairness in society and life, and willingness to pay taxes for common good are some of the Finnish conditions that don't exist everywhere. (Rubin, 2013)

This study however seeks to identify antecedent variables relating to the successful implementation of IE and EE as interconnected units for school improvement. Furthermore, justification for this research is based on the realisation that some

countries are currently in the process of changing various elements of their evaluation systems. In the absence of any significant analysis of the factors relating to the successful integration of IE and EE in these countries, it could be assumed that these changes appear to be based more on periodic trends in education and the requirements of external forces rather than on any social scientific analysis of the present system.

Brauckmann and Pashiardis (2010, p.346) state, 'If we make hasty moves, we are bound to make mistakes and even be led to failure. In addition, fixing the existing situation will not be of much help to the teaching profession and the educational system in general'. The following statement affirms Coe's belief.

The educational world is swept by periodic trends, confidently and optimistically moving on from what did not work, but often returning to ideas that were previously discarded. Short memories and a belief in the power of novelty seem to be the driving forces. Such an unscientific approach creates fashion victims, not improving schools. (Coe 2009, p.364)

Therefore, justification for the proposed research is based not so much on a perceived conjecture regarding similar trends in educational evaluation but on the belief that change should occur as it exists in a regions culture, context and practice.

Moreover, although there are many studies that have examined IE and EE as interconnected units (see Vanhoof and Van Petegem 2007; Blok et al. 2008; Van Amelsvoort and Janssens 2008), there appears to be a lack of analytical research and the recommendations are, for the most part, based on attitudinal-type studies collected from internal evaluators and ignore the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in the process, such as inspectors. Therefore, research into external evaluators' perspectives is also necessary to better understand how these two systems can practically, mutually, and beneficially coexist. It is for these reasons that factors relating to the co-existence of IE and EE in education will be studied from a comparative perspective.

1.3 Expected outcomes of the study

This study will increase the body of knowledge concerning educational evaluations in primary/post-primary schools. More specifically, it will assist governments, policy makers and other interested parties such as the Standing International Conference of Inspectors (SICI) in the formalisation and implementation of future mechanisms, concepts, and resources required for the future direction and successful implementation of internal/external educational evaluations.

The goal of this research is to reinforce the need to develop a network of nodes among educators in which principals, teachers, inspectors and communities can learn from each other's evaluative experiences. This platform could be extended to other areas of educational provision. This research could also be used as a foundation for dialogue between schools in other countries and regions that share common goals and concerns about the quality of the education that is provided in schools.

Based on the experiences of NI and the ROI, the information obtained from this research may also assist other countries that are in the process of refining their evaluation systems. Furthermore, the results of this research will assist organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), with their understanding of the factors necessary to ensure the successful integration of internal/external evaluations in countries that are in the early stages of developing their school evaluation systems.

1.4 Chapter overview

The overarching research question for this study was to investigate 'how best to combine both internal and external evaluation as a vehicle for school improvement by ascertaining what variables increase or decrease the inherent benefits of this relationship'. More specifically, the study seeks to explore the following:

- What are principals' and inspectors' perceptions of IE and EE?
- What factors inhibit and promote the successful integration of IE and EE as a vehicle for school accountability and improvement?

Within these questions a number of themes using an extended version of Nevo's (2002) dialogue model of evaluation (pp.43-52) will be explored. These will include investigating the realistic expectations of what IE and EE can achieve and the need for both inspectors and the school community to work together and take responsibility for the school as a whole by creating an interdependent, culturally responsive community of learners.

Chapter 2: Literature review

With the realisation that educational evaluation has become a global issue with many stakeholders involved in the process of assuring and improving the quality of education provided in schools, Section 1 of Chapter 2 reviews the rise of the quality improvement agenda in education and deconstructs how the various concepts of quality have influenced the development of the various evaluation frameworks that currently exist. In Section 2, Nevo's (2002) dialogue model of evaluation is specifically extended and examined, and key features are identified to form a theoretical basis for this study. As a means of ascertaining how the ROI and NI have embraced the coexistence of IE and EE, Section 3 of this chapter describes the internal/external systems of evaluation that currently exist in both regions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 details the methodology employed in the study. A multi-phase mixed-methods approach that involved a survey of principals and inspectors perceptions of educational IE and EE was used. A quantitative comparative analysis (using parametric and non-parametric techniques) was then conducted to ascertain the differences in principals' attitudes towards IE and EE in both regions. To moderate dissonance-reduction and further clarify the aggregated questionnaire responses, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with inspectors and principals in both regions. Using a modified version of Bushnell's (1990) training model (pp.92-96), the interview data was then classified into the different components of the input/process/output/outcomes/commitment system of the evaluation.

Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis

Chapter 4 is divided into five sections based on the conceptual framework described in Chapter 3: input (system performance indicators), process (value adding activities), output (recommendations, enabling actions), outcomes (school improvement), and the participants' commitment to the various evaluation activities taking place. Each section discusses the similarities and differences found in the topic and the collective qualitative and quantitative responses.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 5 outlines the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It discusses the stages of the research and describes key issues that emerged within each section of the study. Based on the findings from each phase of the research, conclusions concerning how IE and EE can mutually and beneficially coexist are discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research in this area are identified.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 focuses on educational evaluation literature. In the last chapter, the current national and international influences and changes in evaluation practice were outlined. These changes have often taken place at a pace in which governments and schools find difficult to keep with up in order to fully instigate the required change process. The first section of the chapter discusses the emergence of the educational quality improvement agenda and describes the varied concepts of quality in education and how they have managed to influence the development of the evaluation frameworks and methodologies that exist. The next section explores the emergence of the dual system of IE and EE that presently exists in most countries and discusses the terms of coexistence required for IE and EE to mutually and beneficially coexist.

The second half of the chapter describes the systems of evaluation that exist in the ROI and NI. It argues that to create an interdependent culture of evaluation in education, there needs to be a closer connection between the internal and external; the antecedent variables that affect the stability of this relationship also need to be addressed. The need to shift from a preponderant, top-down, model of evaluation to a culturally responsive, cooperative model of evaluation within the social understanding of the evaluation's location is proposed. Based on the literature reviewed, the conclusion will identify key constructs and conceptual features of educational evaluation, which will reinforce the theoretical framework for the exploration.

2.2 Quality and the acculturation of education

In most settings, judgements about the quality of education provided by schools appear to have been axiomatic. Therefore, schools were initially judged primarily by the literacy and numeracy skills obtained by students on high-stakes, externally devised examinations. This statistical conjecture, coupled with sporadic EEs conducted by the inspectorate, was the dominant mode of evaluating the quality of education provided in schools at the turn of the twentieth century. Since the 1950s, however, with the ever increasing value of education in society, interest in the quality of education provided by schools has also quite naturally increased. It is no surprise, therefore, that 'quality as a concern has dominated the educational debates triggered and sustained by international aid and cooperation, and by the ethos of economic globalisation' (Kumar 2010, p.8).

The increased interest in the quality of education provided in schools is in part driven by marketplace demands in which ‘globalisation has increased international competition and boosted the demand for quality education and school accountability’ (Wong 2010, p.206).

Concomitant to neo-liberal ideologies, the quality improvement agenda is also fuelled by a phalanx of what is referred to as the ‘architects, critics and prophets’ (Bangs, MacBeath and Galton 2010, p.1) all working under the all-encompassing banner of ‘quality in education’. Indeed, it would be reasonable to suggest that the order of the day for many architects, critics and prophets seems to be ‘cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins’ (Isaiah 58:1).

However, the quality improvement agenda, fuelled by a broad spectrum of stakeholders with diverse expectations of what actually constitutes educational quality, has also permeated the cultural fabric of education. Therefore, there is no agreed-upon definition of quality in education, nor is there an overall consensus on the most suitable quality improvement initiatives or evaluation frameworks necessary to improve and maintain the educational quality of schools. These diverse expectations, according to Vanhoof and Van Petegem (2007, p.103) ‘come from both internal as well as external stakeholders. Although they are often parallel or complementary, they can also be contradictory’.

Quality, Kumar (2010, p.8) states, can have two meanings; the first is ‘the essential attribute with which something may be identified’ (e.g. a schools ethos) and second is the ‘rank of or superiority of one thing over another’ (e.g. school league tables). Taking these two definitions of quality into account, one can see how tensions and contradictions have arisen in the quality improvement arena. It is no wonder that ‘quality has always been a particularly difficult concept to define, and many academics have struggled to provide the all-encompassing definition’ (Drew and Healy 2006, p.358). Kumar (2010, p.8) states that the quality debate continues ‘at least partly because sufficient attention is not paid to the tension that arises between the two meanings when the term “quality” is applied to education’. Therefore, as a means of deconstructing how and why evaluation is used in education and how tension may arise, it is important to describe how the various concepts and connotations of quality have

managed to occupy almost every part of the educational spectrum and have subsequently managed to influence the formation and development of quality improvement frameworks and initiatives in most countries.

A UNESCO paper by Kumar and Sarangapani (2004, p.2) suggests that ‘the usage of the term “quality” in the discourse of education became significant from the 1950s, and more visibly from the 1960s onwards’. This same period also saw the emergence of human capital theory (Schultz 1960; Becker 1964), which suggests that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is proportional to an individual’s potential earning power. Education is no longer only seen as a fundamental right; it is also a financial investment in the future. In other words, education has a production function, and the quality of education that individuals receive can be potentially correlated to their potential earning power. In theory, therefore, a quality education has a multiplier effect on the economic prosperity, social wellbeing and living standards of a country. According to Heckman and Jacobs (2010, p.4), ‘only when individuals acquire sufficient human capital at the beginning of their lifecycles, can they avoid getting stuck in poverty and productivity traps later on in life’. However, like every investment and the laws of economics, there is also an initial capital investment required to cash in on the policy. To use the language of the market, the maximum return accrued from the initial investment is dependent on the quality of the brokers who are tasked with managing the investment.

As a result, the important questions are: who should bear the costs of the investment, who is responsible for the process, and who is responsible if the desired outputs are not achieved? The OECD (1990 cited in Baptise 2001) affirms that each individual is responsible for bearing the cost as those who make a greater investment in education will be rewarded with higher earnings later. ‘This, insisted the OECD, is one reason why students should pay for their own studies and why support for them should be in the form of loans rather than grants or scholarships’ (Baptise 2001, p.189).

While the author accepts that the more education an individual receives, the greater the chance that person has of achieving economic prosperity, the author also considers that it would be slightly simplistic to suggest that this theory should be considered absolute. Other key determinants for an individual’s potential economic earning power must also be taken into account if education has a production function.

A production function, education or otherwise, describes the maximum level of outcome possible from alternative combinations of inputs. It summarizes technical relationships between and among inputs and outcomes. The production function tells what is currently possible. It provides a standard against which practice can be evaluated on productivity grounds. (Monk 1989, p.31)

Consideration must also be given to variables that either increase or decrease the rate of production. Variables outside the conventional doctrine of education, such as demographics, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status, and the very clear lack of meritocracy in society should also be taken into account when proposing hypotheses for an individual's potential earning power. In addition, the quality of leadership, teaching, parental engagement and student effort that occurs in schools should be used as determinants for potential earnings.

However, correlating the quality of school personnel to the potential earnings of a student creates both quantitative and qualitative problems. For example, a post-primary school in an urban, disadvantaged area in the ROI found that 'up to 90 per cent of first years coming in have a reading age below their chronological age and in many cases, it's well below' (Hunt 2011). While it could be assumed that prior to entering the school, the education received by these students was not of the same quality as those of a similar chronological age that had a higher reading age, it could also be said that this disturbing figure has very little if anything at all to do with the quality of teaching and learning received prior to students entering the school; rather, they are connected to the cultural and social inequities that exist in society more generally. However, on the other end of the social spectrum, it could also be construed as statistically incorrect to suggest that in socially advantaged areas, in which the majority of students reach their chronological reading age, the success of the students has very little to do with the quality of teaching and more to do with the socioeconomic status of students in the school. Indeed, OECD (2010), when referring to the PISA 2009 reading assessment scores, found that it is not always the case where those students who attend private education have an advantage over students in the public education system.

In fact, of the 15 OECD countries that show a positive relationship between attendance in private schools and performance, only 3 show a clear advantage in attending private school: in Slovenia, Canada and Ireland, students of similar backgrounds who attend private schools score at least 24 points higher in the reading assessment than students who attend public schools. In contrast, in Japan and the United Kingdom, students from similar backgrounds who attend private schools score at least 31 points lower than students who attend public schools. (OECD 2010, p.43)

In this regard and akin to the 2011 riots in London, where ‘in the broadest sense, most of those involved have been young men from poor areas’ (Lewis and Harkin, 2011), student success or lack thereof could also be a result of the opprobrium of nations and successive governments that have relied heavily on performance indicators in the form of statistical conjectures that have failed to concertedly understand the culture of its citizens and in consequence have and failed to address the cultural and social inequalities that are endemic in Western society, which inevitably has a multiplier effect on the educational attainment of students. Simons (2004) writes,

At a political level the drive for more efficient management of investments in the public services results in favouring a model of investigation that promises conclusive answers about what works. Is this just a passing fad not worthy of our attention? I think not; we have made that mistake too often, and the result is a school performance system that is grossly unjust and a health service at the mercy of political priorities. (Simons 2004, p.411)

Furthermore, although the majority of students in the ROI and NI receive the same level of primary education, it would be slightly short-sighted to suggest that those students entering post-primary education from more affluent areas have the same potential earning power as those from less affluent areas. This brings the concept of human capital theory and the effect family and community life has on student achievement into question. In this regard, it could be assumed that the terms *quality* and *equality* may be merely social constructs that apply to those children who are fortunate enough to be born into more affluent families, resulting in the sole application of human capital theory to this particular socioeconomic group.

From this perspective, human capital theory in this century also highlights the inequities that exist for young people and questions what can actually be achieved with the evaluation frameworks that exist in some regions. Leithwood et al. (2010) state that ‘best estimates suggest that everything schools do within their walls accounts for 20 per

cent of the variation in students' achievement is based on what happens in schools (Creemer & Reetzigt, 1996) - the maximum difference a school can make because external factors are so powerfully stacked for some schools against others' (p.249).

Quality can also take many different shapes, and if the definition is used in the wrong context, it could possibly skew and confuse the reality of a situation. For example, the use of the term 'value added' has increased, and, although the term is regularly used by economists, it is now frequently used by governments and organisations as a significant determinant for measuring the quality of educational practice and initiatives in schools.

Strong emphasis is being placed on better equipping and encouraging teachers to carry out self-appraisal and student formative assessment, on providing the incentives and means for school self-evaluation, on encouraging "value-added" evaluation and on more regular standardised testing of students and national monitoring of the overall system. (Nusche et al. 2013, p.17)

Using value added to assess the quality of educational provision can be seen throughout the field of education. In the ROI, for example, during the launch of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools initiative (DEIS), which was used to address the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, the then Minister for Education stated,

Apart from our own interest in measuring outcomes, there is a strong consensus on the need for better data at social partnership level. Regular information on the extent of "value added" being achieved from our investment will support any future case for further targeted investment. (Hanafin 2005)

Kumar and Sarangapani (2004, p.11) suggest that although 'concern for quality has a rhetorical value in that it permits us to focus on certain long-neglected aspects and issues in educational planning', the important legacy of the quality debate 'stands in some danger of being lost today in the context of neo-liberal policies and rhetoric, which associate quality with privatization'. Harvey supports this issue in his assertion about the diverse usage of the term quality in education when he states,

"Quality" is used far more frequently, in practice, as shorthand for the bureaucratic procedures than to refer to the concept of quality itself. It is thus, not the quality itself that is regarded as undesirable but the paraphernalia of quality monitoring that is seen as so intrusive. (2005, p.272)

2.3 Concepts of quality in education

2.3.1 Introduction

What is quality, and is it possible to have an acceptable definition and agreed set of procedures for measuring quality as it applies to educational evaluation? According to Doherty (2008, p.256) ‘there is no simple answer to this question, since “quality,” like “beauty” is subjective, a matter of personal judgement’. Sallis (2002) believes that quality has a variety of meanings. The word means different things to different people. One possible reason for the enigmatic nature of quality is that it, in itself, is a dynamic idea, but it also resides at the very core of educational provision, expanding at different rates through various lenses within the system. In other words, quality, by nature, is dynamic, a reflexive human condition. Pirsig (1991, p.119) states that ‘dynamic quality is the pre-intellectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new’. However, Sallis (2002, p.11) warns that ‘there is the danger that much of the vitality of the concept can be lost if it is subjected to too much academic analysis’. This type of over analysis, according to Doherty (2008, p.256), ‘is all good knock-about fun. Sadly, however, the “quality issue” is more than an academic argument about definitions of meaning’.

Nonetheless, according to Leu (2005, p.4), ‘the argument can be made that education systems are always structured around a vision of quality’, resulting in the need for a description of quality as it applies to educational evaluation. If quality is acknowledged as a pre-intellectual, abstract idea, by deconstructing the concepts of quality that exist among stakeholders, we have a better chance of understanding the meaning of the word and how it applies to evaluation, we have chance of finding a foundation for the best way to blend the determinants of quality as they apply to IE and EE, and we have an understanding of how tension might arise between the two forms of evaluation. Watty (2003, p.217) states that ‘deconstructing the abstract concept of quality helps to reveal its dimensions and we may better understand how different stakeholders think about quality’ (Watty 2003, p.217). Moreover, although most parents or guardians want to send their children to a school where the quality of education is good, Macbeath poses the following questions on quality as it applies to education.

What lies beneath the comment, 'It's a good school'? What meanings are attached to the judgement, and what differing forms do meanings take when pronounced by a politician, a journalist, an inspector, a pupil, a researcher, or a parent recommending their child's school to a neighbour? (2002, p.1)

Harvey and Green (1993) and later Harvey and Knight (1996) provide a basis for understanding various judgments relating to comments such as 'It's a good school' by describing five discrete but overlapping conceptions of quality as they apply to education (quality as exceptional, quality as perfection, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value added and quality as transformational).

2.3.2 Quality as exceptional

Quality as exceptional infers that quality is something special or high class of which there are three variations: quality as distinctive, quality as excellence and quality as exceptional. The distinctive or traditional idea of quality does not attempt to define quality. Rather, quality is, according to Harvey and Green 'apodictic' one instinctively knows quality' (1993, p.11). In this regard, because the traditional concept of quality does not attempt to provide a set of criteria or standards from which the quality of a school may be judged, Harvey and Green (1993, p.11) state that it is 'useless when it comes to assessing quality because it provides no definable means of determining quality'.

By way of contrast, quality as excellence is what Morrison refers to as the 'Rolls Royce' model of quality, where high quality and exclusiveness are the order of the day' (1998, p.79). Although this definition is similar to the traditional model of quality in that it is still based on the apodictic nature of quality, it identifies what is required to achieve excellence. However, Harvey and Green are of the belief that, in terms of education, quality as excellence is possibly 'elitist' in that it is 'only possibly attainable in limited circumstances'. One example of quality as excellence is the 11-PLUS transfer exam in England, which is used to evaluate whether or not students attend selective grammar schools. If a school takes the highest achieving students and subsequently provides them with the best resources, the ideal outputs could be achieved. However, the Sutton Trust (2005) states that the majority of 11-year-old students who gain entry to secondary education in England based on their 11-PLUS score are students who are not affected by social deprivation. 'Children from better-off homes are more likely to

pass a selection test at 11 and thus gain a place at a grammar school’ (Sutton Trust 2005, p.8). However, OECD (2012) states that ‘early student selection has a negative impact on students assigned to lower tracks and exacerbates inequities, without raising average performance. Early student selection should be deferred to upper secondary education while reinforcing comprehensive schooling’ (OECD 2012, p.10).

A similar situation exists in the ROI where it was found that ‘students from fee-paying schools are drawn from the most advantaged strata of Irish society—despite claims these schools have students from all backgrounds’ (Flynn 2012). When referring to the 2009 OECD PISA rankings on literacy, Flynn states that ‘students in fee-paying schools are two years ahead of their counterparts in vocational schools in literacy skills, according to a study which underlines the two-tier nature of Irish education’ (Flynn 2012). Harvey and Green (1993, p.12) address the quality of teaching by stating, ‘it does not matter that teaching may be unexceptional—the knowledge is there, it can be assimilated’. More pertinent to the varied meanings of quality among different cultures, it is also worth pointing out that, although Finland scored highest in the PISA 2009 rankings, Sahlberg in Rubin (2013) contends,

Finnish educators are not thrilled about PISA, TIMSS, or any other international comparisons. We would rather hope Finland is seen as a country where four out of five taxpayers trust our public school system, and where three out of four citizens think that our publicly funded education system is our most significant accomplishment since independence in 1917. We celebrate these achievements rather than high rankings in global education league tables. (Rubin 2013)

This brings into question what can actually be achieved with the current models of evaluation when it appears that statistical conjectures relating to the quality of education provided by schools compared to, for example, national and international averages seem to be the common practice. For many social systems, this method also highlights the inequitable gap between the highest- and lowest-achieving students and the predictable reality of future employment for various socioeconomic groups.

Quality as exceptional, although similar to quality as excellence, is absolute in that quality is achieved if a minimum set of standards are obtained. However, a product that has a higher standard quite naturally has a higher quality product. Criticisms relating to quality as exceptional are based on the belief that if standards are set too high, they lead

to exclusivity in education. MacNair (1994, p.4) states, 'traditional British education treats "quality" as exceptional, with testing and selection systems designed, at each stage, to weed out a majority in order to identify the exceptional minority'. MacNair also suggests that the educational structures of the vocational education system challenge the idea of educational exclusivity and measure quality in terms of what students are able to do, know, or understand as opposed to how much better they are than their relative peers. According to MacNair, 'a knowledge-based economy and a learning society mean maximising everyone's capabilities of everyone, not discouraging them by failure' (1994, p.4).

However, reducing educational standards to encourage the massification of education could also have a negative effect on the economic wellbeing of a country. In the *Irish Times*, Ahlstrom (2011) questions the perceived reduction in academic standards at the upper secondary level. He states, 'the standard of students going forward to third level has declined in recent years' (Ahlstrom 2011). Professor Patrick Cunningham, the chief scientific advisor to the government of the ROI, identifies several disturbing trends in the education system. He identifies, 'the continued increase in the percentage of students getting honours grades. Are students becoming smarter, exams becoming easier, or is marking more generous? Whatever the cause, grade inflation is still under way' (Ahlstrom 2011).

In relation to the various methodologies ascribed to evaluation policy and practice, certain questions arise. Is student performance a result of teachers reflecting on various teaching methodologies to create a critical mass for school improvement? Has school improvement in the form of high-stakes test scores improved as a result of school inspection and self-evaluation? Does examination performance have anything to do with the evaluation culture of a school but rather other contextual factors outside of the confines of the school grounds?

2.3.3 Quality as perfection or consistency

Whereas quality as excellence is concerned with inputs and outputs, quality as perfection is concerned more with *doing the right things well*. The focus shifts away from input/output to the process and specifications required to meet the desired outcomes or customer needs. Quality as perfection seeks to continually ensure that there are zero defects, i.e. there are no faults. Quality as perfection is non-elitist and is obtainable in all organisations if it conforms to a predefined, measurable specification, such as an externally devised evaluation framework.

A key construct of quality as perfection is the belief that quality is not a top-down process in which the final output is analysed to identify faults. Rather, quality as perfection embraces the concept of distributed leadership and distributes responsibility in organisations where ‘the emphasis is on “democratising” quality by making everyone involved in a product or process responsible for quality at each stage’(Harvey and Green 1993, p.16). When the implicit needs are not met, however, the process is analysed to ensure that the fault is not repeated.

In education, quality as perfection is typically associated with external benchmarks in which, ‘The ISO8402 definition of quality is, “The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs”. This view sees quality as satisfying implicit needs and shifts the emphasis back to the producer’ (Harvey 2006, p.10). Total Quality Management (TQM) is an example of an external benchmark created using quality as perfection. Criticisms of TQM application emanate from the belief that introducing TQM philosophy in the education sector ‘implies an economisation of that sector and at the same time an introduction of a new set of values that challenge the traditional educational ones’ (Bergquist et al. 2005, p.315). Nonetheless, the TQM philosophy applies because the learner is the customer and is a significant part of the process. In this regard, the organisation achieves quality if its products are developed to meet customer/learner needs. However, this underlying assumption questions the concept of the learner as a customer and has not gone without criticism in its application to education.

Although TQM embraces the concept that learners are the primary reasons schools exist and because schools exist to serve the customer, all the schools’ processes should

revolve around satisfying and meeting customer needs. In the field of education, in which both internal and external requirements need to be satisfied, the application of TQM might not be as easy to realise as it is in other sectors in which the concept of zero defects is not always possible.

From an educational perspective, customers are not always students. Other stakeholders, such as parents, inspectors, future educational providers and employers, are also inextricably linked to the process of satisfying educational outcomes in schools. Based on this expansion of the definition of customer in an education system, Bergquist et al. (2005, p.316) asks 'whose expectations, demands or needs should be fulfilled? The reality might look that way and, therefore, require a broader overview of which customer needs should be prioritised and which should not'.

2.3.4 Quality as fitness for purpose

Quality as fitness for purpose suggests that quality only has meaning if it fits the purpose of the product or service being offered. Although it is similar to quality as perfection, Harvey and Green (1993) believe that quality as fitness for purpose has become the fashionable way to obtain perfection while ensuring that the product/service being offered is beneficial to its various stakeholders. According to Harvey and Green (1993, p.17) 'the ultimate measure of perfection, "zero defects," may be excellent as a definition of quality but runs the fatal risk of being perfectly useless'.

Due to the varied perspectives on the purpose of education, there are considerable difficulties in defining quality education and prioritising the stakeholders when the purpose is being specified. However, fitness for purpose can be viewed from two varying perspectives: satisfying customer/learner needs or realising provider goals.

From the perspective of satisfying customer/learner needs, a quality product or service is one that conforms to customer-determined specifications while its providers recognise that purposes may change over time and subsequently require the re-evaluation of the specification. In education, it might be used in various ways. For example, if one of the purposes of compulsory education is to prepare students for active citizenship, the question one then asks is: is secondary education providing enough training for students to recognise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities in a

balanced manner? According to Harvey and Greene (1993, p.18), although requirements may appear to originate with the customer, ‘customer requirements or needs are determined by the producer or provider’. Therefore, the concept of the learner as a customer is contested. Harvey and Greene (1993, p.18) pose the following question: ‘Is the customer the service user (the students) or those who pay for the service (the government, the employers)?’ In addition, is the question, ‘Is the student the customer, the product, or both?’ (Collins, Cockburn and MacRobert 1990 cited in Harvey and Green 1993) pertinent to neoliberal ideologies of wealth derived from knowledge?

In theory, because students are also consumers of education, it is reasonable to suggest that they have some influence in determining the services offered. In reality, however, and in compulsory-level education in which the curriculum is primarily determined by external agencies, students have very little say in determining the shape of the final product as it filters through the agents of educational change in the form of policy makers. Students do not typically specify the product. The product is specified by the producer, and the student’s role as a customer has only a tokenistic nature. In addition, compulsory-level students ‘may not have enough knowledge and experience to know what they need in the long term. Thus, they may not be in a position to judge whether their needs are being met’ (Harvey and Green 1993, p.21). Although studies on evaluation policy and practice have found students to be valuable in conducting evaluations, in the case of the ROI, Dillon (2012) found that students did not have the required capacity to be of any significant value to the evaluation process.

Though there are a number of studies which indicate that students are effective and valuable contributors to evaluation initiatives which place them in such roles, the students participating in this study were limited by their experience of evaluation and could not be expected to imagine these possibilities. (Dillon 2012, p.122)

Fitness for purpose also attempts to fulfil the stated objectives that are identified in mission statements, visions, etc. created by the organisation and the consumer/student. According to Van Berkel and Wolfhagen (2002), fitness for purpose is the most undisputed definition of quality because it allows schools to define their purpose in their mission statements, objectives and plans. From this perspective, quality is demonstrated by realistically attempting to achieve these objectives. Woodhouse (1999 in Van Berkel and Wolfhagen 2002, p.337) states that fitness for purpose ‘allows variability in institutions, rather than forcing them to be clones of one another’. Van Berkel and

Wolfhagen (2002, p.337) state that fitness for purpose ‘can define as clearly as possible the criteria that each stakeholder uses when judging quality and for these competing views to be taken into account when assessments of quality are undertaken’.

However, when an evaluation of quality is undertaken using fitness for purpose as a model for assessing the quality of education provided, two prevailing questions arise: what criteria is used to assess quality and to what extent is the organisation achieving its purpose? The extent to which a school is achieving its purpose normally requires elaborate IE and EE frameworks and procedures to assure that quality is maintained and realised. If mechanisms exist to attain quality, then quality can be assured. However, it is still unclear who should decide what mechanisms need to be established to assure quality, whether the mechanisms used to assure quality should be internally or externally devised, and who should assess whether the processes are sufficient enough to realise the desired outcomes.

2.3.5 Quality as value for money

Quality as value for money (VFM) has become synonymous with other public reform initiatives, such as external accountability, decentralisation, performance indicators and value added. Usage of the term quality as value for money can be seen in many countries, such as the ROI, where in the late 1990s, ‘the government approved a series of what are called “value for money and policy” reviews to be carried out as part of a new system of comprehensive programme evaluation’ (McNamara et al. 2009, p.105).

Quality as value for money has also become one of the core motives for introducing external accountability systems as a means of assessing quality in terms of the financial returns received from public investments in education. This is evident where evaluations are conducted by inspectorates. Ofsted (2011) states that ‘the aim of all this work is to promote improvement and value for money in the services we inspect and regulate, so that children and young people, parents and carers, adult learners and employers benefit’.

Although there is no standard definition of quality as VFM, according to Davidson et al. (2008, p.4) ‘the relationship between inputs and outputs is an important element of VFM in schools’. Assessments of outputs historically meant analysing the results of

high-stakes, externally devised examinations and the schools that achieved higher grades based on their level of expenditure than other schools provided a quality education.

There is also a widely held belief that students' levels of achievement are inhibited by factors outside the confines of the school grounds and that assessing quality based on the results of high-stakes, externally devised examinations gives an incomplete picture of the quality of education. Measuring educational outputs using high-stakes, externally devised examinations as a proxy for the educational quality is not as reliable as it might appear because other factors, such as social disadvantage, ethnicity, etc., can also affect student performance. Therefore, the factors that directly inhibit or enhance student achievement should be considered when school output is evaluated. Sammons states,

In most systems students from disadvantaged backgrounds (especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those experiencing a range of social disadvantages, such as low income, parents lacking qualifications, unemployed or in low SES work, poor housing, etc.) are more likely to experience educational failure or under-achievement, though the equity gap in achievement is wider in some systems than others. (2007, p.7)

One example of social deprivation affecting student performance in external examinations occurs in NI where the term 'free school meals' (FSM) is used as a proxy for social deprivation during compulsory education. In the case of Northern Ireland it was found that, 'as the number of children receiving free school meals rises, achievement levels fall—the correlation is quite strong, which means that the free school meals element affects the performance of children in those schools'. (Northern Ireland Assembly 2010, p.7)

Sammons (2007, p.19) states that young students with low academic achievement are also 'more at risk of developing poor attendance, poor self-esteem and behaviour as they grow older and move into secondary school, thus early intervention is vital'. Consequently, a student achievement continuum is undeniably required during the transition from primary to secondary school to assure, assess, and institute mechanisms to diminish the occurrence of these problems.

Furthermore, students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be concentrated in the same schools in some regions. This situation can also have a multiplier effect on the overall achievement levels of the general population of the school. Smyth and McCoy (2009, p.57) state that ‘there is indeed a “multiplier effect” whereby those in schools with a high concentration of disadvantaged students experience poorer outcomes in relation to attendance, achievement and early school leaving’.

Merely using the outputs of high-stakes, externally devised examinations as an indicator of quality is in many ways almost meaningless unless other contextual variables that inhibit student achievement are also taken into account.

From this perspective, a more complex paradigm for evaluating quality as value for money has now emerged in most countries in the form of comparative and contextual value added (CVA), which attempts to account for other significant variables that may inhibit student progress. According to Scheerens, Glas and Thomas (2003, ch.13.1, para.1), ‘a more complex picture has developed with indicators falling into distinct categories of input process, context and output data’. CVA has many benefits, such as reducing ‘the temptation for schools to focus on borderline students at the expense of those who have predicted outcomes well below or safely above the threshold’ (Kelly and Downey 2010, p.183). Value-added assessment is promising because:

- (1) Teachers and administrators can focus on quality of education rather than reputation, resources, or other variables;
- (2) Achievement data and trends derived from value-added assessments are more meaningful for educational change than school-wide data, and they beget a process more equitable than simply measuring raw scores;
- (3) The focus on out-comes and individual growth avoids Micro-management of schools and reflects the assumption that both students and schools are responsible for achievement;
- (4) Data derived from value-added assessment can aid parents in making informed choices about schools because higher or lower scores would no longer be equated with better or worse schools. (Misco 2008, p.12)

Indeed, as Donaldson et al. (2012) when referring to the absence of CVA in the Portuguese Education system state,

Another difficulty concerns the comparison of student outcomes across schools. The average results of national examinations (both in the 9th Grade and secondary education and, as of 2011/12, in the 6th Grade) at the school level are publicly disclosed with no account for the socioeconomic context of each school (or the characteristics of schools' student population). This can considerably distort considerations about the effectiveness of each school as average results do not reflect the value added by schools to student results.
(p.132)

However, as a precursor to the proceeding section and all that is perceived as flawed, with present CVA frameworks, the authors go on to state that 'it is important to note that value-added models are still under development, and therefore they are prone to error' (Donaldson et al. 2012. p.132). Furthermore, Doherty (2008) states,

How do you measure valued-added where people are concerned? Or in a system where one of its most cherished characteristics is diversity? There are just too many contextual variables, some of them immeasurable in numerical terms, for even the most sophisticated statistical methods to cope with. (Doherty 2008, p.258)

Scheerens, Glas, and Thomas (2003) reaffirm Doherty's (2008) view that calculating the effect a school has on student performance is a complex process due to the wide variety of factors that inhibit student progress.

However, the more information it is possible to have about individual students, sub-groups of students, and all students in a school as well as comparative data across a whole population (or representative sample) of schools, the more reliable and informative any subsequent analysis is likely to be. (Scheerens, Glas and Thomas 2003, ch.13.3, para.1)

Indeed, Ofsted (2008, p.9) also states, 'no meaning can be attached to an absolute CVA value, and any ranking of schools by their CVA values is meaningless'. This supports the view that CVA cannot be used as an absolute proxy for the quality of the school and, consequently, cannot be used for performance indicators, such as league tables. In addition, there are statistical limitations of CVA and interpreting the value-added data requires an apparent level of sophistication.

The value-added calculations are rather worse than pointless because their apparent precision and technical sophistication may have misled analysts, observers and commentators into believing that they had succeeded, or that a greater range of variables or a more complex analytical model would somehow solve the outstanding problems. (Gorard 2006, p.241)

Gorard (2006, p.242) states that the misuse of value-added calculations can have a negative effect on evaluating the quality of educational provision ‘with the schools in poorer areas and with academically weaker intakes suffering the most from this misguided comparison dressed up as a “fair test.”’ Moreover, and particularly in relation to the use of CVA for the purpose of accountability, ‘school improvers and school improvement researchers, relying on value-added analyses, will have been misled in their explanations and in making recommendations for practice... The implications of this simple mistake are legion’ (Gorard 2006, p.242). Although Davidson et al. (2008, p.20) believe ‘value-added measures represent a considerable improvement over the previous threshold attainment measures’, the authors also believe that if value-added frameworks are to be introduced into mainstream education, the purpose and function of the measures themselves must be clear.

If CVA is used as a measure of school improvement (or to allocate funding), there is little point in capturing factors which schools cannot influence. Similarly, if CVA data are to be used for accountability purposes, the model must be understandable and useable by relatively non-technical stakeholders. (Davidson et al. 2008, p.21)

Davidson et al. (2008, p.35) highlight a number of issues in the use of CVA frameworks that are particularly relevant to the system of evaluation in the ROI and NI and to future evaluation systems given the consistently increasing drive for value-added measures in mainstream education.

- If value-added models become more complex in the search for greater accuracy, education professionals may find them harder to understand, challenge, and act upon.

This perspective resonates with Heritage and Yeagley’s (2005, p.333) assertion that ‘misinterpreting data or relying on a single, often unreliable, data point to make crucial decisions may be even more detrimental to a school and its students than having no data at all’. Referring to value-added assessments used in Tennessee schools in North

America, Morgan (2002 cited in Amrein-Beardsley 2008, p.67) states, ‘a lack of training for teachers and administrators in how to understand the data reports were preventing schools and teachers from using value-added data to improve student learning and achievement’.

- Some contextual factors are included because they are easier to measure (e.g. entitlement to free school meals (FSM), while others are omitted because they add too much complexity to the model.

Davidson et al. (2008, p.38) state that the use of FSM as a proxy for social disadvantage cannot be taken as an absolute measure of pupil deprivation, ‘as some eligible families may elect not to claim FSM (e.g., for cultural reasons) and other families may suffer deprivation but not be entitled to FSM’. A similar problem exists in the ROI where evaluators could use schools that are part of the DEIS scheme as a very loosely bound proxy to compare examination performance with similar school types. However, Smyth and McCoy (2009, p.14) state that ‘61 per cent of young people from semi/unskilled manual backgrounds and 56 per cent of those from non-employed households attend non-DEIS schools’.

- It is unrealistic to suggest that schools will add value to all pupils in equal measure, and CVA does not facilitate an assessment of the contributions individual teachers make to student attainment levels.
- Representative sampling of individual pupils’ progress may prove a more cost-effective way of assessing value added than considering every child from every postcode and from every ethnic background.

Introducing value added into mainstream education has both positive and negative effects; however, there appears to be a consistently increasing desire to introduce value-added frameworks into most education systems. The use of value-added data for evaluation purposes (although widely used in NI) has only recently been introduced into mainstream education discourse in the ROI in the publication, ‘Better Literacy and Numeracy for Children and Young People. A Draft National Plan to Improve Literacy and Numeracy in Schools’ (2010). In an attempt to introduce CVA in the ROI, the DESROI suggested instituting the Schools Like Ours value-added system of evaluation

because ‘at present, a vital piece of evidence is not available to teachers, nor is it available to the system in general: we do not have any evidence about how other students like ours are doing in other schools like ours’ (DESROI 2010, p.41). The report suggests that Schools Like Ours

would give schools access to information about the achievement levels of students in “matching” schools...All teachers and schools would need to do is administer the tests. A central unit, operating on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, would look after everything else. (DESROI 2010 p.41)

Of particular relevance and a significant barrier to creating a culture of evaluation in schools was the strong opposition to Schools Like Ours from various interest groups that appears to emanate from the lack of trust these groups feel not only towards educational policy and practice but, given the cataclysmic economic decision making in the ROI, towards government policy and practice more generally. O’Tuathaigh asserts,

Irish society is traumatised by a crisis of trust...There is no trust in the figures, no trust in the understandings, no trust in the promises, no trust in the will to deliver. There is no trust that the words mean what they seem to mean. There is a suspicion. A presumption on each side of the intention to deceive or renege by the other party. (O’Tuathaigh 2010, p.28)

Social partners believe that introducing CVA frameworks in the ROI may lead to school league tables, which occur in other education systems whose governments control and monitor value-added data. Resistance to the use of value added can be clearly identified in the INTO’s and the TUI’s responses to the proposed introduction of Schools like Ours.

The INTO is concerned that proposals referring to the Schools Like Ours initiative where data from individual schools would be aggregated by the DES, or an agency on its behalf, and returned to schools so that they compare their results with Schools Like Ours could lead, perhaps unintentionally, to the establishment of league tables and competition between schools. (INTO 2011, p.11)

The TUI (2011, p.22) states that ‘although not advocated in the draft plan an emphasis on comparing data between schools could inadvertently fuel the emergence of league tables. Once in train it would be hard to reverse such a trend’. Both these perspectives focus on the possibility that CVA will be used for clandestine purposes. Doherty (2008)

is also concerned that value-added data could be used for the creation of coercive power structures, league tables and funding allocation. Doherty (2008, p.260) states that ‘attempts to make comparisons between institutions for the purposes of coercion, league tables or funding, need to be strongly resisted’.

It is also no wonder that organisations, such as the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at the University of Durham, have become one of the most widely used independent evaluation and monitoring systems in the world. Its evaluation frameworks, such as Yelis and Midyis, are in widespread use in the majority of schools in NI. In these evaluations, the foundational philosophy of the CEM model appears to be centred on the informational value of the data as opposed to the monitoring and reward power structures often associated with CVA.

What makes the model interesting is that at all times the data remains the property of the education community from which it is drawn and they alone can decide what to do with it. At no stage does CEM offer the data to any external body and even goes so far as to forbid participating schools from using its information for comparative publicity purposes. (McNamara and O’Hara 2008, p.177)

Of particular interest to the negotiated terms of the coexistence of IE and EE was the absence of Schools Like Ours from the final strategy for Literacy and Numeracy (Department of Education and Skills Republic of Ireland 2011a) although value added is mentioned as a possibility (coincidentally, this was mentioned near the end of the social partnership agreement Towards 2016).

The government intends to commission research to explore the potential to analyse assessment data from schools so as to enable the provision of national trend data on achievement in different categories of schools (schools serving students from different socioeconomic and demographic contexts, etc.) and the potential for this analysis to assist schools in benchmarking their standards against a norm for similar schools and to set targets for improvement. (DESROI 2011, p.83)

This statement is quite the opposite of the CEM philosophy in terms of centralised control, and, in many ways, the partial delay of value added in the ROI highlights the historical policy and practice of initiating school-wide change where it appears that *canis canem edit* seems to have become the order of the day among *Le Grand Monarchs* of educational policy and practice.

McNamara et al. (2009, p.107) state that ‘these social partnership agreements and subsequent actions, including the setting up of evaluation structures, have been negotiated and agreed with the social partners, including trade unions’. However, with the demise of social partnership agreements, educational change in the ROI inevitably occurs regardless of the social partnerships perceived to exist. For example, in the ROI, the new junior cycle framework that is strongly influenced by the OECD’s definition and selection of key competencies, i.e. ‘Use tools interactively (e.g. language, technology), Interact in heterogeneous groups, Act autonomously’ (Rychen and Salganik 2003, p.5), appears to have been used by the DESROI as way of introducing CVA in external monitoring. DESROI states,

The DES will provide each school with a Data Profile...The Data Profile will also provide schools with information on their patterns of achievement relative to schools with a similar school context...These data will help schools to refine their assessment and moderation practice. They will also be a valuable source of information for schools’ self-evaluation processes...In the event of an unusual pattern of achievement, the Inspectorate of the DES will be advised, and support and evaluation measures will be provided for the school. (2012a, p.27)

Indeed, the use of value-added measures as another layer of accountability in the ROI is largely confirmed by Santiago (2013) who states,

Examples of the move towards accountability include the introduction of regular whole-school inspection to secondary schools in 2003, the publication of school inspection reports in 2006, and the introduction of mandatory standardised testing in primary schools in 2007. The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy outlines additional accountability measures such as the development of national standards of students’ achievement and the collection of national data on student achievement. (Santiago 2013, p.42)

On the other hand, whenever issues relating to the promotion of IE are discussed in other education systems, Finland is frequently held up as a model of best practice towards creating a culture of evaluation in schools, yet the social partnership model that exists in Finland appears to be one of harmonisation as opposed to circumnavigation among the various social partners. An interview with Finish Minister for Education Henna Virkunnen suggests that teacher unions as partners have actually been of great benefit to ensuring that the quality of education in schools is of a high standard.

For me, as Minister of Education, our teachers' union has been one of the main partners because we have the same goal: we all want to ensure that the quality of education is good and we are working very much together with the union. Nearly every week we are in discussions with them. They are very powerful in Finland. Nearly all of the teachers are members. I think we don't have big differences in our thinking. They are very good partners for us. (Snider, 2011)

However, as Guba and Lincoln (1981 cited in Devos and Verhoeven 2003) state, 'human behaviour is mediated by the context in which it occurs' (p.406).

Nonetheless, the use of value-added data for all its perceived benefits and connotations of quality in EE, assessment, or otherwise, is a dilemma that faces most countries now and will in the future. Finally, given the ever increasing need to introduce value-added data in education, the author concurs with Professor Onora O'Neill's supposition relating to potential misuse of data during an interview at the 2011 British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference.

Every time you use a measure of pupil attainment for some extraneous purpose you risk creating a perverse incentive. So every time you find yourself doing that or participating in a system that requires you to do that; ask what incentive is this creating? Whom is it damaging? Pupils, head teachers, schools, employers and I think that would be a very useful first step. (O'Donoghue, 2011)

2.3.6 Quality as transformational

Quality as transformational seeks to develop and empower the student through the learning process. The concept of quality as transformational is based on the assertion that students are not seen as products, customers, consumers, service users, or clients. Rather, education is 'an on-going process of transformation of the participant' (Harvey, 1997, p.138). According to Harvey (1997, p.137), 'rather than excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose or defect-free notions of quality... at root, quality is about transformation'. Unlike other concepts of quality, quality as transformation 'arises from the process of change, with a focus on student learning' (Löfström and Nevgi 2007, p.313) and 'institutional changes which might transform student learning' (Newton 2007, p.15).

Harvey (1997, p.138) believes, ‘parents, teachers, educationalists from primary schools to universities in a variety of countries prefer, overall, the **transformation** view of quality’. Despite the almost universally positive attitude towards the concept of quality as transformational, according to Harvey, when referring to the education system in the United Kingdom, a greater emphasis has been placed on quality monitoring in education, much to the detriment of the transformational process of learning.

Quality monitoring in the UK has been beset by overlapping and burdensome processes, competing notions of quality, a failure to engage learning and transformation, and a focus on accountability and compliance. This has been compounded by a lack of trust. (Harvey 2005, p.271)

In relation to the various evaluation frameworks that exist to assure and improve quality, Carmichael et al. (2001, p.451) state that ‘when looked at from the perspective of the individual learner, there is a strong case for student learning to be placed at the very heart of quality systems in all sectors of education, and also therefore in related sectorial quality assurance programmes and processes’. To ascertain and improve the quality of the learning experience, Chung Sea Law (2010, p.65) states that ‘more attention should be paid to the student experience (Tam, 2001) in general, and student learning (Richardson, 2000) in particular’,

Although the frameworks that are used to evaluate the varied concepts of quality rely heavily on quantitative data and *in camera* qualitative observations, trying to evaluate the transformational quality of student learning outcomes over time is a more complex process. Nonetheless, Carmichael et al. (2001, p.451) state that ‘it is not sufficient to only measure that which it is easy to measure, and that it is in fact more challenging (i.e., “harder”) to try to assess the often complex factors involved in the nature of the actual learning event’.

2.3.7 Conclusion

Due to the various stakeholders, such as principals, inspectors and teachers, involved in the formation and varied uses of evaluation in education, the suggestion that a one-size-fits-all definition of quality can apply to evaluation policy and practice within the context of this study and to all populations in all countries is arguable. Watty (2003, p.214) asserts that ‘stakeholder conceptions of quality may not “fit” only one of the five categories and the Harvey and Green (1993) categories can be viewed as a matrix of quality’. Although Harvey’s (1993) concepts of quality have the potential to overlap, they do enable the understanding of how the concepts of quality have managed to influence the development of the various evaluation frameworks that exist, and they illustrate how tensions might arise when using evaluation in practice.

2.4 New relationships

2.4.1 Introduction

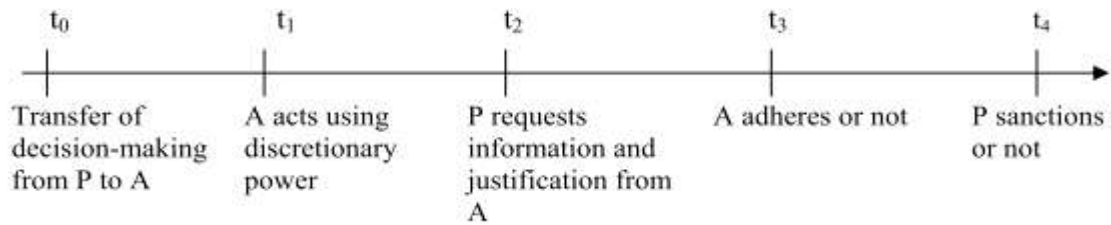
As a result of the overlapping perspectives concerning what actually constitutes quality in education, an assortment of terms, such as accountability, benchmarking, evaluation, fitness for purpose, value added, quality assurance, self-regulation, standards, impacts and so forth, have become commonly used terms within the lexicon of what Bangs et al. refer to as

the architects of policy (mainly politicians, senior civil servants and advisers), the critics (mainly academics...) and the prophets (those whose ideas challenge existing ideas and led to new policy initiatives).
(Bangs et al. 2010, p.9)

As Barnett (1994, p.166) states, ‘the languages interweave, like shoals of fish, their boundaries indistinct and their participants seemingly inhabitants of more than one grouping’. Barnett’s (1994) perspective on the varying concepts of and stakeholders involved in assuring and improving quality resonates with the evolution of the evaluation frameworks that have been developed in most countries since the beginning of the neoliberalism and decentralisation agenda era. In this regard, according to Lindberg (2010, p.22), there are five defining characteristics of any form of

accountability system that may be translated into a stylised timeline, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Time-Line of Accountability. (Source: Lindberg 2010, p.11, fig.1)



In relation to compulsory-level education, the decision-making power to ascertain and improve the quality of education is first transferred from government P to school A (decentralisation). The school then acts in this capacity, and the government or agencies on behalf of the government (inspectorate) can require the school to provide information about the quality of education it provides and the justification for these actions (IE). If the school fails to do this, the government has the right to sanction or remedy these actions to maintain and improve the quality of education provided. However, in most countries, there now appears to be an on-going dialogue on how best to blend the second (t_1) and third (t_2) parts of the accountability timeline to ascertain and subsequently improve the quality of education provided in schools. It is this part of the accountability timeline that I will now discuss.

‘After a decade of antagonism between agencies of governments and schools’ (Macbeath 2006, p.1) coupled with neoliberal ideologies of standardisation and decentralisation, a dual system of internal/external quality assurance (QA) has emerged, and ‘across many countries a change from quality control to quality assurance can now be detected’ (Mathews 2010, p.7). From a practical level, it is generally accepted that self-evaluation and QA is about trying to improve and monitor the quality of education in schools, but ‘past research indicates that in most European countries an official definition of school self-evaluation (SSE) and quality assurance is not available’ (Van Amelsvoort and Janssens 2008, p.16). Indeed, QA appears to have many meanings and has become what Vanhoof and Petegem (2007, p.104) describe as ‘an umbrella concept which covers all activities undertaken to investigate, monitor, improve and perhaps also even to make public the quality of schools’. It is no wonder, therefore, that IE and EE are frequently referred to as ‘two components of a single entity which is called quality

assurance’ (Vanhoof and Petegem 2007, p.110). However, the distinction appears to relate primarily to the extent that IE and EE are used for accountability or improvement, ‘who bears responsibility’ (Nevo 2002) and what mechanisms, resources and frameworks have been instituted to ensure their coexistence. It is apparent that, the future direction of evaluation appears to have shifted from an either-or discussion to a discussion centred on how best to maximise scarce resources to blend the two systems of evaluation that exist in most countries and to varying degrees in NI and the ROI.

2.4.2 Equilibrium of evaluation

Although various definitions of evaluation exist (see Weiss 1998; Scriven 1998; Patton 2002a), there is no all-encompassing definition of evaluation that can be attributed to the varied purposes of educational evaluation.

However, one consistent element of evaluation in the majority of definitions is that evaluation is generally viewed as a systematic endeavour (Trochim, 2006a) that involves the collection of reliable and valid information to ascertain the significance or worth of what Trochim refers to as a ‘deliberately ambiguous term object, where the term object can ‘refer to a program, policy, technology, person, need, activity, and so on’ (Trochim 2006a).

While acknowledging (1) the various concepts of quality in education that exist, (2) the array of stakeholders involved in educational evaluation, (3) the varied contexts in which evaluation is applied, and (4) the varied purposes of educational evaluation, be it for accountability, improvement or otherwise, a more distinct definition of internal/external evaluation IE/EE as it exists in practice is required.

Schwandt (2011) refers to evaluation as ‘an argument for the value of something, made on a particular occasion to a particular audience for a particular reason’. Frierson, Hood and Hughes, (2002, p.63) refer to evaluation as ‘an examination of impacts through lenses in which the culture of the participants is considered an important factor’. Scriven (2000) states,

The discipline of evaluation undertakes the systematic, objective, determination of the extent to which any of three properties are attributable to the entity being evaluated: merit, worth, or significance. (Merit is roughly equivalent to quality; worth is roughly equivalent to value or cost-effectiveness; significance is roughly equivalent to importance.) (Scriven 1998, p.64)

Taking these definitions into account, for the purpose of this study, evaluation is referred to as

a systematic argument for the quality or impact of something, made on a particular occasion for a particular audience or individual for a particular reason, through lenses in which the culture and context of the participants is considered an important factor.

One distinguishing feature that exists within the present evaluation frameworks of NI, the ROI and elsewhere is that there appears to be confusion as to whether or not evaluation with all its different and sometimes misconstrued purposes is used primarily for accountability or improvement. Barnett (1994, p.165) states that ‘a major fault line distinguishing the different purposes at work is that between enlightenment and surveillance’. Van Amelsvoort and Jansen (2008, p.17) state that ‘the predominant perception or function of external evaluations which are conducted by inspectorates is accountability’. From this perspective, the primary fundamental objective of EE is surveillance and control, and schools are required to become accountable by providing a public account of the quality of education they provide against a framework of comparable national and collective international standards. IE, on the other hand, is generally perceived as ‘directly or indirectly aimed at school improvement’ (Hofman and Nynke 2009, p.48), although it would be reasonable to suggest that there is a belief among most inspectorates in NI and the ROI that the critical objective of EE is to act as a catalyst for school improvement after the EE has taken place.

With an ever increasing eurocratic drive for standardisation, decentralisation and cost effectiveness culminated with certain stakeholders’ beliefs that ‘external evaluation is judgemental and controlling whereas internal school-based evaluation aims to be seen as a developmental process contributing to improved teacher and student learning’ (Livingston and McCall 2002, p.165). New blended systems of internal/external evaluation have emerged in most countries to theoretically reduce the perceived shortcomings of the other. Van Amelsvoort et al. (2008, p.17) state that ‘an ideal

relationship between external and internal evaluation would be achieved if there was a certain balance between the two’.

The new relationship between governments and schools that aspires to counteract the flaws that are inherent in both systems of evaluation when they are used in isolation has very often been open to criticism. Criticisms appear to primarily relate to the hypothetical manner in which IE has been introduced. Apart from rhetorical aspirations, it appears that very little foresight has been given in some countries as to how both IE and EE can practically and mutually coexist.

Although there appears to be an abundance of research and evidence relating to the benefits of the new relationship, some observers believe that an imbalance between theory and practice exists. McNamara and O’Hara state,

Whether either of these systems or a combination of both might or might not prove ideal for the Irish context is uncertain. One thing that is certain however is that without support individual teachers, principals and schools cannot be expected to collect and analyse the data necessary to implement the evaluation system currently being suggested. Yet without the evidence there can be no worthwhile evaluation. The challenge therefore seems to be for the DES to find a methodology that matches the theory or to be increasingly perceived as having no reality to support its high-flown rhetoric of evaluation. (McNamara and O’Hara 2005, p.279)

It appears that schools have been given greater autonomy to institute mechanisms in the form of IE to assess and improve the quality of education offered. ‘In return for this autonomy, schools are being required to evaluate their own educational quality and to come up with their own plans for improvement’ (Vanhoof and Van petegen 2007, p.102). One of the tenets of the new relationship however is ‘intelligent accountability’ where ‘schools are (or should be) effective learning organisations, with rigorous self-evaluation, strong collaboration and effective planning for improvement’ (Ozba 2009, p.153). However, according to Cheng (2010, p.985), when establishing mechanisms for school development planning, consideration should be given to ‘teachers understanding of plan and how to collect the evaluation data and its supporting sets, otherwise, the failure possibility of planning will be increasing’. It is no wonder, therefore, that the systemic autonomy that has been given to schools has led to a variety of concerns.

The forces of globalisation, decentralisation, standardisation and evaluation measures that drive large scale educational reform also lead to various challenges, particularly where capacity building and assurance of quality and equity are concerned. (Brauckmann and Pashiardis 2010, p.332)

Despite this tremulous start, ‘both systems should exist because we need both and because they might even benefit from each other’ (Nevo 2002, p.6). Within the context of any policy-making decisions, it is imperative to describe how the systems can be mutually beneficial. Nevo (2002) illustrates a broad framework of how both systems can interdependently benefit each other.

2.4.3 How external evaluation can enhance internal evaluation

Internal evaluation can benefit from external evaluation by:

- (1) Stimulating evaluation (SE):** A school might opt to develop and perpetuate a culture of IE if it was a pre-condition of EE with the view that ‘we should do it ourselves before we have it done to us’ (DENI 2004, p.7). This could also reduce the degree to which EE’s would take place. In ‘schools that have good self-evaluation systems, external evaluation should only need to be “light touch”’ (McNamara and O’Hara 2008b, p.29). In addition, as is the case with whole school evaluation management, leadership and learning (WSE-MLL), in the ROI

schools could be invited to engage in self-evaluation and to present the findings from their evaluation efforts to inspectors. They could then be subjected to lighter levels of external evaluation according to the degree of rigor and success of their efforts. (Mathews 2010, p.168)

However, if IE is merely used as a compliant externalised process of evaluation on behalf of the inspectorate, it could quite easily become a form of self-inspection in which ‘senior leaders assume the role of an internal inspectorate applying a set of common criteria arising from quite differently held assumptions about the nature of accountability and improvement’ (MacBeath 2008a, p.395). In this regard, the issue of isomorphism only serves one purpose, which is that of compliant internal evaluation on behalf of external agencies.

However at root, ‘self-evaluation is centred on capacity-building’ (MacBeath 2008a, p.395).

- (2) **Expanding the scope of IE:** Although IE could be regarded as more insightful to the needs of the school, in the absence of EE, there is a possibility that local standards might be narrow in their scope. Vanhoof and Van Petegem (2007, p.107) state, ‘in the event of a lack of distance and a lack of objectivity, a school can suffer from organizational blindness’.
- (3) **Legitimising the validity of IE:** Although there is a perception that ‘everybody hates external evaluation, while nobody trusts internal evaluation’ (Nevo 2002, p.14), EE can add to the trustworthiness of IE to some extent, providing an impartial stamp of approval on IE results. In addition, EE can legitimise the belief that IE is a core component of school evaluation. As Coleman (2007) when referring to the system of school evaluation in England states; ‘the recent move towards a more light touch inspection system of schools by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is also based in part on a belief in the value of self-evaluation by schools’ (Coleman 2007, p.481).

2.4.4 How internal evaluation can enhance external evaluation

External evaluation can benefit from IE by:

- (1) **Expanding the scope of IE:** EE is often criticised for being too narrow in its focus due to its attempt to form generalisations about schools, which often results in the inspectorate addressing *lowest common denominator* issues rather than evaluating the school within the context that it operates. However, in conjunction with IE and the use of additional local data, EE can broaden its scope and address local issues that are deemed necessary by schools. The use of locally gathered data can also add to the validity and reliability of the results.
- (2) **Improving the interpretation of findings:** EE can be used to generalise the quality of a school against a broad set of national standards. By itself, it could operate under an isomorphic assumption, ‘overlooking the local perspective, reflecting the special needs and opportunities of the school’ (Nevo 2002, p.9).

However, when it is used with IE, the local perspective can be added to augment the overall quality of the evaluation.

Internal evaluators could be better placed to increase the validity of the evaluation, and members of the school community would be more acutely aware of the needs of various cultures (be they socioeconomic, ethnic or otherwise) that exist in the school community. Kirhart (2005, p.34) states, 'culture is relevant to all aspects of evaluation and that it must be appropriately addressed to establish the fundamental validity of evaluative inferences and actions'. However, external evaluators, policy makers and other agents of change must recognise that 'within the evaluation context, there are different dimensions, locations, perspectives, and characteristics of culture that influence the ways in which programs are designed, implemented, and experienced by individuals and groups' (Samuels and Ryan, 2011, p.189). A one-size-fits-all model of evaluation as it applies to all populations might not improve schools, but it might result in mono focal interpretations of the quality of education provided based on externally presumed perspectives of quality.

(3) Increasing evaluation utilisation: A major issue of EE is that schools either oppose or accept the results and make very little use of the findings. This may be attributed to the fact that schools might not have the necessary evaluation literacy skills needed to realise the significance of the evaluation. However, a school that has an embedded culture of IE should have the knowledge required to understand EE findings. Rather than opposing EE, schools use the results of an EE as a foundation for dialogue and consequent school improvement. Ironically, according to MacBeath and McGlynn (2002, p.20), schools that have a well-developed system of IE actually welcome an external perspective for a variety of reasons 'perhaps because they wish to celebrate their efforts, perhaps for affirmation that they have got it right, perhaps because they welcome a further critical eye'.

2.5 Realising the terms of coexistence

2.5.1 Introduction

Although it would be reasonable to suggest that there are numerous benefits to having a dual system of IE and EE, the terms of coexistence need to be explored. For IE and EE to mutually and beneficially coexist, they need to be focused on four evaluation dialogues. Three described by Nevo (2002) are conceptual, methodological and communication and two described by the author; influential and culturally responsive dialogues. These dialogues are essential ingredients for the longevity, and coexistence of IE and EE.

2.5.2 Coexistence at a conceptual level

At a conceptual level, 'evaluation needs to be perceived as a means of understanding rather than judgement' (Nevo 2002, p.10). This occurs by acknowledging the flaws inherent in both systems of evaluation and the reasons for their coexistence. In addition, Nevo (2002) believes that quality profiles should be used instead of composite scores to recognise the varying contexts and given constraints in which schools are operating. Furthermore, as is the case with EE in the ROI and NI, the use of recommendations is advised and should be a foundation from which both internal and external evaluators share the responsibility of the evaluation's consequences.

2.5.3 Coexistence at a methodological level

At the methodological level, evaluation should be conducted as a continuum and not as a one-time or end-of-year activity. Evaluation should be based on the continuous dissemination of information, enabling mutual learning. However, the quality of information shared between both parties is questioned because it assumes that school personnel have the capacity and skills required to conduct meaningful and worthwhile social scientific research.

Criticisms relating to lack of internal evaluator capacity have been highlighted by McNamara and O'Hara (2008b, p.175) who point out (when referring to Elliot's research on self-evaluation) that the self-evaluation movement that was popular in the

late 1970s and early 1980s declined because ‘neither training, experience or professional culture had allowed teachers to develop the discursive consciousness necessary to become reflexive, self-aware and thus able to self-evaluate’. While it is accepted in the case of, for example the ROI and NI, that external evaluators have been adequately trained and have the necessary skills to systematically collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data, this might not be the case with internal evaluators where a significant obstacle to systemic internal evaluation in schools is ‘the unacknowledged but very clear lack of capacity in schools to collect evidence to support the evaluation of professional activities’ (McNamara et al. 2009, p.110). However, more recently in the case of the ROI, as part of a wider government agenda to ensure that evaluation in the form of quality assurance is embedded into the education system of the ROI, Ehren et al. state,

In Ireland, these measures include for example promotion of school self-evaluation and extensive support for school development planning; teacher in career development and support in the context of curriculum change; school-designed assessment and reporting to parents; use of standardized assessment and state certificate examinations; and program evaluations focusing on aspects of curriculum provision and system evaluation through international surveys of attainment. (Ehren et al., 2013, p.20)

Nonetheless, the lack of capacity by school personnel to carry out meaningful and worthwhile evaluations also resonates well with the assertion of Vanhoof et al. (2010, p.2) that internal evaluators, such as school principals, ‘are usually not trained in carrying out research, collecting data, data management or data interpretation’. The resulting absence of information-rich environments and inadequate evaluation skills can inevitably lead to valuable information either being neglected or mistreated, culminating into what Blok, Slegers and Karsten (2008, p.387) refer to as, ‘an arm chair analysis without any empirical evidence’. The lack of data-literacy skills among internal evaluators was also highlighted in a European Commission report that attempted to emphasise the imbalance between the research skills of internal and external evaluators.

Given the qualifications and support required by external evaluators and the fact that internal evaluation is compulsory in the majority of countries, regulations concerned with the competence of internal evaluators do not seem very demanding. (Eurydice 2004, p.126)

This statement highlights the imbalance between the training provided to internal evaluators and the continuous training and professional development given to external evaluators where in the case of inspectorates such as the ROI, inspectors are afforded

an extensive four to five month induction programme on all aspects of the work... Participation in seminars, training meetings, the annual conference of the Inspectorate, etc. as part of the on-going professional development programme for inspectors. Support for self-initiated study, professional development, etc. (Public Appointments Service 2011, p.4)

Furthermore, because school evaluation has been conceived out of an experts-based professional model ‘this creates tensions for these novice, school-based evaluators who meet their teaching responsibilities while being expected to attain at least some professional evaluator skills and knowledge—often with minimum support’ (Ryan, Chandler and Samuels 2007, p.208). This obstacle to conducting meaningful and worthwhile evaluations brings into question the quality of data that could actually be gathered locally. It is questionable whether the data would be of any benefit to school development planning or of use to external evaluators unless significant evaluator training is obtained.

In light of this criticism, Ryan et al. (2007) are of the view that the training discrepancies seem to be extremely relevant to the gap between internal and external evaluator capacity in some regions. Ryan et al. (2007, p.208) state, ‘what should we expect from novice, school-based evaluators? Should we have the same standards and expectations for the school teams (i.e., internal evaluators) as we do for evaluators conducting external evaluations?’ In light of the evident imbalance in evaluator capacity, it could be perceived that the drive for IE in some regions is at present nothing more than a cost-saving exercise in the form of self-inspection on behalf of external agencies with very little chance of school personnel having the required professional training or capacity to conduct effective, dynamic and contextually sensitive practitioner research for school improvement.

2.5.4 Coexistence at a communication level

At the communication level, there needs to be mutual respect and trust between internal and external evaluators. However, within the social fabric of many regions, where the economic downturn has led to cut backs in education, it would be reasonable to suggest that very little trust in government policy and practice in general actually exists. The lack of trust between the government and the people can inadvertently have a negative effect on the relationship between internal and external evaluators. According to Cullingford (1999, p.92), where trust does not exist, 'the inspection process itself may be undermined as teachers engage in defensive teaching, and any recommendations are likely to be undermined as teachers and administrators see them as illegitimate'. The more the relationship is characterised by reciprocal respect and trust, 'the greater the probability that the inspectorate takes into account the aspects of educational quality that really matter for schools (instead of only those of a political, administrative or procedural nature)' (Ehren and Visscher 2006, p.54) and the greater the probability that school personnel realise the recommendations from the inspection.

Although an ideal relationship between internal and external evaluators needs to be centred on a concerted drive for reciprocal trust and respect, it is equally important that the parameters of reciprocity are understood by all. Ehren and Visscher (2006, p.56) state that 'inspectors that try to build trust and an equal type of relationship with schools should therefore be clear and upfront about the parameters of reciprocity and about who has the final word'. In practice, the following questions on the NRWS in England posed by MacBeath (2006) are particularly relevant to evaluation practices when respect and trust are promoted.

- How feasible is it for inspectors to render accurate and valid judgements across such a wide range of objectives?
- In what sense is the accountability agenda different under the NRWS?
- On what basis would schools be honest with Ofsted about their most serious weaknesses?
- To what degree is there a genuinely reciprocal relationship between a school staff and an inspection team?
- What is the nature of productive dialogue?
- What does it mean for an inspection team to claim objectivity?
- What test may be applied to conform or contest inspectors' judgements as valid?
- Is inspection under the new relationship any less high stakes in its consequences than before? (MacBeath, 2006 p.8)

In addition, at the communication level, external evaluators must commit themselves to developing solutions to problems outlined in the evaluation report by providing follow-up support and possibly, as with the system of school evaluation in NI, regular interim follow-up evaluations when the need arises. The absence of post evaluation support has a debilitating effect on the motivation for schools to become engaged in an active discourse for improvement (see McNamara and O'Hara 2005; Van Petegem 2007; Macbeath 1999, 2006). It appears, therefore, that continuous support through interim follow-up evaluations and the use of other support services is an essential requirement for schools to move forward from implementing compliant rudimentary tasks to a more practitioner research-based approach to improvement. Although some governments will emphatically state that the appropriate support structures are in place, the required level of support available should clearly be dependent on the complexity of the required improvement actions. Moreover, it appears that the actions required to improve areas, such as literacy levels, school attendance, behaviour and parental engagement, become extraordinarily more complex in schools in which there is a high proportion of social deprivation.

The recognition of the external conduits that consistently affect school performance requires a proportionate and urgent need for the majority of inspectors to concentrate their efforts on assisting these communities. Together, the school and inspectorates can find solutions for improving the educational outcomes of students. MacBeath (1999, p.152) asserts that 'there is a continuum of support that is needed, with very little or none at one end to strong and sustained support and intervention at the other'.

2.5.5 Coexistence at an influential level

At the influential level, 'School inspectors bring with them a mandate and an authority' (Ehren and Visscher 2006, p.56) and have at their disposal, with other agents of change, such as principals, the power to influence the fate of an organisation by controlling or changing the behaviour of others.

The balance of power between the inspection teams and school teams and the weight given to the external report and the internal narrative differ widely, although virtually by definition, a government body is likely to have the final word. (MacBeath 2010, p.716)

According to Nevo (2010, p.782), ‘schools will surrender with or without protest to inevitable external evaluation requirements, imposed on them by the educational system’. It is generally accepted that ‘while “control” is the key-term in accountability, “learning” is the key term in internal improvement-oriented evaluation’ (Scheerens, Glas and Thomas 2007, ch.2.3.3, para.6). This statement highlights the concept of power and influence, i.e. how they apply to evaluation in practice and what types of power are best used to realise the terms of coexistence between IE and EE.

Whereas power can be seen as the accepted or legitimate right of an individual or group of individuals to alter the behaviour of others, such as the inspectorate ensuring through legislation that all schools engage in comparative value-added assessment regardless of their own personal views, influence is more subtle in that it is not as authoritarian as power, which makes it less reliable and less stable. The relationship that exists between power and influence from a Foucaultian perspective is one in which an individual in power has the capacity to influence, and the measurement of the individuals power can be viewed as the amount of influence the individual has to alter the behaviour of others. The techniques or actions employed by individuals are situation specific. Foucault (Foucault 1969 cited in Rau 2004, p.23) calls these techniques ‘unexpected contingencies to influence events so that different end states may be reached from the same initial situation’. This raises a question about what techniques or actions an individual or organisation use to alter the behaviour of others or, more specifically, what techniques or actions evaluators should use when conducting evaluations? From a Foucaultian perspective, power and influence are social and interpersonal phenomena and, like IE and EE, are in a constant state of flux.

How can we analyse power and influence through school evaluation if power and influence are continually changing? French and Ravens’ (1959) and Ravens’ (1965) typology of the six bases of power (Table 2.1) can be used to describe how evaluators can socially influence the behaviour of others. Social influence is defined as ‘a change in the belief, attitude, or behaviour of a person, the target of influence, which results from the action, or presence, of another person or group of persons, the influencing agent. Social power is defined as the potential for such influence’ (Erchul and Raven 1997, p.131).

Table 2.1: French and Ravens’ six bases of power and how they apply to educational evaluation

POWER BASE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Reward power	This depends on the potential power of the influencing agent to have the resources to reward the target.	A principal of a school informs a member of staff that it would be advisable to practice self-evaluation if that staff member wanted to get a promotion; an inspector informs a school that it should engage in comparative value-added assessment if it wants to continue receiving extra funding.
Coercive power	This depends on the potential power of the influencing agent to inflict negative consequences, such as punishment or threats, on the target.	A government reduces school funding if the school does not perform to a certain level in externally devised examinations.
Legitimate power	This depends on the targets’ belief that that they should comply with the influencing agent based on the influencing agents position.	An inspector informs the school that it should engage in rigorous self-evaluation assessments for learning and embrace distributed leadership. Regardless of the schools’ beliefs on this matter, this view is accepted because of the inspector’s position.
Referent power	This depends on the targets acceptance of power from the influencing agent because the target admires certain characteristics of the influencing agent that he or she might want to emulate	A member of staff agrees with the principal’s views on self-evaluation because of a desire to be close/friendly or associated with the principal. A staff member believes that there is a possibility of promotion if the staff member agrees with the principal.
Expert power	This depends on the targets belief that the influencing agent possesses specialised knowledge and expertise in a particular area (i.e. ‘I don’t really understand why the influencing agent is fully correct with what he/she is saying, but I will agree with the influencing agent anyway. After all, he/she is the expert’).	I think that comparing my Leaving Certificate Examination results to the national average is a waste of time as my school is a school with many children who live in social deprivation, and contextual value-added variables do not exist in our system. In this regard, it’s impossible to compare like with like. However, now that I’ve been told by the inspectorate that this practice is very beneficial for school

		improvement, I'm now going to conduct the analysis anyway. After all, they are the experts.
Informational power	This type of power is used when the influencing agent gives those he is trying to influence a logical argument or new information that might alter their behaviour.	<p>Although the school didn't initially agree with the district inspector's assertion that the school engage in peer-to-peer observation, the school now agrees based on the district inspector showing the school research to suggest that peer-to-peer observation results in better teaching and learning and also how other schools have benefited from this process.</p> <p>Having read the Department of Education's 'Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Post-Primary Schools'(2011) I can now see required areas for improvement in our evaluation processes.</p>

Empirical studies (Podsahoff and Schriesheim 1985; Shackleton 1995; Handy 1993; Mullins 2002) have shown that the first three bases of power—reward, coercive and legitimate power—are positional in that they depend on the position the influencing agent holds (in the case of this study, the position of a principal as internal evaluator or inspectors as external evaluators), are independent of the internal beliefs of the target, and are used to ensure compliance regardless of the target's internal beliefs. The first three bases of power are influenced by key aspects of evaluation practice, including standards, legislation and the position of the individual carrying out the evaluation. The latter three bases of power—referent, expert and informational—are independent of the position that the influencing agent holds; they depend on a change in the internal beliefs of the target (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Positional vs. transformational bases of power

POWER BASE		POSITIONAL		DEPENDENT ON CHANGE IN TARGETS INTERNAL BELIEFS		REQUIRES SURVEILLANCE
Reward		Yes		No		Yes
Coercive		Yes		No		Yes
Legitimate power		Yes		No		Yes
Referent power		No		Yes		No
Expert power		No		Yes		No
Informational power		No		Yes		No

With regard to their ability to change the target's internal beliefs, it is widely believed that the most effective types of power are informational, expert and referent power. These bases of power do not require continuous surveillance and are more sustainable than the other three bases of power. Moreover, if the rationale for school evaluation is based on quality as transformational, then power bases within the evaluation spectrum should ideally concentrate on expert and informational power structures that appear to be, wisely to the forefront of external evaluation policy and practice in NI and the ROI.

However, the crucial elements that are required within the social acceptance of expert and informational power are confidence and trust in the credibility and competence of the individuals or organisations that are conducting the evaluation (in the case of this study, inspectorates as external evaluators and school personnel as internal evaluators). Where credibility and trust in the individual or organisation is questioned, positional power is quite naturally the only method that can be employed to bring about compliance and change. Therefore, presently, and perhaps when policy makers attempt to ascertain what elements of power should be used for IE and EE to mutually, sustainably and beneficially coexist, an analysis of a teacher's reaction to inspections in England in the nineteenth century is compelling.

The inspection became a game of mechanical contrivance in which the teachers will and must learn how to beat [the inspectors]. Every educator knows that his best results are those that cannot be measured at all. Inspection failed to stimulate the intellectual life of the school. (Dunford 1980 cited in Thody 2006, p.57)

2.5.6 Coexistence at a culturally responsive level

At a culturally responsive level, internal and external evaluators need to be culturally responsive and in practice, culturally competent when carrying out evaluations. Cultural competence is,

A set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs, and to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing focused interventions, communications and other supports. (Orlandi 1992 cited in Hood 2011, p.11)

According to Samuels and Ryan (2011, p.189) when referring to the process of culturally relevant democratic inquiry (CDI), ‘the external consultant helps the internal evaluation team to become more self-reflective... in its thinking to develop the skills to know when to ask for technical or other expertise to strengthen and warrant their CDI processes and to recognize culturally important nuances that might be overlooked’. Furthermore, as reciprocal partners, internal evaluators can also assist the external evaluation team with their understanding of the culture and context of those members of the community than would otherwise have been achieved in the absence of IE. Indeed, as Frierson et al (2010) state,

When designing an evaluation that seeks to be culturally responsive, considerable attention must be given to the identification of the stakeholders. Often, identified stakeholders include those who are most vocal, most visible, and easiest to work with throughout the evaluation process, but ignoring other relevant stakeholders might result in failing to capture critical contextual aspects of the project under study, which potentially can lead to inaccurate judgments and conclusions. Issues related to the identification and prioritization of relevant stakeholders and gaining access to and getting the cooperation of the multiple stakeholder groups are evaluation challenges that can be more meaningfully addressed through engaging and collaborating with members of the community. (Frierson et al 2010,p.81)

2.5.7 Conclusion

A review of evaluation literature suggests that EE is primarily associated with standardisation and control, whereas IE is concerned with school improvement. In many regions, both IE and EE are referred to interchangeably as a means of monitoring and improving the quality of education provided in schools. It also appears that while the debate on quality in education rages on, the debate on evaluation policy and practice in many regions has switched from an either/or discussion to an acknowledgement that both forms of evaluation, when they are treated as interconnected units, will theoretically reduce the perceived shortcomings of the other. Although there are purported benefits of the relationship, according to Nevo (2010, p.782), ‘evaluation is a demanding undertaking whose benefits are yet to be proved’. For both forms of evaluation to mutually and beneficially coexist, the terms of coexistence need to be discussed by governments, policy makers and other agents of change. In addition, the terms of reciprocal trust need to be clearly and transparently defined. If not, the perceived benefits of the relationship may diminish, and the relationship that exists will inevitably sway towards legitimate, coercive and reward power structures or internal mechanical measures. Indeed, if expert and informational power structures were used to discuss the real benefits of a dual system of IE and EE, this would inevitably result in a positive dialogue about the transformational quality of educational provision within the school.

Despite the mutual benefits and terms of coexistence offered by both forms of evaluation, it is important to investigate the extent to which NI and the ROI have adapted to the new relationship that purportedly exists in both regions on a practical level.

2.6 Evaluation in the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

2.6.1 Introduction

The evaluation of post-primary schools in NI and the ROI has primarily evolved from the Education Act of 1832 in which, in the case of NI, the present system of EE is managed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) whose responsibility is detailed in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (Article Number 30).

‘The purpose of inspection is to promote the highest possible standards of learning, teaching and achievement throughout the education, training and youth sectors’ (DENI 2012, p.2).

IE is also acknowledged by the ETI as an essential element in continuous school improvement, and various documents, including *Together Towards Improvement* (2003a), *Evaluating Schools* (1998), *Compendium of Case Studies by Schools who piloted Together Towards Improvement* (2003b) and *The Reflective Teacher* (2006), have been developed to augment a culture of evaluation in schools. Currently, according to the ETI, ‘using these materials many organisations are now undertaking rigorous self-evaluation of their provision, in order to improve the experiences of the pupils and the standards they attain’ (DENI 2006, p.i). Interestingly, the ETI sees its role in relation to IE as not only that of a clearing house. It also produces a set of tools to assist with IE and, in conjunction with the five regional educational library boards, ‘to work with all involved to promote the development of self-evaluation and, where appropriate, will issue further guidance’ (DENI 2003a, p.ii).

The evaluation of post-primary schools in the ROI has also evolved considerably since the 1830’s. In the ROI, EE is conducted by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills (DESROI) whose role is ‘to evaluate the education standards in such schools or centres... to promote excellence in the management of, teaching in and the use of support services by schools’ (Education Act, 1998). IE has also been recognised by the DESROI as complementary and essential to school planning and improvement.

Ireland, along with other European countries, is adopting a model of quality assurance that emphasises school development planning through internal school review and self-evaluation with the support of external evaluation carried out by the Inspectorate. (DESROI 2003, p.viii)

Similar to the ETI, the responsibility of the inspectorate is not only that of merely carrying out inspections, but also, by act of legislation, ‘to support and advise recognised schools and centres of education and teachers on matters relating to the provision of education’ (Education Act 13(3), 1998). Based on the above orders, decrees, and acts, the importance of implementing and promoting a dual culture of

IE/EE is evident in both regions. However, in order to explore these statements further, it is also necessary to examine how this relationship has been implemented in practice.

2.6.2 Implementation of evaluation in Northern Ireland

EE conducted by the ETI, whose mission statement is ‘Promoting Improvement’, is generally focused on three main forms of evaluation: individual institutional inspections, area inspections and thematic surveys. ‘The frequency of full inspections of schools and institutions is once in seven years’ (SICI 2008, p.11), and the final product of the inspection is the publication of an inspection report detailing the main strengths and areas in need of improvement within the school. In reality, EE is generally more frequent than this, and different evaluation models, such as focussed inspections and area inspections, also take place. However, within the context of this study, EE is normally conducted as an area inspection, a standard inspection, an unannounced inspection or, in the event that some area of improvement is in need of attention, a follow-up inspection. Inspections are conducted by inspectors employed by the ETI, and their work is guided by the ETI’s *Charter for Inspection* (2006).

Most inspectors also act as district inspectors (DIs) and are responsible for a number of schools within a geographical area. OECD (2007, p.26) states, ‘this facilitates close links and provides a good communication channel between the schools and the Department’. DIs also play a key role in realising the terms required for IE and EE to mutually and beneficially coexist. In many ways, DIs also support the belief that IE and EE can benefit each other. Although DIs also form part of the inspection team during the course of standard and follow-up inspections, they are also involved in a series of district visits. The district visits complement more centrally-programmed inspections, according to the ETI (2008a, p.8), and they provide ‘a valuable opportunity for the DI and staff of the organisations involved to engage professionally, outside the context of the formal inspection programme’. Moreover, DIs embrace the terms of coexistence at a conceptual, communication and influential level. To be effective in this role, a DI needs to

develop productive and purposeful working relationships with the leaders and other staff of the organisations in the district...develop his/her knowledge and understanding of the organisations, through direct observation of practice, and through dialogue with the leader of the organisation and other staff, while always taking cognisance of the organisation’s view of itself. (ibid 2008a, p.8)

The significant role played by the DI in realising the terms of coexistence is best described in the NI Assembly *Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities* (2011). John Allen OBE, former principal of St Colm's High School Belfast, states,

During my time as Principal, the emphasis was on schools evaluating themselves with the Inspector as the "critical friend". For the approach to be successful it required a good working relationship between the Principal and the District Inspector...By meeting frequently we grew to trust and respect one another with the result that I never felt threatened or worried when Dr Shevlin (DI) would ask probing questions...With Dr Shevlin's support we tried new approaches to things like literacy, discipline, behaviour and then wrote up our policies. It was this professional relationship between the Inspector and the Principal which greatly assisted school improvement in the case of St Colm's... I am convinced that Inspectors would find frequent contact with a cohort of schools much more rewarding than the present system of inspecting. (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2011)

Standard inspections focus primarily on leadership and management at all levels; the provision for pastoral care and child protection; overall educational provision; and the school's SE process, which according to the ETI, reinforces 'the importance of strong and effective governance and leadership within schools in helping to maintain and improve standards' (DENI 2009a, p.2).

A reporting inspector (RI) leads the evaluation team and is responsible for drafting the final evaluation report as well as informing the school and board of governors of the results of the evaluation. The RI is normally assisted by two more inspectors. More recently and in many ways embracing the concept of culturally responsive evaluation and assessment, associate assessors (AA) have also been included in the EE process. AAs are normally principals or deputy principals who have experience and/or training in a particular sector of education, such as experience resulting from working in socially deprived communities, and who have generally received ETI evaluation training similar to those employed by the ETI directly. According to the ETI, having AAs in the evaluation process can be beneficial to both the ETI and the organisation to which the AA is attached. The ETI can benefit from having an AA on the team through the increased awareness of local issues, and consequently, AAs 'contribute to the improvement of the inspection process' (DENI 2008b, p.3).The AA can benefit 'by

developing the use of the self-evaluation process in their own organisations, in relation to learning and teaching/training’ (DENI 2008b, p.3).

During the course of the evaluation, inspectors meet with the principal, senior management, teachers, parents and students. To identify the views of all the members of the community, parents and teachers are also asked to complete a confidential questionnaire (with the option of completing the questionnaire online) detailing their views of the leadership, teaching and learning in the school. The school is also asked to provide the inspector with quantitative and qualitative data (with assistance from support officers and data collected from the C2K.net website.) and other information relating to the school through a secondary school information disk (SSID). In acknowledgement of the importance the inspectorate places on IE, the school is also asked to detail any IE’s that they have conducted.

When the inspection is complete, the RI communicates the findings to the school community and produces an inspection report detailing the results, including the quality of school leadership, the schools arrangements for pastoral care and child protection, and the quality of teaching, learning, etc. The structure of the final report is also data driven, and it provides a detailed account of examination results and compares the school to contextual national averages and other statistical data relating to school attendance and the destinations of students that have left the school. This data is used to describe the strengths (and necessary improvements) of the school in the final report.

In the event that certain areas of improvement are deemed necessary, the school is asked to complete an action plan addressing the highlighted areas for improvement within 30 working days of receipt of the report. ‘This action plan will be the basis for discussions during the follow-up process’ (DENI 2009b, p.3). In the period between the standard inspection and follow-up inspection, ‘the RI will maintain contact with the organisation to monitor progress’ (DENI 2009b, p.3). The DI is also involved in the follow-up process and post-inspection contact. According to the ETI, ‘the DI’s function is that of monitoring and reporting on the progress of the organisation in addressing the issues identified, with particular reference to improvements in learning and teaching, standards achieved, quality of leadership, and the effectiveness of external support’ (DENI, 2012).

The follow-up inspection normally takes place 12 to 24 months after the standard inspection. The key requirement of the follow-up inspection is an IE of the required improvements. As stated by the DENI (2009b, p.3), 'Organisations will be required to write their own follow-up self-evaluation report and have it quality assured by the DI'. In the event that the follow-up inspection still shows areas in need of improvement, another follow-up inspection is scheduled and conducted. According to the ETI, follow-up inspections coupled with a school's SE have been successful. An analysis of follow-up inspections conducted by the ETI found that 'in the schools sector, there were sixty-seven follow-up inspections; almost all (93%) of the schools in both primary and post-primary sectors demonstrated their capacity to self-evaluate and improve on aspects of their provision' (DENI 2009b, p.6).

2.6.3 Implementation of evaluation in the Republic of Ireland

EE is conducted by the inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills whose responsibility is 'to promote excellence in all aspects of the functioning of schools and to provide advice and support to schools, teachers, boards of management, and parents on matters relating to educational provision' (DESROI 2003, p.v). EE typically uses six evaluation models: thematic, subject, incidental inspections, whole school evaluations (WSE), WSE-MLLs and evaluations of DEIS planning. Although the frequency of evaluations can vary, 'given the fact that the number of inspectors working has fallen from 154 to 133' (Faller, 2010), according to SICI (2009), 'at present, primary level inspections are carried out approximately once every nine to ten years... At Post-Primary level, schools may expect a Whole-School Evaluation with a similar frequency' (SICI 2009, p.14). In reality, EE is generally a lot more frequent than this in locations where incidental, subject and thematic inspections also take place.

In the ROI, EE's are also conducted by external evaluators whose work is guided by the DESROI's *Professional Code of Practice on Evaluation and Reporting for the Inspectorate* (2002). The professed benefit of the ROI's inspection system as described in an interview with the chief inspector is that inspectors have had considerable experience as teachers and are also dedicated classroom specialists.

At our core, we are committed to improving the learning opportunities that schools offer to pupils and students. That's why we are committed to carrying out our inspections in ways that provide real opportunities to affirm good practice and to provide practical advice to individual teachers, to principals and to boards of management. It's also why all our inspectors are committed, skilled and experienced teachers themselves, not academic researchers. (Seomra Ranga 2012)

The final outcome of all the evaluation models that are used, except for (during the composition of this dissertation) incidental inspections, always takes the form of an inspection report detailing the main strengths and areas for improvement within the school. WSEs, according to the DESROI (2006), are not conducted in isolation. They are 'a collaborative process involving the teaching staff, the management of the school, parents, and students' (DESROI 2006, p.2). The WSE's primary focus includes five evaluation themes: school management, school planning, curriculum provision, learning and teaching and support for students within a school. These five themes should also form the basis for a school's IE, as outlined in the inspectorates guide to self-evaluation entitled *Looking at our Schools* (2003). However, akin to standard inspections in NI, two complementary models of evaluation, WSE and the codicil version of WSE, whole school evaluation management, leadership and learning (WSE-MLL) are currently used to gain an overall perspective of quality within the school.

Prior to a WSE evaluation, the school is asked to provide the RI with a school information form that includes 'questions relating to school context, enrolment, attendance patterns, the allocation of teaching staff, and the provision of accommodation and resources' (DESROI 2006, p.6). Unlike WSE-MLL and school inspections in NI, parents and teachers are not asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their views about the provision of teaching and learning in the school. During the evaluation, the RI (with the assistance of one or more inspectors) meets the principal, senior management, teachers, members of the parents association, ancillary staff and students to ascertain the quality of the education provided. Upon completion of the evaluation, the RI communicates the findings to the principal, teachers and the board of management (BOM).

A provisional inspection report is then produced in accordance with the evidence that was collected. The report details the quality of management, teaching, learning and the relevant support structures that are in place at the school. The report also draws

attention to the school's strengths and recommended areas of improvement. According to the Chief inspector (2010, p.17), 'these school communities read and examine the strengths and recommendations identified by the inspectors. They review their own self evaluations and compare them with those of the inspection team'. Unlike NI, the WSE report does not contain statistical data relating to attendance, examination results, the destination of those who leave the school, etc. The WSE report is issued to the chairperson and the principal who have 20 school days from the report's issue date to submit a school response. Furthermore, within the complexity of strategic school development planning and the various partners who are involved in the process within this time frame, schools' 'use the report as part of a platform for planning and action... Some schools even include their plans for follow-up in the school responses that they submit for publication with the inspection report' (Hislop 2010, p.17).

WSE-MLL is significantly different than the present WSE model in the following ways:

- (1) A greater emphasis is placed on IE, where 'the onus is placed on schools to engage in the self-evaluation process' (Egan 2010, p.53).
- (2) The structure and composition of the final WSE report differs.
- (3) Parent/student opinions in the form of questionnaires are not conducted in the WSE.

The WSE-MLL model provides 'a shorter and more focussed report on the school... with less time on school planning and even more time in classrooms' (Hislop 2010, p.20). Most notable in the WSE-MLL model (and similar to other regions, such as NI and England) is the use of confidential or anonymous questionnaires consisting of Likert-type questions that are given to parents and students prior to the EE. However, unlike the inspection models of NI, England, Scotland, Wales and other regions—teachers are excluded from this part of the evaluation process.

The use of parent/student questionnaires acknowledges that 'schools exist to serve the learner and so one of the more important changes that we are making in this new model is to give voice to both students and their parents' (Hislop 2010, p.20). Furthermore, WSE-MLL also serves as a means of encouraging schools to initiate the IE process.

At the beginning of the inspection we are asking boards of management for their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school so that we get some sense of the capability of the school to conduct self-evaluation. (Hislop 2010, p.20)

The externally perceived robustness of the school's IE system will also form the basis for any future EE.

As schools engage in robust school self-evaluation processes that are informed by evidence-based judgements, the approach to external evaluation will change. External evaluation processes such as WSE will take increased account of the self-evaluation engaged in by schools. (DESROI 2012, p.13)

There is no legislative requirement for post-primary schools to conduct self-evaluations, although it is assumed that self-evaluation is an intrinsic part of the school's development planning (a legislative requirement of all schools in the ROI). According to SICI (2009, p.17), the DESROI recognises the importance of developing a culture of self-evaluation in which 'school self-evaluation is promoted by a process of school development planning which is supported by a dedicated support service of the Department of Education and Science, which provides support to schools in the form of grants, resources, advice and continuing professional development'. For the most part, this support previously took the form of the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) whose responsibility it was 'to stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness' (SDPI 1999). However, due to the recent economic downturn in the ROI, 'many support services, including SDPI, were discontinued and a new multi-disciplinary Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) was established' (SDPI 2012). Given the limited government finances and supports in the ROI, it is no surprise that the chief inspector (CIROI) affirmed that after the inspection has taken place, 'the primary responsibility for following through on recommendations rests with the board and staff... Others external to the school may be involved to a limited extent—Patron/VEC, certain DES divisions, Inspectorate, school support services, etc.' (Hislop 2010, p.16).

Indeed, there are financial constraints involved with carrying out inspections, and each WSE-MLL costs the Department of Finance approximately €10,750, based on the following government estimate.

The estimated cost of the 24 trial whole-school evaluations (WSE-MLL) conducted in 2010, calculated on the basis of a per diem proportion of the total annual salary, travel and subsistence costs of the Inspectorate, was €258,000. (Quinn 2011a)

However, at the conceptual level, the belief that external agencies should only play a limited role in realising the recommendations of an EE is at odds with the belief that

leaving the school alone with its responsibility to solve the problems revealed by the evaluation, not only decreases the chances to find appropriate solutions, it also implies that the school is to be blamed for these problems. (Nevo 2002, p.14)

Based on the considerable expense incurred by the Department of Finance in the ROI at a time when these funds could be used to assist schools with the myriad of barriers associated with educating children who are living in poverty, it is no wonder that unlike other regions, such as NI and Scotland, external follow-up inspections are ‘concentrated on a very small number of schools with very serious failings and those with significant problems’ (Egan p.26, 2010). Furthermore, the frequency of follow-up inspections are not perceived as always being the best way to ensure the recommendations from an evaluation are implemented and realised. The Chief Inspector of the ROI stated, ‘Do we need to intervene at the level of the patron or the VEC or is it simply something that can be done by following up with another inspection’. Actually, another inspection is not always the best way of doing it’ (NPCPP 2010).

Indeed, very few follow-up inspections take place in the majority of schools in the ROI. At this stage, the EE appears to be complete until the next incidental or subject inspection takes place.

2.6.4 Conclusion

As is evidenced by the abundance of legislation and literature, such as ‘Looking at Our Schools’ (2003), ‘School self-evaluation draft guidelines for post-primary schools’ (2012) in the ROI and ‘Together towards improvement’ (2003), both regions appear to have instituted evaluation models and systems that require schools to foster and embrace the terms of coexistence. However, to ascertain the extent to which schools and governments have practically embraced the terms of coexistence, it is imperative to combine theory with practice and examine the views of IE and EE evaluators and their interpretations of the system. It is this question that forms the core component of the presentation and analysis for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction and background

This research centred on how best to blend internal evaluation and external evaluation with the perspective being that evaluation should not be viewed as a disambiguation for accountability and improvement. Rather, evaluation should be viewed as both a benchmark and promoter for quality that is primarily focused on a moral and social discourse for quality in education.

The research method used in this study was that of a mixed methods approach (Greene, Caracelli and Graham 1989; Creswell and Plano Clark 2010; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007), which is viewed as a ‘distinct model of enquiry’ (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011, ch.2, para.7) that uses both qualitative (QUAL) and quantitative (QUAN) techniques as the methods of inquiry and analysis.

It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. (Creswell 2003 p.18)

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), ‘mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry’ (ibid, 2011, ch.1, para.11). As a field of enquiry, the use of mixed methods is based on the philosophical assumption that ‘a mixed methods way of thinking rests on assumptions that there are multiple legitimate approaches to social inquiry and that any given approach to social inquiry is inevitably partial’ (Greene 2007, p.20). In terms of enquiry, ‘mixed methodologists present an alternative to QUAN and QUAL traditions by advocating the use of whatever methodological tools are required to answer the research question’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2008, p.7). Haines (2011) stated that ‘the underlying idea of mixed methods research is to combine different strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods (large sample size, generalization) with qualitative methods (small sample size, in-depth)’ (p.11). Moreover, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest that rather than thinking about how best to fit different methods to specific topics, researchers should focus on ‘thinking about fitting methods to different types of research problems’ (ibid, ch.1, para.19). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) also suggest that ‘effective use of this principle is a major source of justification for mixed

methods research because the product will be superior to mono method studies' (p.18). On the other hand, Denzin (2010) is of the view that 'unlike the poaching of animals, there is nothing illegal about methodological poaching, but it does have some negative consequences' (Denzin 2010, p.420). Indeed, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) affirm that not all research problems justify the use of mixed methods research and a clear outline of the study and justification for using mixed methods research should be described.

Research problems suited for mixed methods are those in which one data source may be insufficient, results need to be explained, exploratory findings need to be generalized, a second method is needed to enhance a primary method, a theoretical stance needs to be employed, and an overall research objective can be best addressed with multiple phases, or projects. (Creswell and Plano Clarke 2011 ch.1,para.22)

Further to the point made by Denzin (2010), Wolf (2010) also suggests that researchers are sometimes compelled to use mixed methods strategies in which

scholars are regularly expected to demonstrate both familiarities with the latest fashions in quantitative modelling and a critical awareness of their methodological perils, and to combine macro quantitative methods with in-depth case studies (based on meticulous process tracing, numerous expert interviews, and the like) at the same time. (Wolf 2010, p.145)

However, while neither being a proponent or antagonist for mixed methods research, Wolf goes on to state that, 'the nexus between the qualitative and quantitative analyses needs to be carefully established' (Wolf 2010, p.160) with the recommendation being that of, not subscribing to a "one-size-fits-all" solution but rather, 'to use tailor-made triangulation strategies fitted to the respective research topics, questions, and interests' (Wolf 2010, p.160). This study utilised a multi-phase convergent mixed methods approach to obtain multilevel data for analysis and consisted of four distinct phases that were triangulated to form an overall interpretation of the research.

Justification for the use of this research strategy is based on the view that one strategy of inquiry would not be sufficient to answer the research question. In this regard, the author was of the view that to naively proceed to other phases of the study with one single method alone could result in a limited mono-focal interpretation of present and subsequent phases of the study.

Indeed, as Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) state,

Multiphase designs occur when an individual researcher or team of investigators examines a problem or topic through an iteration of connected quantitative and qualitative studies that are sequentially aligned, with each new approach building on what was learned previously to address a central program objective.
(Creswell and Plano Clark 2011 ch.3,para.87)

The central objective of this study was to gain a greater understanding of and consequently improve educational evaluation policy and practice on the island of Ireland and elsewhere as a moral and social discourse. Each phase of the study was sequentially aligned and built on what was learned in previous phases, which facilitated the overall interpretation of the study.

Furthermore, although addiction and prescription to large scale single method quantitative studies are quite frequently used by governments and organisations to put forward recommendations for improvement in a particular area of education (see PISA 2009; OECD 2012), it would be reasonable to suggest that the persistent drive to focus on this single method of enquiry is problematic, especially where recommendations to inform and improve practice are concerned. An article by Simons (2004) highlights this issue.

Government seeks a closer relationship with the research and evaluation community and a more prescriptive role in determining the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of policy-related inquiry. It is the ‘how’ – the methodology – that is problematic. Simplicity and certainty are what governments seek. Complexity and uncertainty are what we habitually deliver. (Simons 2004, p.410)

This is also the case with comparative education where ‘multi-national quantitative comparisons are also more valued by academics, policy-makers and funding bodies, and often understood as ‘proper’ comparative research, even if the advantages of and the need for qualitative, more in-depth comparisons are today widely recognized’ (Gómez and Kuronen 2011, p.684). Further to this point, although quantitative research is liberally said to allow for greater objectivity and accuracy of results compared to qualitative methods, it has also been said that ‘quantitative researchers are in the background, and their own personal biases and interpretations are seldom discussed’ (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011 ch.1,para.35).This perspective resonates with Rosenberg (2013), who states:

Data by definition are “that which is given prior to argument”, given in order to provide a rhetorical basis. (Facts are facts-that is, they are true by dint of being factual-but data can be good or bad, better or worse, incomplete and insufficient.) Yet precisely because data stand as a given, they can be taken to construct a model sufficient unto itself: given certain data, certain conclusions may be proven or argued to follow. Given other data, one would come to different arguments and conclusions. (p.7)

Within the parameters of this study, to ignore and or focus entirely on a single research method of quantitative enquiry is particularly relevant, but it is also relevant to evaluation studies more generally. Indeed, Simons (2004) is of the view that if researchers wish to generate policy to inform practice, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the lived experience of those who are involved in the process.

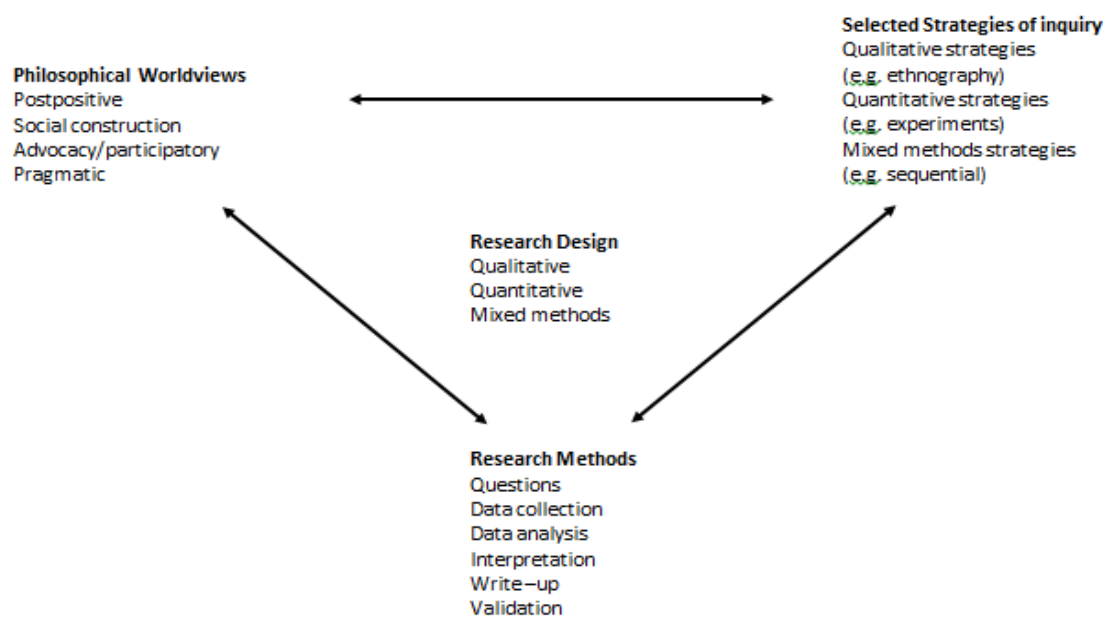
In making this case, I am not saying that other kinds of systematic evidence or experimental intervention studies are not useful for certain purposes and contexts. It is a question of appropriateness of method for purpose and function – in this case, of improving practice. (Simons 2004, p.411)

This chapter is divided into the following sections. The second section, Section 3.2 provides a description of the authors’ philosophical assumptions, which, according to Creswell and Plano Clark, should be clearly stated in all mixed methods studies. ‘As a general rule, we suggest that mixed methods researchers not only be aware of their philosophical assumptions but also clearly articulate their assumptions in their mixed methods projects’ (Creswell and Plano Clarke 2011, ch.2, para.7). The third section (Section 3.3) provides a description of the mixed methods research methodology in order to further elucidate the paradigm choice and consequent research design used in the study. Leading on from this, Section 3.4 provides a description of the research design including the methodologies used and the theoretical connections that linked each phase of the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with ethical considerations and acknowledged limitations of the study.

3.2 Philosophical assumptions

Creswell (2013) suggests that ‘whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research’ (p.15). He added that ‘although philosophical ideas remain largely hidden in research (Slife & Williams, 1995), they still influence the practice of research and need to be identified’ (Creswell 2008, ch.1, para.4). Indeed, it could be said that, within any research study, from initial conception to interpretation, a researchers philosophical beliefs and world views not only influence, but also guide the strategies of enquiry and research methods (Figure 4).

Figure 4: A framework for design: The interconnection of worldviews, strategies of inquiry, and research methods. (Source: Creswell 2008, ch.1, para.8, fig.1.1)



Philosophical assumptions, or what Creswell (2008) refers to as ‘world view’ and Kuhn (1962) in his book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* referred to as ‘paradigm’, are synonymous terms that are used to describe a set of complementary and contradictory beliefs that influences the overall research design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest that paradigms or world views can be described in a number of ways.

First, paradigms can be viewed as worldviews, an all-encompassing perspective on the world, or second, they can be seen as epistemologies incorporating ideas from the philosophy of science, such as ontology, methodology, and epistemology. Third, paradigms can be viewed as the "best" or "typical" solutions to problems, and fourth, paradigms may represent shared beliefs of a research field. (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2011, ch.2, para.51)

In contrast to Creswell and Plano Clark's summation of the various interpretations of the term 'paradigm', Mertens (2012) poses the question, 'What comes first, the paradigm or the approach' (2012). By way of explanation, the author, when referring to Greene and Hall (2010) argues 'against the school of thought that paradigms can be methodological in their foundations' (Mertens 2012, p.255). However, Mertens also suggests that 'the use of paradigms as philosophical frameworks that delineate assumptions about ethics, reality, knowledge, and systematic inquiry helps clarify the basis of disagreements amongst members of the mixed methods research community' (Mertens 2012, p.256). Further to the point made by Mertens (2012), Cahill and Freshwater (2013) suggest that disagreement 'offers a more interesting space in which to hold a debate and refine a discourse rather than the seemingly solid ground of a solution. And one that potentially continues to delineate paradigms as philosophical frameworks that lead to choices in methods' (Cahill and Freshwater 2013, p.3).

It would be reasonable to suggest that having no all-encompassing definition or convergent world view of the term 'paradigm' could be construed as problematic. However, Guba (1990) is of the view that

some persons view that lack of definition as an unfortunate state of affairs. But I believe that it is important to leave the term in such a problematic limbo, because it is then possible to reshape it as our understanding of its many implications improves. Having the term not cast in stone is intellectually useful. (Guba 1990, p.17)

Furthermore, the author goes on to state that paradigm may be generically described as 'a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry' (Guba 1990, p.17). Indeed, this perspective resonates with Cahill and Freshwater (2012) who are of the view that 'understanding the constructed nature of paradigms is key' (p.3). These philosophical assumptions or set of beliefs 'include, but are not limited to, ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, axio-logical beliefs, aesthetic beliefs, and methodological

beliefs' (Johnson et al. 2007, p.129). While acknowledging that philosophical beliefs are non-hierarchic and interlinked, the author has chosen four philosophical beliefs (ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological) that are of particular relevance to this study.

Ontological beliefs 'relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics' (Creswell 2012, p.20) and centres on the belief that reality can be singular ('reality exists "out there" and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Knowledge of these entities, laws and mechanisms is conventionally summarised in the form of time-and context-free generalisations' [Guba 1990, p.20]), or it can be **universal**, ('although a real world driven by real natural causes exists, it is impossible for humans truly to perceive it with their imperfect sensory and intellectual mechanisms' [Cook and Campbell 1979 cited in Guba 1990]). In sum, as Johnson et al. state,

Debates about singular or universal truths or approaches to viewing the world (Socrates, Plato), versus multiple or relative truths (the Sophists such as Protagoras and Gorgias), ver-sus balances or mixtures of the extremes (Aristotle's "golden mean" or principle of balance, moderate skepticism, Cicero, Sextus Empiricus), go back, at least, to ancient Western philosophy, and the spirit of these debates lives today in the different views of the three major approaches to social research. (2007, p.113)

Epistemological beliefs are concerned with 'how we gain knowledge of what we know' (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2011, ch.2, para.41) where the epistemological debate centres on what actually constitutes real knowledge. In other words, depending on the ontological and epistemological beliefs of a researcher, knowledge can be **objective** ('it is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture. Values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes' [Guba 1990, p.20]) or **interpretive/subjective**, where the faults inherent in objectivity are recognised. In other words, it would be naive to suggest that it is possible 'for a human inquirer to step outside the pale of humanness while conducting inquiry' (Guba 1990, p.20). However, Denzin and Lincoln (2012) also state that the interpretive camp is not anti-science; instead, they believe in 'multiple forms of science: soft, hard, strong, feminist, interpretive, critical, realist, postrealist and post-humanist' (Denzin and Lincoln 2012, p.22).

Nonetheless, the authors also state that ‘the critics are correct on this point. We have a political orientation that is radical, democratic, and interventionist. Many post positivists share these politics’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2012, p.22).

Axiological beliefs are concerned with intrinsic values that are inherent in all researchers. In studies that have a qualitative component, ‘the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field’ (Creswell 2012, p.21). In other words, the researcher ‘openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretation of participant’.

Methodological beliefs are concerned with ‘the process of research’ (Creswell 2008, ch.x, para.xx) where, in the case of qualitative research, the researcher pursues a logic of inductive reasoning as opposed to pursuing an entirely singular, theory lead strategy. Creswell (2012) offers an example.

Sometimes the research questions change in the middle of the study to reflect better the types of questions needed to understand the research problem. In response, the data collection strategy, planned before the study, needs to be modified to accompany the new questions. During the data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analysing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic studied. (Creswell 2012, p.21)

In conclusion, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) in reference to Guba (1990) state that ‘the net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological and methodological premises’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.13) can be called a paradigm or interpretive framework. However, the authors also state,

All research is interpretive: guided by a set of values and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, or only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial. Each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.13).

In turn, these philosophical assumptions can influence the interpretive framework of the study and the theoretical paradigm employed by the researcher.

3.3 Paradigms

There are many prescriptive paradigms to choose from as shown in Tables 3.1 to 3.3. Creswell (2012) considers Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) assertion that philosophical assumptions are 'key premises that are folded into interpretive frameworks used in qualitative research' (Creswell 2012, p.23). Indeed, from Denzin and Lincoln's list of theoretical paradigms (2011, p.12) there are many interpretive, theoretical and indeed contested theoretical paradigms from which our philosophical assumptions are drawn.

THEORETICAL PARADIGM	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES
Positivism	'Positivism is objectivist by definition' (Crotty 1998, p.12)
Post-positivism	'Post Positivism rests upon five assumptions that are increasingly difficult to maintain. These five assumptions capture the most salient aspects included in the various definitions of post positivism'. These five assumptions are: (1) ontological , (2) epistemological , (3) 'an assumption of the temporal and contextual independence of the observations... ,(4) linear causality , 'there are no effects without causes, and no causes without effects' and (5) 'an axiological assumption about value freedom' (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p.28).
Interpretivism	'Interpretivism attempts to implement the rule of law by assuming that the meanings of words and rules are stable over extended periods' (Tushnet 1983, p.785).
Constructivism	'Social construction or <i>constructivist</i> philosophy is built on the thesis of <i>ontological relativity</i> , which holds that all tenable statements about existence depend on a world view, and no world view is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world. Hence, two people can live in the same empirical world, even though one's world is haunted by demons, and the other's, by subatomic particles' (Patton 2002a, p.97).
Hermeneutics	'It can be used to interpret written or oral texts' (Shahavali 2010, p.202).
Table 3.1: Selection of theoretical paradigms/perspectives (1). Source: The author.	

THEORETICAL PARADIGM	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES
Feminism	‘A critique of dominant ‘value free’ modes of doing social research, the rejection of exploitative power hierarchies between researcher and researched’ (Edwards and Mautner 2012, p.15).
Transformative Advocacy/ Participatory	‘Advocacy is best understood as the absence of value neutrality and that advocacy most importantly implies an explicit value commitment rather than a partisan stance toward a particular program or an alignment with a particular stakeholder group’ (Greene 1997, p.26).
Critical and Cultural theory	<p>‘There are no universally accepted definitions of the phrases ‘critical theory’ and ‘cultural theory’. This is because critical theory and cultural theory are not sciences governed by precise sets of rules and procedures. In fact, they are multi-layered discourses that integrate diverse themes and approaches’ (Cavallaro 2001, p.ix).</p> <p>‘Today the phrase ‘critical theory’ is generally used in a far less specialised fashion. Indeed, employed in tandem with ‘cultural theory’, it describes a cluster of approaches which-especially-since the 1970s-have prompted a radical reassessment of notions of meaning, history, identity, power, cultural production and cultural consumption’ (Cavallaro 2001, p.x).</p>
Marxist Theory	‘Marxist theory argues that society is fundamentally constructed of the relations people form as they do and make things needed to survive humanly. Work is the social process of shaping and transforming the material and social worlds, creating people as social beings as they create value. It is that activity by which people become who they are. Class is its structure, production its consequence, capital its congealed form, and control its issue’ (MacKinnon 1982, p.515).

Table 3.2: Selection of theoretical paradigms/perspectives (2). Source: The author.

Queer Theory	‘At its widest, tallest and Wilde(st), queer theory is a plea for massive transgression of all conventional categorisations and analyses-a Sadean/Nietzschean breaking of boundaries around gender/the erotic/the interpersonal, and a plea for dissidence. More narrowly, it is a political play on the word <i>queer</i> , long identified with ‘homosexuality’, and the newest in a series of “reverse affirmation” in which the categories constructed through medicalization are turned against themselves. Often there is overlap between the more narrow (i.e., lesbian and gay) focus and the wider focus on transgression: they are far from separate (Plummer 1994, p.182).
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Table 3.3: Selection of theoretical paradigms/perspectives (3). Source: The author.

While the varying theoretical paradigms that exist could be construed as, to paraphrase Hodgkinson (1993) when referring to the ever expanding leadership theories, ‘word magic of the worst kind’ (cited in Macbeath 2003, p.1). Schwandt on the other hand states that ‘in wrestling with the ways in which these philosophies forestructure our efforts to understand what it means to “do” qualitative inquiry, what we face is not a choice of which label-interpretivist, constructivist, hermeneutivist, or something else – best suits us. Rather, we are confronted with choices about how each of us wants to live the life of a social inquirer’ (Schwandt 2000, p.205). Indeed, Denzin (2010) is also of the view that ‘we need a moral and methodological community that honors and celebrates paradigm and methodological diversity’ (Denzin 2010, p.425). While this might be the case; Morgan (2007), when referring to the exclusion of the widely contested paradigm referred to as ‘pragmatism’ from the list is also of the view that:

These examples point to a “political” or “social-movement-based” account of who gets to define and draw boundaries around paradigms, whether this amounts to post-positivists pushing for a place on this list, only to be given second-class citizenship, or the continual exclusion of pragmatism as a member of the club.
(Morgan, 2007,p.61)

3.4 Pragmatism

Within the realms of ‘paradigm and methodological diversity’, Creswell (2008) orients towards 4 paradigms: post positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory (Tables 3.2 and 3.3) and, of particular relevance to this study, the worldview referred to as ‘pragmatism’ (Table 3.4).

Post-positivist worldview	Constructivism worldview	Advocacy/participatory worldview	Pragmatist worldview
Determination	Understanding	Political	Consequences of actions
Reductionism	Multiple participant meanings	Empowerment and issue-oriented	Problem centred
Empirical observation and measurement	Social and historical construction	Collaborative	Pluralistic
Theory verification	Theory generation	Change-oriented	Real-world practice oriented
Table 3.4: Basic characteristics of four Worldviews used in research. Source: Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, para.35, ch.2).			

However, as previously stated, consternation as to whether or not pragmatism is a ‘paradigm’ has been the subject of much debate, and it centres on the view that it is not possible to combine ontological and epistemological traditions. Indeed, Tashakkori and Teddlie state that ‘many dismiss it as a “naïve” or even “vulgar” orientation that simplifies highly complex philosophical issues into “what works”’ (2003, p.ix). Further to the point made by Tashakkori and Teddlie, Morgan (2007) states,

The issue of who controls the list of “accepted” paradigms is particularly important for methodologists who are interested in combining qualitative and quantitative methods because nearly all the lists proposed within the metaphysical paradigm ignore pragmatism, even though it is the favored approach within that subfield. (Morgan 2007, p.61)

While the author accepts, as a point of logic, that there are metaphysical incompatibilities of positivism and post-positivism, the author concurs with Morgan (2007) when he states that ‘if the content of paradigms is subject to this level of human agency, then it makes little sense to claim that principles such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology are actually defining characteristics for such paradigms’ (p.61). Indeed, as Einstein states, ‘whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge in the field of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods,’ (Einstein 1953 cited in O’Brien 2011, p.118).

Pragmatism is not committed to any one philosophy or paradigm but rather, ‘inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research’ (Creswell 2008, ch.1, para.12). Within the pragmatist world view, the focus is centred on the importance of the questions being asked as opposed to the method of inquiry being used. In this regard, pragmatist researchers can use ‘multiple methods of data collection to inform the problems under study. Thus, it is pluralistic and oriented toward "what works" and practice’ (Creswell and Plano Clark ch.2, para.40) as opposed to the ‘metaphysical’ philosophical stance the researcher takes.

Indeed, pragmatism utilises both qualitative and quantitative strategies of inquiry within the research and is frequently referred to as ‘the primary philosophy’ (Johnson et al. 2007, p.113) and ‘philosophical partner’ (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p.14) of the strategy of enquiry, which is more commonly referred to as mixed methods research.

3.5 Strategies of Inquiry

3.5.1 Introduction

There are two discrete strategies of inquiry:

Quantitative The systematic, controlled, empirical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena (Kerlinger 1970 cited in Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2007 p.5)

Qualitative A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material that makes the world visible... At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.3)

However, within the realm of social science enquiry, it is not as simple as ‘choosing one over the other’ (Antonescu et al. 2006, p.12). This is because of the realisation that socially occurring phenomena such as perceptions or attitude are extraordinarily complex phenomena to analyse.

Nonetheless, regardless of the methodology chosen, it would be reasonable to suggest that within the pragmatist worldview and metaphysical paradigm, that research activities should be focussed on how best to increase or interpret the reliability/authenticity or validity/trustworthiness of a scientific argument. From this perspective, the decision as to what strategy of inquiry would best suit this study is centred on the view that socially occurring phenomena such as perceptions are extraordinarily complex, and limiting the research to one strategy of inquiry could inevitably lead to a partial or mono focal interpretation of what is actually occurring.

Furthermore, within the field of social science research, it is the author’s belief that there are indeed multiple legitimate forms of knowing and also multiple legitimate ways of analysing socially occurring phenomena that are inherent in all humans. Based on this philosophical conviction and within the context of this study, the paradigm choice used in this study is that of pragmatism. In this regard, it was decided that in order to augment the interpretation of the research question, a combination of both qualitative

and quantitative strategies of inquiry was necessary. When these two strategies of inquiry are mixed, the strategy of inquiry changes from a singular strategy of inquiry to what is more commonly referred to as mixed methods research.

It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. (Creswell 2003, p.18)

Although, as previously stated, criticisms relating to the use of mixed methods research are centred on the view that 'it is not possible to combine the ontological and epistemological stances of both traditions' (Guba and Lincoln 1988 cited in Doyle, Brady and Byrne 2009, p.178). Rodwell (1998) takes a different view.

It should become clear that it is impossible to hold positivist assumptions along one dimension, while holding alternative, interpretive assumptions along another (Rodwell, 1990), even though it is possible to use either quantitative or qualitative methods or both in each paradigm. One might be able to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods while still attending to the rigor requirements built on the epistemological assumptions of each position. (Rodwell 1998, p.13)

Furthermore, it could also be argued that, if quantitative research is 'objectivity by deduction' and qualitative research is 'subjectivity by induction', by ignoring either subjectivity or objectivity in favour of the other can only limit the quality of the research question as it unfolds, and, although this view might appear to be one-dimensional, it is pragmatic. Pragmatism is one of the key ingredients for all successful research designs and also one of the driving forces behind the emergence of mixed methods research. The author concurs with Morgan (2007) who states,

Outside of introductory textbooks, the only time that we pretend that research can be either purely inductive or deductive is when we write up our work for publication. During the actual design, collection, and analysis of data, however, it is impossible to operate in either an exclusively theory or data-driven fashion. (p.71)

3.5.2 Mixed methods research

The term mixed methods in educational research and evaluation is fundamentally a mixed way of thinking ‘that actively includes, even welcomes, multiple methodological traditions’ (Greene 2005, p.207) by the acceptance of multiple ways of knowing in our practice as practitioner researchers. Mixed methods research rejects the ‘incompatibility of methods thesis’ in support of ‘methodological eclecticism’ by ‘using techniques that encompass the entire QUAL and QUAN “toolboxes.” A researcher employing methodological eclecticism is a connoisseur of methods who knowledgeably, and often intuitively, selects the best techniques available to answer research questions that may evolve as a study unfolds’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2012, p.777). In mixed methods research, the researcher is guided by the research as it unfolds and, if needed, uses an eclectic contingent process of inquiry by moving back and forth within the research question.

Furthermore, by using mixed methods research, the researcher is not merely trying to find methods that are simply fit for purpose but rather as Greene (2005) states, ‘the generation of important understandings and discernments through the juxtaposition of different lenses, perspectives, and Stances’ (Greene 2005, p.208). Indeed, the fundamental purpose of mixed methods research is not merely that of collecting both types of data for the sake of collecting both types of data. ‘It also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research’ (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007 cited in Creswell 2008, ch.1, para.6). This perspective resonates with Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) who state that ‘the bottom line is that research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions’ (p.16). In this regard, the research question for this study was ‘what factors relate to the successful integration of IE and EE as a promoter for school accountability and improvement’.

Although mixed methods researchers advocate the use of qualitative and quantitative techniques and reject the incompatibility of methods thesis.

There is recognition that quantitative and qualitative research are each connected with distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions, but the connections are not viewed as fixed and ineluctable. Research methods are perceived, unlike in the epistemological version, as autonomous. A research method from one research strategy is viewed as capable of being pressed into the service of another. (Bryman 2012, p.631).

However, for those who are proponents of mixed methods research, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2012) are of the view that there are at least three issues relating to the integration of qualitative and quantitative techniques that need to be considered. The first issue relates to the belief that many mixed methods researchers are not properly trained in qualitative methods.

QUAL-oriented critics see this as particularly important because they are concerned that researchers will not be trained properly in the ethnographic tradition, nor will they appreciate the resources required to conduct ethnographies. They believe that many MMR projects will result in “QUAL-light” research. (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2012, p.777)

Indeed, further to the point made by Tashakkori and Teddlie, it could also be said that this is the case for mixed methods researchers who are not properly trained in quantitative methods with the result being QUAN Light descriptive type statistics consisting of, for example, visual representations of the main features of a collection of data coupled with a summary of the mean, mode, median and so forth. In this regard, the authors are of the view that mixed methods researchers need to be proficient in the use of the full range of research methods and techniques needed to answer the research question. In other words, mixed methods researchers need to be ‘methodologically bilingual’ or as Tashakkori and Teddlie state, ‘mixed methods researchers must be competent in the full spectrum of research methods and approaches to select the best paths for answering their research questions’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2012, p.777).

The second issue concerns over reliance on prescriptive mixed methods designs used to integrate qualitative and quantitative techniques. As Gorard and Symonds (2010) state, ‘any all-encompassing predetermined design strategy for mixed methods would surely inhibit future creative efforts that might fall outside of these perspectives’ (Gorard and Symonds 2010, p.134). However, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2012) state that the use of conventional mixed methods research designs was needed in the early stages of mixed

methods research because of the controversy surrounding the convergence of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Furthermore and in relation to the first issue concerning researcher capacity to carry out mixed methods research, the authors go on to state,

Part of the reliance on simple methods was also due to the training the students received, since professors teaching rigorous ethnographic methods or complex statistical applications were more likely to emphasize purely QUAL or QUAN applications. The first generation of professors teaching mixed methods will hopefully spawn a second generation that is more likely to be exposed to and adapt a wider variety of research tools as MMR becomes more popular and as new techniques are developed across the methodological spectrum. (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2012, p.778)

A third and final issue is the view that, those who reject the incompatibility thesis of not being able to integrate qualitative and quantitative techniques (see Morgan 2007) should in some way desist from engaging in philosophical debates with those who are antagonists of mixed methods research. However, the author concurs with Tashakkori and Teddlie (2012) when they state,

We must continue to be engaged in these dialogues to convince the “undecided” members of the research community that the mixed methods approach to social inquiry is viable. We believe that if the mixed methods community pays attention to these issues of language, pedagogy, and philosophy, then MMR will continue its emergence as the third methodological movement. (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2012, p.784)

Furthermore, even when factoring researcher capacity, the perceived prescriptive use of mixed methods designs and an acceptance of the philosophical underpinnings of mixed methods research are addressed within the mixed methods research study. Issues such as when to converge, triangulate, interpret and validate qualitative and quantitative data are essential component parts of any mixed research design. In this regard, within the mixed methods research design, it is essential that conceptual and practical considerations are carefully considered, and it is this issue that forms the next part of this study.

3.6 Conceptual and practical considerations in research design

History has observed various research methods and techniques that have been used in the search for truth. This has inevitably led to conflicting opinions among researchers as to what actually constitutes effective and worthwhile research be it qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both. However, in the unified search for truth, these methods of inquiry harmonise with each other in relation to the significant and often over looked importance of an effective research design.

Research design necessitates an action plan or logic for collecting and making use of data so that information may be obtained with acceptable accuracy or, depending on the field of enquiry used, so that a hypothesis may be tested properly.

According to Trochim (2006b), the research design provides ‘the glue that holds the research project together’ and the design is used to structure and guide the researcher into showing how all of the major parts of the research project (the theoretical assumptions, samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs and methods of assignment) work in unison to try and address the central research questions. In sum, the critical success of a research project is that it is well designed. Indeed, as Lankshear (2004) states,

Under arctic conditions, for example, an igloo is an excellent design for a house. It would be a terrible design, however, for tropical areas. Similarly, a building design that may be very acceptable for areas where there are never earthquakes might not be acceptable for areas where earthquakes are common. The ultimate success of a research study depends crucially on its being well designed –which means we need to be alert to the importance of design from the outset. (Lankshear 2004, p.27)

From a pragmatist world view, the research design should be a construct for building on the research and best fit the types of questions the researcher is seeking to address. In other words, the research design should be governed by the notion of ‘fit for purpose’ as not all designs are compatible with certain types of research in terms of what types of research methods and theories are used. Therefore, it is essential for the research design and the various phases of the investigation taking place to synchronise in order to translate the investigation into the most suitable framework used to address the questions being asked.

While acknowledging that it is not always possible to describe all of the predicted phases of, for example, grounded theory, within many social science studies, to change the research design after the research has begun could possibly lead to numerous problems as the research unfolds. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state,

It is essential to try as far as possible to plan every stage of the research. To change the 'rules of the game' in midstream once the research has commenced is a sure recipe for problems. The terms of the research and the mechanism of its operation must be ironed out in advance if it is to be credible, legitimate and practicable. Once they have been decided upon, the researcher is in a very positive position to undertake the research. The setting up of the research is a balancing act, for it requires the harmonizing of *planned possibilities* with workable, coherent practice, i.e. the resolution of the difference between what could be done/what one would like to do and what will actually work/what one can actually do, for, at the end of the day, research has to work. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, p.115)

Lankshear (2004) suggests that an effective research design should be structured into different stages where each stage enables the researcher to plan for significant milestones in the investigation while at the same time ensuring that different stages of the research complement and build on each other.

The first stage of the research design should be centred on initially starting with a broad set of aims and questions that relate to the research focus and then through the process of operationalization, these aims and questions should be continually broken down in to more specific concrete aims and questions.

What is required here is translating a very general research aim or purpose into specific, concrete questions to which specific, concrete answers can be given. The process moves from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the concrete. Thus the researcher breaks down each general research purpose or general aim into more specific research purposes and constituent elements, continuing the process until specific, concrete questions have been reached to which specific answers can be provided. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, p.115).

Furthermore, by using the process of operationalisation we are not only breaking down the research into more concise and tangible questions that can be answered, we are also developing a blueprint for what research methodologies and methods will be used to answer the questions we are addressing. Indeed, if a research question is too broad it can

result in various problems such as using the wrong instruments for gathering the data needed to answer the question.

The research design should also be guided by what is already known or is similar to the research study. Furthermore, by conducting an intensive literature review, the chances of error in the design are reduced by ensuring that all of the major constructs are included in the study. According to Trochim (2008a), 'by using this knowledge we can envisage and prevent difficulties that might have otherwise occurred during the course of the research'.

Based on what has been elucidated from the previous stages of the research design an appropriate plan for collecting and analysing the data should be developed to ensure that the types of data being collected are the most appropriate data sets required to answer the questions being asked. This stage of the design process should also address what instruments are used and how much data is necessary. Practical issues such as time, resources, ethics and the financial cost of gathering data need to be investigated at this stage of the design to ensure that the required data is obtainable. If for a number of extraneous reasons, during the course of the research, the researcher finds that the necessary data required for the research is unobtainable (for example, ascertaining the views of inspectors on evaluation), apart from the obvious breakdown of the research, it could also lead one to suggest that not enough preparation was done in formulating and relating the other various stages of the research design.

Assuming that the necessary data is obtainable, the research design should also include a framework and plan for analysing and interpreting the data which, depending on what kind of data analysis is performed, 'will influence the way in which the data analysis is written up' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007, p.461). Indeed, the type of data analysis used needs to concur with the other various stages of the design process if the purpose of subsequent stages of the research is to interpret and strengthen the validity of the argument.

The preceding discussion has endeavoured to highlight the nature and importance of examining conceptual and practical issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure the development of an effective research design. By dividing the research design into various stages that are in unison, all issues relating to the research study are addressed,

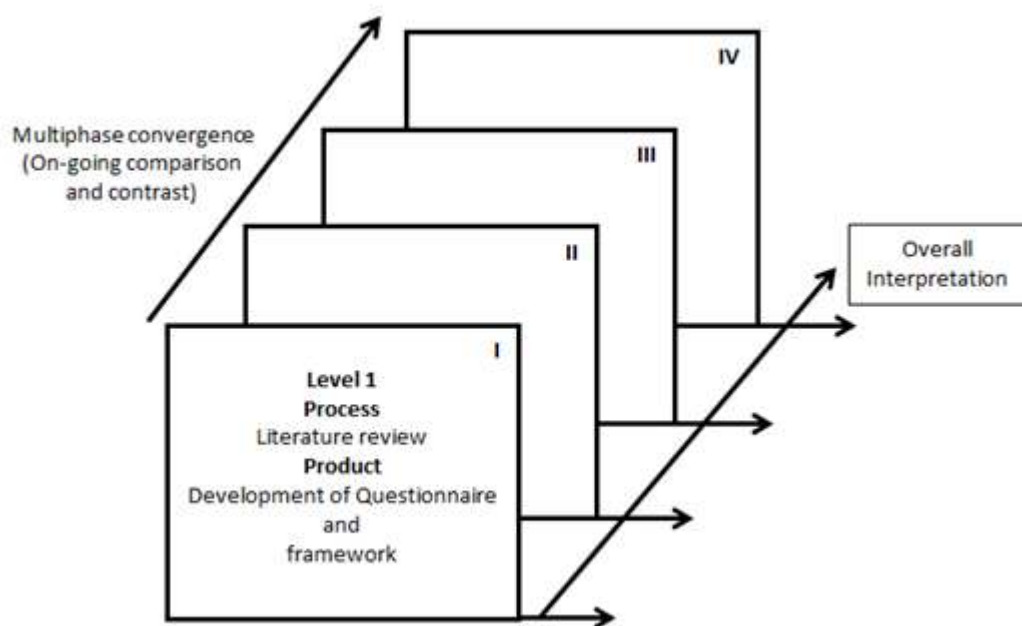
thus maximising the likelihood that the most appropriate research design is chosen. Indeed, an effective *fit for purpose* research design is a critical element in ensuring the success of the project. However, using an incorrect research design could possibly lead to the collapse of the research. As Lankshear (2004) states,

Launching into an investigation without first having thought about what sorts of concepts, theories, methods and instruments 'how the data will be gathered' might best fit the question being asked, and how these can be arranged in a systematic way, is like waking up one morning and suddenly deciding to build a house and starting right then and there without having given any thought to the kind of house, the plan, the materials, the tools and options available. (Lankshear 2004, p.27)

3.7 Research design used in this study

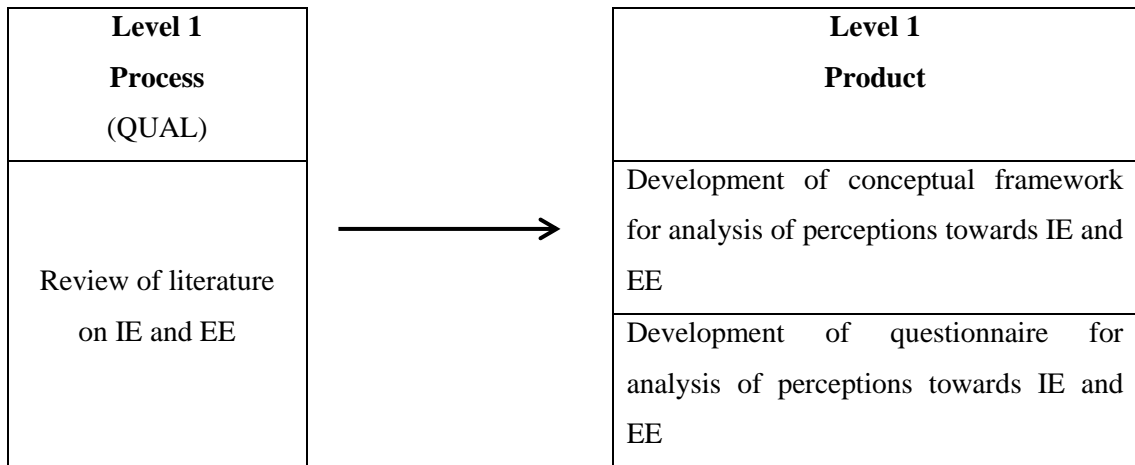
This study used a multi-phase convergence research design consisting of four distinct phases (Figure 5). Each phase of the research consisted of concurrent levels that were sequentially aligned with other phases in order to build upon and provide an overall interpretation of the study (Appendix 1)

Figure 5: Multi-phase research design used in the study. Adapted from Youngs, H., and Piggot-Irvine, E. (2012). (Source: Youngs, and Piggot-Irvine 2012, p.190, fig.2)



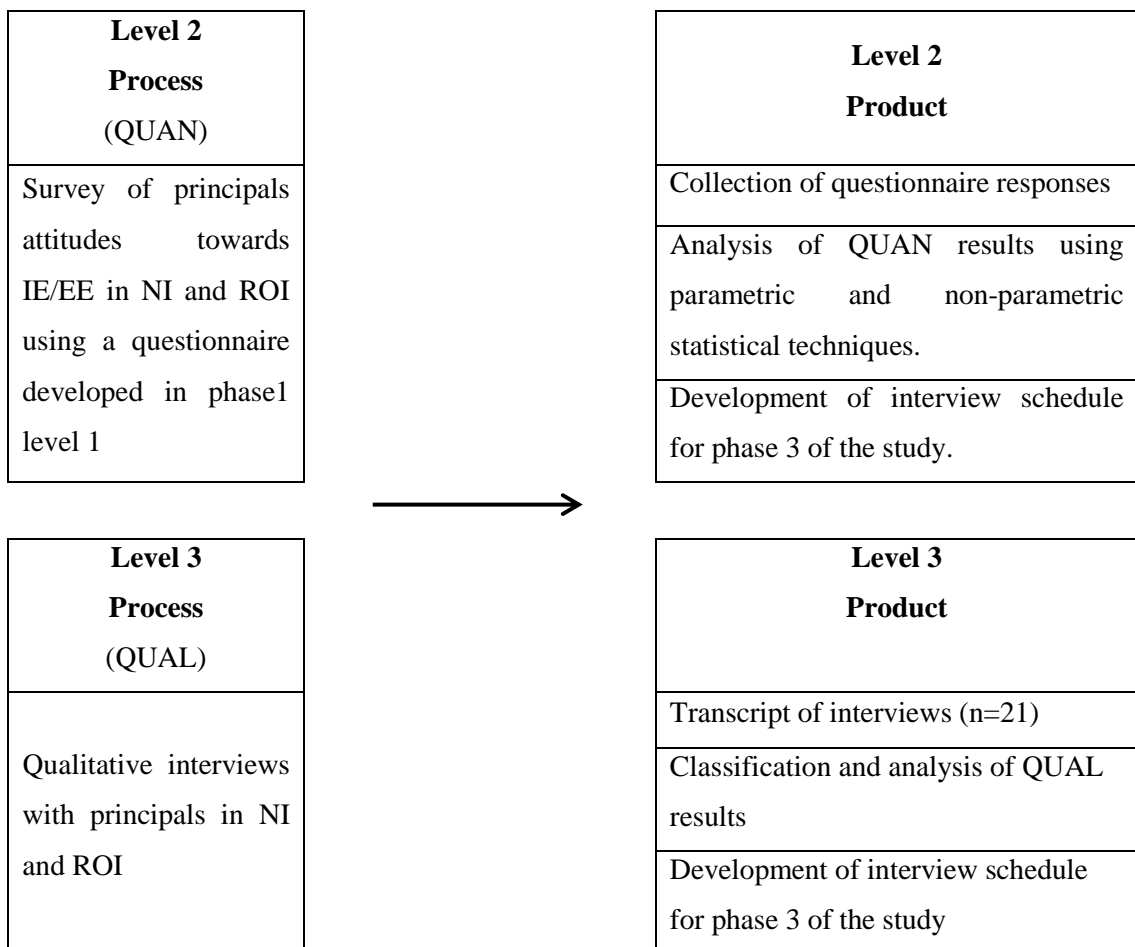
Phase one of the study involved one exploratory level (Figure 6). This phase of the research consisted of a review of the literature on IE and EE (Chapters 1 and 2) and resulted in the production of a conceptual framework (p.92) that was used to (1) develop a questionnaire to ascertain principal's perceptions of IE and EE in the ROI and NI (Appendix 2) and (2) form the basis for classification of interview data in the proceeding stages of the study.

Figure 6: Exploratory phase 1.



Phase two of the study consisted of two exploratory concurrent levels (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Exploratory concurrent phase 2.



Level 2 of this phase of the study consisted of an all island survey and subsequent analysis of principals' attitudes towards IE and EE using parametric on non-parametric statistical techniques (Appendix 3). This sub-phase of the research was deemed necessary for a variety of reasons. The Department of Education in NI invested a considerable amount of resources in order to ascertain stakeholder perceptions of evaluation¹. However, while Hislop (2013) is correct in stating that 'the lack of teacher appraisal contrasts strongly with the Irish civil and public service where annual Performance Management and Development Reviews are commonplace' (p.18), since the formal introduction of WSE in the ROI in 2004, there appears to be a paucity of quantitative research in this area. However, as Patton states,

For our on-going professional learning, we need to evaluate our evaluations to find out how they are actually used and become more sophisticated about and adept at doing useful evaluations. The result of this will be better delivery on the positive promise inherent in the idea of taking evaluation to the people. (Patton 2002b, p.131)

Indeed, at the time of the questionnaire development and subsequent questionnaire analysis, apart from quantitative research carried out by Mulkerins (2008) and the DESROI commissioned Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) customer survey (2005)², there was a limited amount of quantitative research available on principal or, for that matter, inspectors, parents, teachers, or student's attitudes towards IE/EE on the island of Ireland. Consequently, using quantitative statistical techniques, it was deemed necessary to analyse principals' attitudes towards IE/EE in order to successfully proceed to subsequent phases of the research. **Level 3** of this phase of the study was used to further ascertain principals' attitudes towards IE/EE, and it consisted of semi-structured interviews with a sample of principals (n=21) in both regions. While this sub-phase of the study was also used to form an overall interpretation of the research (Chapters 4 and 5), it was also used in preparation for the semi structures interviews that were conducted in levels 4 and 5 of the study.

¹ See Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP Evaluation of ETI Inspection Process, 2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2006/2007, 2007/2008.

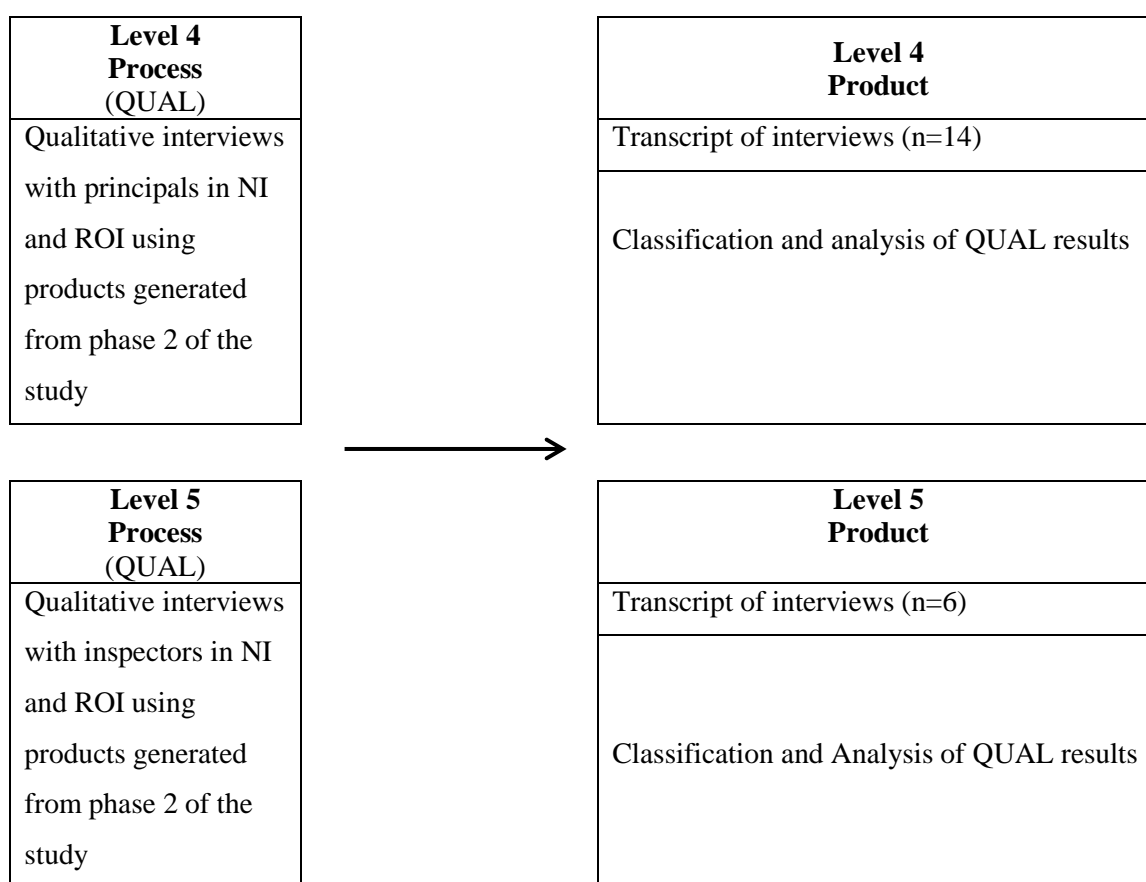
² A report of a customer survey by MORI Ireland on behalf of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science (2005).

Further to the point made by Patton (2002b) of ‘taking evaluation to the people’, the decision to use qualitative interviews in this and subsequent phases of the study was also based on the view that to only use scientific quantitative techniques within this study would not be enough to fully understand the research question and to fully understand the lived experiences of those who are involved in the process. As Hall and Ryan (2012) state,

Studies and reports that emphasize only quantitative empirical materials neither fully capture the implications of educational accountability, nor do they fully depict the unique demographics, histories, and daily functions that characterize an individual school and the context within which it operates. (Hall and Ryan 2011, p.105)

Phase 3 of the study consisted of two explanatory concurrent levels (Figure 8) and consisted of carrying out semi-structure interviews with a sample of principals and inspectors in NI and the ROI using the information that was gathered in the first two phases of the study.

Figure 8: Explanatory Concurrent Phase 3.



This phase of the research was carried out for a variety of reasons. More specifically, it is the author's belief that if the data collection phase of this study was finalised at this stage, the research would be incomplete based on the initial key aim of the research, which was to analyse factors relating to the co-existence of IE and EE. Moreover, if recommendations relating to the co-existence of IE and EE were proposed under the premise that both IE and EE should coexist and be treated as two interrelated components, the perspectives of internal and external evaluators would also need be sought and investigated. In this regard, I wanted to gain a greater understanding of issues relating to the co-existence of IE and EE that resulted from an analysis of principals' and inspectors perceptions of IE and EE in phase 2 of the study. 'Identifying weak-nesses is a first important step toward formulating new research questions. It may also help toward improving research methodology and the validity of extrapolation of results' (Ionidis 2007, p.328). This perspective and the subsequent methodology used in the study also resonates with Creswell, Plano Clark et al. (2003) who state,

Many inquirers actually go back and forth between confirming and exploring in any given study, although qualitative inquirers refrain from specifying variables in their questions and attempt to keep the study as open as possible to best learn from participants. (Creswell, Plano Clark et al. 2003, p.222)

Apart from research carried out on inspectors' perceptions towards IE/EE by O'Connor (2001) and Mathews (2010), I was unable to locate qualitative research on post-primary school inspectors' perceptions of IE/EE in the ROI. Moreover, in the case of NI, no qualitative research relating to inspectors attitudes towards either process of IE or EE could be found. Without taking these critical perceptions into account, trying to ascertain the variables that affect the terms of co-existence between IE and EE seemed quite illogical if not presumptuous.

Finally, **phase 4** of the study consisted of converging all of the various stages to form an overall interpretation of the study as presented in Chapters 5 and 6 of study (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9: Convergent phase 4 (overall interpretation of results).

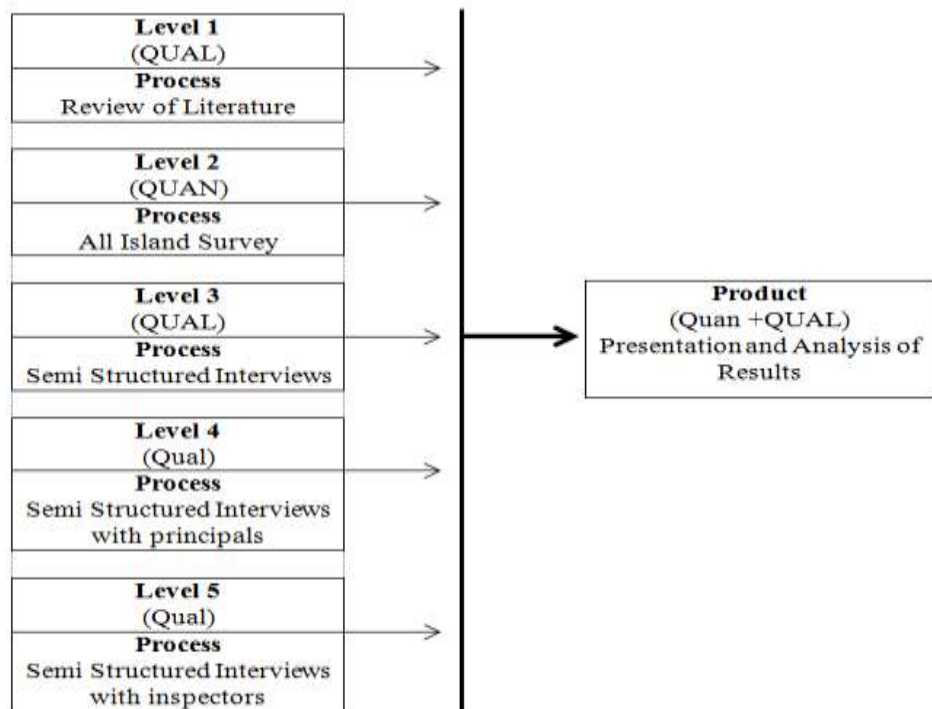


Figure 10: Individual phases in the multi-phase design. Adapted from Youngs, H., and Piggot-Irvine, E. (2012). Source: The application of a multiphase triangulation approach to mixed methods. The research of an aspiring school principal development program. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(3), 184–198.

PHASE I (EXPLORATORY PHASE 1)	Phase II (EXPLORATORY PHASE 2)	Phase III (EXPLANATORY PHASE 3)	Phase IV (CONVERGENT PHASE)																																	
<table><tr><td>Level 1</td></tr><tr><td>Process Review of literature</td></tr><tr><td>Product Development of questionnaire and conceptual framework for analysis</td></tr></table>	Level 1	Process Review of literature	Product Development of questionnaire and conceptual framework for analysis	<table><tr><td>Level 1</td></tr><tr><td>Process Review of literature</td></tr><tr><td>Product On-going comparison and contrast</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>Level 2</td></tr><tr><td>Process (QUAN)</td></tr><tr><td>Product Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. Analysis of QUAN results. Development of Interview schedule for phase III of the study.</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>Level 3</td></tr><tr><td>Process (QUAL)</td></tr><tr><td>Product Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. Transcripts of interviews. Analysis of QUAL results. Development of interview schedule for phase 3 of the study.</td></tr></table>	Level 1	Process Review of literature	Product On-going comparison and contrast	Level 2	Process (QUAN)	Product Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. Analysis of QUAN results. Development of Interview schedule for phase III of the study.	Level 3	Process (QUAL)	Product Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. Transcripts of interviews. Analysis of QUAL results. Development of interview schedule for phase 3 of the study.	<table><tr><td>Level 1</td></tr><tr><td>Process Review of literature</td></tr><tr><td>Product On-going comparison and contrast</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>Level 4</td></tr><tr><td>Process (Qual)</td></tr><tr><td>Product Perceptions of principals towards IE/EE. Transcript of interviews. Analysis of Qual results.</td></tr></table> <table><tr><td>Level 5</td></tr><tr><td>Process (Qual)</td></tr><tr><td>Product Perceptions of inspectors towards IE/EE. Transcript of interviews. Analysis of QUAL results.</td></tr></table>	Level 1	Process Review of literature	Product On-going comparison and contrast	Level 4	Process (Qual)	Product Perceptions of principals towards IE/EE. Transcript of interviews. Analysis of Qual results.	Level 5	Process (Qual)	Product Perceptions of inspectors towards IE/EE. Transcript of interviews. Analysis of QUAL results.	<table><tr><td>Level 1</td></tr><tr><td>Process REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td></tr><tr><td>Level 2</td></tr><tr><td>Process (QUAN)</td></tr><tr><td>Level 3</td></tr><tr><td>Process (QUAL)</td></tr><tr><td>Level 4</td></tr><tr><td>Process (Qual)</td></tr><tr><td>Level 5</td></tr><tr><td>Process (Qual)</td></tr><tr><td>Product (Quan +QUAL) Presentation and Analysis of results</td></tr><tr><td>PRODUCT OVERALL INTERPRETATION</td></tr></table>	Level 1	Process REVIEW OF LITERATURE	Level 2	Process (QUAN)	Level 3	Process (QUAL)	Level 4	Process (Qual)	Level 5	Process (Qual)	Product (Quan +QUAL) Presentation and Analysis of results	PRODUCT OVERALL INTERPRETATION
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3.8 Conceptual framework used in the study

Since the component parts of IE and EE are, like any other system, made up of a set of interrelated components that when combined make up a complete system, all objects within this system can therefore have a positive or negative effect on other objects within the system. These objects according to Scheerens, Glas and Thomas (2003) can be classified according to an input, process, output model of evaluation as shown in figure 11.



Figure 11: Organisation as a black box.

In this model, education is seen as having a production function where ‘it is assumed that within the black box, processes take place that transform inputs into outputs’ (Sheerens, Luyten and Ravens 2011, p.9). More specifically, in relation to educational evaluation, if the correct inputs are not entered into the system, the processing objects would not be able to produce the correct outputs, resulting in the case of educational evaluation, invalid recommendations and enabling actions required to improve some aspect of educational quality. Using a modified version of Bushnell’s (1990) input /process/output training model, if evaluation is initially described as having a production function and consists of three layers: input, process and output (Figure 12), it would be reasonable to suggest that there are three central points that can either increase or decrease the improvement function of the evaluation.



Figure 12: Input/process/output system of evaluation.

At the input layer, elements (*system performance indicators or SPIs*) can either increase or decrease the quality of the evaluation and fall into such categories as evaluator experience, the availability of evaluation materials and the type of evaluation taking place. The process layer could comprise of *value adding activities*, such as evaluation criteria and the evaluation tools needed to carry out the evaluation. Finally, the output

layer could include knowledge gained as a result of the evaluation in the form of recommendations and perceived enabling actions needed to realize the results of the evaluation. As a point of logic, by realising the recommendations of the evaluation, the outcome of the evaluation would result in an increase or quite logically, a decrease in some aspect of educational quality.

However, and in relation to school evaluation, a clear distinction needs to be made between the outputs of the evaluation on the one hand and the outcomes of the resulting recommendations and enabling actions on the other. As stated by Scheerens, Glas and Thomas (2003), ‘In the case of evaluation, in the sense of program evaluation, there is an additional ambition concerning causality. Can the outputs that are measured be attributed to the project, or are they due to other circumstances?’ (ch.3.5.1, para.2).

In this regard, it would be reasonable to suggest that outputs, in the main, deal with the short-term effects of the evaluation, including realising the need to improve a managerial, teaching strategy, and/or suggesting a series of enabling actions required to improve a school initiative. Outcomes however, refer to the long-term effects of the resultant recommendations and enabling actions such as an increase in the health and well-being of the school community as a result of some initiative brought about by suggested recommendations and subsequent enabling actions. From this perspective, it could be assumed that the value of educational evaluation consists of four layers (input, process, output and outcomes) as shown in Figure 13.

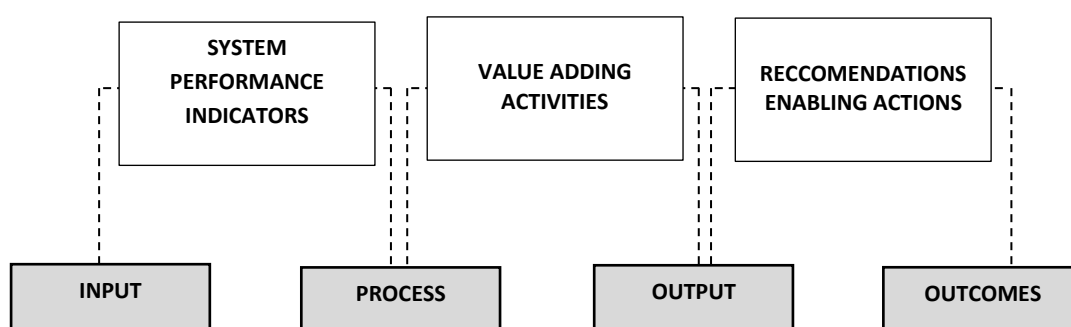


Figure 13: Educational evaluation: Input/process/output/outcome layers.

However, because of the myriad of antecedent variables outside of this logic model such as an increase in social deprivation, change in management structures, decreased funding in e.g. resource hours for students with special educational needs, withdrawal of

funding for traveller education, student/teacher effort, increased student teacher ratios and so forth, it would be reasonable to suggest that outcomes do not always flow directly from the outputs of the evaluation and the effect of the evaluation activities cannot be taken as absolute. However, it would be reasonable to suggest that the outcomes of the evaluation would dictate to a certain degree the value of the evaluation activities as shown in Figure 14.

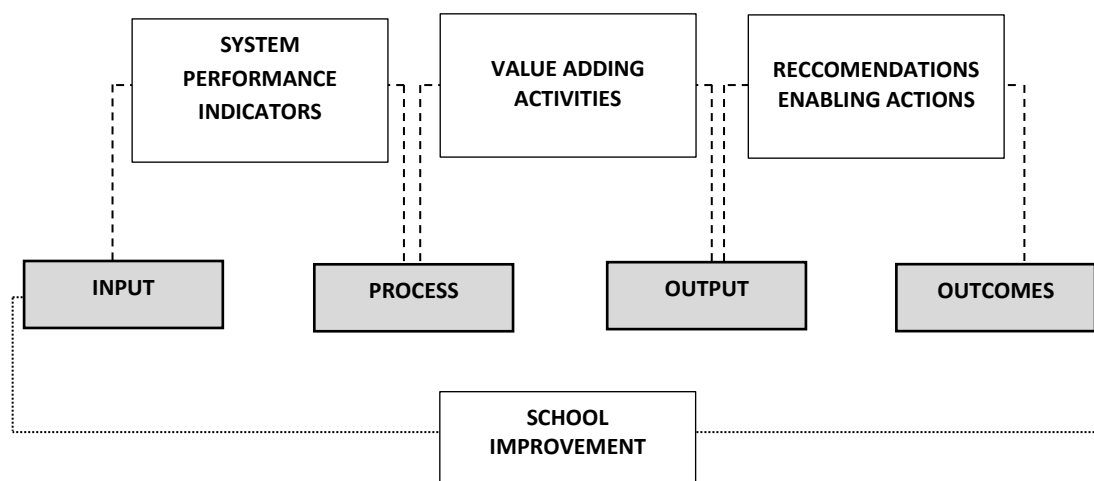


Figure 14: Net worth of educational evaluation activities.

However, because educational evaluation does not work in a closed loop system, other antecedent and subsequent variables not directly located within this logic model can also have an effect on the long term commitment of stakeholders to evaluation activities, such as stakeholder perceptions of the type of evaluation taking place, the human resources required to carry out the various evaluation activities and the net effect of the evaluation on individuals such as an increase or decrease in staff morale as a result of the type of evaluation activities taking place.

If however, evaluators had the required skills, resources and evaluation criteria needed to carry out various evaluation activities, this would likely result in more reliable and valid outputs leading to, it could be assumed, more meaningful and worthwhile recommendations and a greater commitment to evaluation activities more generally. On the other hand, if evaluation researchers did not have the required expertise and appropriate resources needed to carry out the evaluation, incorrect outputs in the form of flawed recommendations and worse still, flawed enabling actions, could quite possibly be produced. This could inevitably result in evaluation activities being perceived as not being of any significant value to improving or maintaining the quality of a particular

aspect of education. Furthermore, this could inevitably lead to a negative change in attitude among stakeholders with regard to the effectiveness of the system where, in the case of this study, the type of evaluation would be seen as failing to produce the required recommendations and enabling actions for school improvement. Consequently, this could inevitably lead to less commitment on the part of individuals associated with the system. As Sheerens et al (2007) state: ‘Particularly when school evaluation has the characteristics of internal, improvement-oriented self-evaluation, commitment appears to be the most important desideratum’. (Scheerens, Glas and Thomas 2003, ch.16.6, para.6). From this perspective, evaluation in terms of the net worth and long-term stability of evaluation activities can best be described as having five interdependent overlapping critical points as shown in Figure 15.

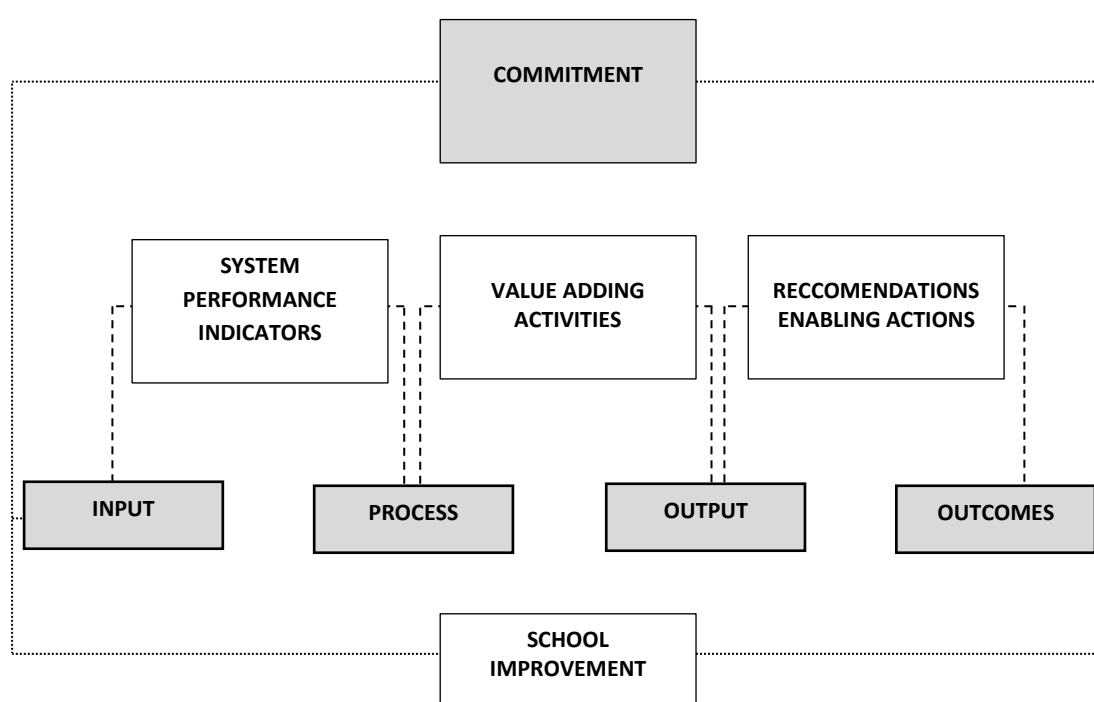


Figure 15: Net worth and sustainable commitment to evaluation activities.

Each layer—from input to process (*system performance indicators*), process to output (*value adding activities*), output to outcomes, (*recommendations, enabling actions*), etc.—can be further subdivided into additional layers in order to elucidate further participants perceptions of, for example, available resources, standards, etc. on the overall net effect of the type of evaluation being carried out. In this regard, in accordance with the variables required to realise the terms of co-existence (Chapter 2), each critical point was divided into a series of sub layers in accordance with their location in the input/process/output/outcomes/commitment model of evaluation (Figure 16).

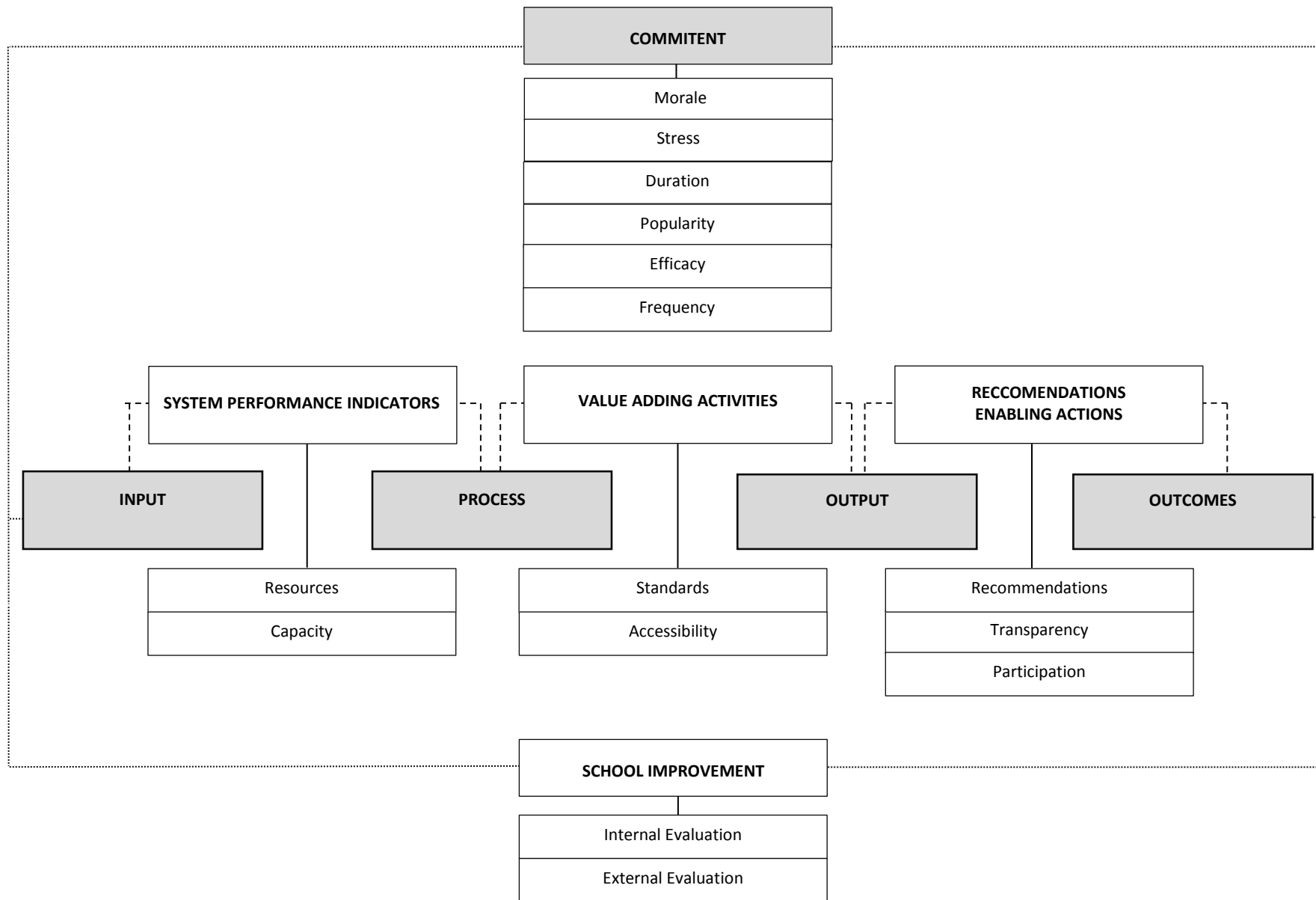


Figure 16: Net worth and commitment to evaluation activities (sub-layers).

3.9 Questionnaire development, distribution and analysis

3.9.1 Introduction and background

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the varied definitions and different measurements of attitude that exist, it is important to explain how the term ‘attitude’ has been classified within the context of this study. In this regard, while recognising that there are many definitions of the term, according to Boargardus (1931), ‘an attitude is a tendency to act toward or against some environmental factor which becomes thereby a positive or negative value’ (Boargardus 1931 cited in Chen and Bargh 1999, p.217). Fisbein and Ajzen (1975) state that ‘attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object’ (cited in Fisher 1980, p.608). These definitions imply that attitude can be measured and can range from a positive or a negative response towards some object or process within a system, and the cause of this response is either an internal or external stimuli. Barki, and Hartwick (1994) state,

Consistent with theorizing in the field of psychology, attitude is conceptualized as an affective or evaluative judgment of some person, object, or event. Attitude can be measured with a procedure that locates the person's position on a bipolar affective or evaluative dimension. (Barki and Hartwick 1994, p.63)

Within the field of social science research, the most widely used research instrument for measuring attitude is through the use of self-completed questionnaires that frequently use a Likert or Thurston scale of measurement. In the case of Likert scales, the intensity of the individuals attitude is measured along a ‘bi polar affective or evaluative dimension’ of, for example, 1 = Disagree Strongly to 5 = Agree Strongly. The questionnaire used in this study also consisted of a series of ordinal bipolar responses (strongly disagree, disagree, indifferent, agree, agree strongly) in response to a series of statements relating to the input/process/output/outcomes model of evaluation. All of these statements received a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, respectively, for the five bi-polar response alternatives. This score did not apply to questions 23–24 in part one of the questionnaire and questions 21–22 in part two of the questionnaire, as they provided nominal data asking for yes/no responses (Appendix 2).

The advantages of using questionnaires have been well documented. Denscombe (2010, p169) lists the following advantages:

- *Questionnaires are economical* in the sense that the researcher is able to gather large amounts of data at a low cost compared to other research methods. As stated by Muijs (2011, p.39); ‘Survey studies are also efficient in terms of being able to gather large numbers of data at reasonably low cost and effort compared to other methods such as observation’ (2011, p.39).
- *Questionnaires are relatively easy to arrange* compared to, for example, interviews and observations where unannounced questionnaires can be sent to participants. On the other hand however, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest that ‘a pre-survey letter advising respondents of the forthcoming questionnaire has been shown to have substantial effect on response rates’ (p.340). Indeed, research carried out by Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine (2004) comparing web and mail survey response rates found that there was a significant difference in response rates between those who had and had not received pre-survey correspondence. ‘The test results show that there is a clear and statistically significant separation between groups that received pre-survey postcards and groups that did not receive pre-survey postcards’ (2004, p.99).
- *Questionnaires supply standardised answers* and ‘interpersonal factors’ are reduced compared to, for example, focus group or interview data collection strategies. ‘The data collected, then, are very unlikely to be contaminated through variations in the wording of the questions or the manner in which the question is asked. There is little scope for the data to be affected by ‘interpersonal factors’ Denscombe (2010, p169).
- *Pre-coded answers* in questionnaires make data collating and subsequent analysis less complex compared to other data collection strategies. According to Simmons,

Closed questions have advantages because they can be pre-coded and the responses can easily be put on a computer, saving time and money... They also have particular advantages in studies using self-completion questionnaires because they are less time-consuming for the respondent to complete. (Simmons 2008, p.192)

- *Data accuracy*

Surveys that use internet-based questionnaires are less prone to error than paper-based questionnaires in which the researcher has to read and then input paper-based responses, which could lead to human error.

While there are many stated benefits to the use of questionnaires as a data collection instrument, ‘in many respects the potential disadvantages of questionnaires go hand in glove with the potential advantages. You can’t have one without the other’ (Denscombe 2010, p.170). Indeed, reservations surrounding the use of this type of research instrument are less concerned with whether a four- or five-point Likert-type scale is used and more concerned about the following issues.

- *Pre-coded questions can be frustrating for respondents and, thus, deter them from answering.*

Although the ‘tick box’ routine is less demanding on participants, closed-ended questions might encourage participants to respond. Denscombe (2010) goes on to state that pre-determined answers could also cause participant frustration. Consequently, ‘this same routine might be experienced as negative and put people off co-operating with the research’ (p.170).

- *Pre-coded questions can bias the findings towards the researcher’s rather than the respondent’s way of seeing things.*

Because of the structured nature of questionnaires, answers may subjugate participant responses and reflect the view point of the researcher as opposed to the participant. Indeed, criticisms relating to scaled measurements of attitude have been well documented within the field of social science where, according to Foddy (1994),

The most common criticism of the survey researchers is that their pre-set response categories determine the way the respondents can answer a question, making it impossible to evaluate the validity of the answers. Put another way, it is argued that the provision of sets of response options may cause respondents to give answers which they would not think of if they had to supply answers themselves. (Foddy 1994, p, 16)

- *Questionnaires offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the truthfulness of answers given by the respondent's way of seeing things.*

Because respondent answers are quite frequently anonymous, the researcher is unable to determine the authenticity of the responses. Indeed, and particularly in relation to this study, 'this is all the more true if the questionnaires are anonymous' (Denscombe 2010, p.170)

Moving forward and recognising positive and negative issues relating to the use of questionnaires as a data collection strategy, the concept of validity formed the basis for the development of the questionnaire and also the decision to carry out a series of semi structured interviews with a sample of principals and inspectors. This approach was used to gain greater insight and provide plausible explanations for the quantitative responses. Indeed, the author concurs with Gillham who states,

The great popularity of questionnaires is that they provide a 'quick fix' for research methodology; no single method has been so much abused. This is a pity, because questionnaires have their place as one method, of most value when used in tandem with other methods. This *multi method* approach to real-life questions is important, because one approach is rarely adequate; and if the results of different methods converge (agree, or fit together) then we can have greater confidence in the findings. (Gillham 2000, p.1)

3.9.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was carried out prior to distribution of the questionnaire. Piloting is an essential component of a well thought-out research design where, according to Bell (2005), 'all research instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items that do not yield usable data'. The importance of piloting questionnaires is further emphasised by Oppenheim (1998) who states,

Questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged; they have to be created or adapted, fashioned and developed to maturity after many abortive test flights. In fact, every aspect of a survey has to be tried out beforehand to make sure that it works as intended. (p.47)

In this regard, five principals were asked to participate in the pilot study and the responses and comments made in relation to the content, layout and how the

questionnaire should be administered were then incorporated into the final questionnaire revisions.

In the early stages of the research design, it was envisaged that the most resourceful method for collecting the quantitative data in terms of financial costs and reducing human error would be to create a web site that would collect data through the use of an online questionnaire. In this regard, five domain names that were deemed appropriate to the research question were purchased (www.selfevaluation.ie, www.selfevaluation.eu, www.wholeschoolevaluation.ie and www.actionresearch.ie). An online questionnaire was developed (Appendix 5). Leading on from this, participants involved in the pilot study were then asked to complete the questionnaire by logging on to one of these web site addresses and to make comments in relation to how the questionnaire could be improved in terms of distribution, language used, format, content and question order. Participants were also given the option to complete the questionnaire in the traditional paper-based format.

Apart from the correction of typing errors and terms of reference, three of the five principals who participated in the pilot study felt uncomfortable with the electronic version of the questionnaire and preferred the traditional paper-based format. A number of reasons were given for this, and primarily related to reflection and time.

Participants were of the view that the online questionnaire did not allow for reflection because there was no option available to revisit and complete the questionnaire at a later stage, meaning principals who would not be in a position to complete the electronic questionnaire from beginning to end would only partially complete the questionnaire. This would result in the loss of valuable data.

Nonetheless, it was also interesting to note a contradicting view by one of the other principals who was of the view that fewer resources would be wasted and a higher response rate would be achieved with an electronic version. The reason given for the preferred choice of electronic questionnaire was that principals receive too many paper based questionnaires and most questionnaires that are received are ignored regardless of their content or quality. Furthermore, another principal was of the view that if an electronic version of the questionnaire was used, it would take a lot less time to complete, and less of the researcher's resources would have been spent if participants

chose not to complete the questionnaire. While respecting the views of all participants who were involved in the pilot study, it is interesting to note contradictory research relating to postal and web based surveys. Kwak and Radler (2002), in a study consisting of 2,000 potential respondents discovered that ‘as expected, findings show that the mail survey generated a higher response rate, and web respondents returned their questionnaires more quickly (p.262). The view that web-based surveys have a higher response rate compared to mail surveys is also in line with research carried out by Shih and Fan (2008, p.264) who state that ‘our meta-analysis showed that Web survey modes generally have lower response rates (about 10% lower on the average) than mail survey modes’. However, research carried out by Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine (2004) suggests that response rates between web and postal surveys are similar if a notification letter is sent to participants prior the web based survey taking place.

The findings of this research suggest that, in a population in which each member has Web access, a Web survey application can achieve a comparable response rate to a questionnaire delivered by surface mail if the Web version is preceded by a surface mail notification. A caveat is that we found a significant age difference in response to mail and Web survey versions. (p.100)

Taking the views of participants in the pilot study into consideration, coupled with research comparing web and postal surveys, it was decided that the questionnaire would be distributed using the traditional paper based format, despite it being more costly.

Timing in terms of the distribution of the questionnaire was another issue. All participants felt that a low response rate would be achieved if the questionnaire was distributed at the end of the academic year rather than during first term because the workload of principals considerably increases from term 2 onwards’.

In conclusion, all participants were satisfied that the questionnaire gave a clear insight into principals’ perceptions of IE and EE.

3.9.3 Distribution of questionnaire

This part of this research consisted of obtaining contact details and the postal address for principals in post-primary schools in NI and the ROI by consulting the online database of the departments of education in both regions. A database was then developed listing the principal name and postal address of every post-primary school in NI and the ROI. This was then further divided into five categories by school type.

A questionnaire and cover letter (Appendix 2) explaining the ethical considerations and purpose of the research were then sent to all principals in both regions. Furthermore, participants also received a return stamped, self-addressed envelope to facilitate the return of the questionnaire to the researcher. Finally, questionnaires were posted to all schools with no specific date given for their return. No further contact was made with principals until the questionnaires were received.

3.9.4 Response rate

The majority of questionnaires (>80%) that were used in this study were received within seven days of sending the questionnaire out. The questionnaire response rates by region and school type are shown in Tables 3.5 and 3.6.

Region	Number of Questionnaires sent	Number of questionnaires returned	% response rate
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	219	99	45%
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	731	365	49%

Table 3.5: Questionnaire response rate based on region

School type	Number of Questionnaires sent	Number of questionnaires returned	% response rate
<i>Voluntary Secondary</i>	388	193	49%
<i>Vocational</i>	252	123	48%
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	91	48	52%
<i>Grammar</i>	69	32	46%
<i>Non Grammar</i>	150	67	45%

Table 3.6: Questionnaire response rate based on school type

The overall response rate for this study compared favourably with other National surveys (see Drew and Healy 2006; Sun et al. 2004). However, it is worth acknowledging research carried out by Baruch (1999) who found in an analysis of 175 academic studies that the average response rate was 55.6%. The author states that this ‘suggested that the average and standard deviation found in this study should be used as the norm for future studies, bearing in mind the specific reference group’ (Baruch 1999, p.421). Indeed, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), also suggest that ‘a well-planned postal survey should obtain a 40% response rate and the judicious use of reminders can increase the original return by as much as 30%, giving a 70% or greater response rate’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007, p.263).

However, it is the author’s belief that the response rate could have been increased if (as stated by one of the participants in the pilot study), if questionnaires had been distributed at the beginning as opposed to the end of the academic year and if principals were also given the option to complete the questionnaire electronically. Furthermore, in line with research carried out by Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine (2004), response rates could have been increased if pre- and post-questionnaire reminder letters were sent to participants. Unfortunately, due to the fact that this study was self-financing, the author did not have the financial resources available to pursue these options. Nonetheless, as an acknowledged limitation of the study, the author recognises that the response rate for NI and the ROI compares less favourably than that suggested in other studies.

3.9.5 Descriptive and school type/region comparison statistics

All questions, although inter related, were classified according to their location in the input/process/output/outcomes system model and the data were then inputted manually using SPSS Version 14.0. From this, a series of statistical tests were used to analyse the data by using a combination of both parametric and non-parametric tests based on region and then by school type. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the mean and standard deviation of the responses given by region and school type. However, since descriptive statistics can only give an indication of differences, descriptive statistics do not ascertain if there is a statistically significant difference among or between groups. In this regard, in order to ascertain if there were any statistical differences, non-parametric (Mann-Whitney ANOVA) analysis of variance was used to see if there was any significant difference by region. Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA tests were used to see if there was a statistical difference by school type for each question asked. In both types of analysis, the independent variable was either school type or region and the dependent variable was a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). For all ANOVA tests, α was set at 0.05. Furthermore, correlations between various question responses were also explored.

3.9.6 Questionnaire reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked using Cronbach's alpha coefficient on all scaled items that had an ordinal measurement scale (Appendix 3). A value for Cronbach's alpha can range from between 0 and 1; the closer the value is to 1, the higher the reliability of the research instrument. Malhorta (1993 cited in Heidman 2008, p.125) suggests that a minimum value of 0.6 must be obtained for a questionnaire to be considered reliable. However, Bryman and Cramer (1990) suggest that 'the reliability level is acceptable at 0.8' (cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007, p.506). All item sub scales for this study had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.6 apart from the sub scales 'Required Resources (Internal Evaluation)' and 'Efficacy (Internal Evaluation)'.

3.10 Interview coding, participant selection and analysis

3.10.1 Introduction and background

Interviewing according to Fontana and Frey (1994) ‘is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings’ (p.361). Indeed, Merriman (2009) states that, ‘interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings or how people interpret the world around them’ (p.88).

As previously described, in relation to the significance of using interviews with other methods, Fidel (2008) is of the view that ‘the use of inherently different methods fosters flexibility in the research process. This may create new insights and possibilities that one method alone could not produce’ (p.267). Indeed, and in parallel with the objective of this phase of the study, Seidman states,

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to test hypotheses, and not to “evaluate” as the term is normally used (See Patton, 1989, for an exception). At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (2012, p.9)

Seidman goes on to state that ‘at the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals stories because they are of worth’ (Seidman 2012, p.9). This perspective resonates with Mears who states that ‘you ask participants about related matters and to tell their experiences, share their feelings or thoughts, and reflect on decisions and events. From their narratives, you will be able to analyse the information and answer you research question’ (Mears 2012, p.172).

I wanted to gain a greater understanding of participant’s views towards evaluation policy and practice than one single quantitative method alone could provide. From this perspective, and also to dissipate dissonance-reduction and further elucidate the lived experience of those involved in evaluation policy and practice, a series of semi-structured interviews were carried out with a sample of post-primary school principals and inspectors from NI and the ROI.

However, while recognising the inherent benefits of interviews to gain a greater understanding of some aspects of educational provision, the author took note of

Professor Peter Ribbins advice that ‘as an approach to research, whilst it can seem the easiest to start, it can be among the most difficult to finish’ (2007, p.207). Accordingly, while the author is of the view that this phase of the study was the most enjoyable and significant part of the study, what had initially been envisaged to take two years to complete actually took a lot longer than this.

The interview approach used was a semi-structured interview although no two interviews were exactly the same. However, although semi-structured interviews allowed the author to gain a greater understanding of the questionnaire responses and allowed other interesting material to emerge, apart from the unanticipated financial resource requirements of the novice researcher, other pertinent issues relating to semi-structured interviews need to be considered. In this regard, although an interview schedule/guide was used for this phase of the research (Appendix 4), it was envisaged in the early stages of the study that the interview would tend more towards a structured rather than a semi-structured format. However, having open-ended questions in the interview schedule such as, ‘what is your vision for the future of evaluation policy and practice in education’, it was naïve to assume that the interview could have been anything but semi-structured. While the use of open-ended questions could appear to be more complex at the later stage of classification and analysis, compared to, for example, closed ended questions, Merriman is of the view that ‘overall, good interview questions are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon. The more detailed and descriptive the data, the better’ (Merriman 2012, p.99). In practice, no set of participant interviews contained exactly the same set of questions, but this did result in a range of topics regarding evaluation being discussed than might not necessarily have been anticipated by the researcher.

Moreover, it is the authors view that if the purpose of the interview was to gain a greater understanding of evaluation policy and practice from the perspective of those individuals involved in the process, it would have been unwise to follow a rigid interview format and thus diminish issues relating to evaluation policy and practice that might have been overlooked by the researcher. As Meyers (2012) states,

Your interview guide frames the area to be investigated, but with open-ended or semi-structured questions you can’t be certain exactly where the answer will lead. The first response you hear may be a general description, but buried in the response, you find the markers that point to other areas to explore. (Meyers 2012. p.172)

I was also cognisant of ethical considerations, such as the respect that should be afforded to participants. To interrupt or ignore issues on evaluation policy and practice deemed of importance to interviewees would, at the very least, be disrespectful considering the altruistic nature of those who were willing to participate in the study. Furthermore, in terms of the quality of interview data required, Ribbins (2007) is of the view that ‘in responding to a question, an interviewee might jump to a later question; to interrupt them in full flow is likely to be disruptive and annoying, and may reduce their willingness to speak freely later’ (Ribbins 2007, p.210).

On the other hand however, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) are of the view that the ‘power of the analysis’ can be reduced if interview schedules are not focused. The authors’ state: ‘If interview schedules or observation schedules are not focused, too much superfluous information will be collected. An overload of data will compromise the efficiency and power of the analysis’ (p.39). Indeed, it is the author’s view that trying to find a balance between not losing out on gathering vital information on the one hand and maintaining the focus of the interview on the other is a skill that is learned with practice, failure, success and time. However, whilst acknowledging the significant benefits garnered from using the semi-structured interview technique, it became evident during the transcription and classification phase of the study that semi-structured interviews are more difficult to code and analyse than a more structured interview format.

Prior to the interviews taking place, a letter and the questionnaire were sent to principals stating the purpose of the study and asking principals if they would be willing to participate in the research. In the case of inspectors, correspondence was made with the respective chief inspectors of NI and the ROI requesting inspectors to participate in the study. For both groups, ethical issues, such as the anonymity of interviewees, and the purpose and intended outcomes of the research were explained. No further contact was made with participants until after consent to participate in the research was acknowledged (Appendix 6).

3.10.2 Selection of participants for interviews

‘The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question’ (Creswell 2008, ch.9, para.10).

The selection of participants for this phase of the study was based on a purposeful sampling strategy. ‘The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study’ (Patton 2002a, p.46).

In order to gain a representative sample of principals from all school types, selection of principals was initially based on an equal distribution of principals from the ROI and NI. However, I also wanted to interview principals who could possibly have varying perspectives on evaluation policy and practice based on school type. In this regard, a stratified purposeful sampling technique was chosen in which principals were also selected based on an equal distribution of principals from each of the five school types that presently exist in NI and the ROI. However, as was the case in this study, Patton states, ‘the purpose of a stratified purposeful sample is to capture major variations rather than to identify a common core, although the latter may also emerge in the analysis (Patton 2002a, p.240).

In terms of sampling size, Patton suggests that a frequently asked question in studies that use qualitative techniques relates to that of sample size.

My universal, certain, and confident reply to these questions is this: “It depends.” There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources. (Patton 2002a, p.244)

Taking into consideration the various issues mentioned, between May 2009 and October 2012, 36 principals were interviewed for this phase of the research. A description of the principal sample size is shown in Table 3.7.

School type	Number of interviews
<i>Voluntary Secondary</i>	8
<i>Vocational</i>	7
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	8
<i>Grammar</i>	6
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	7

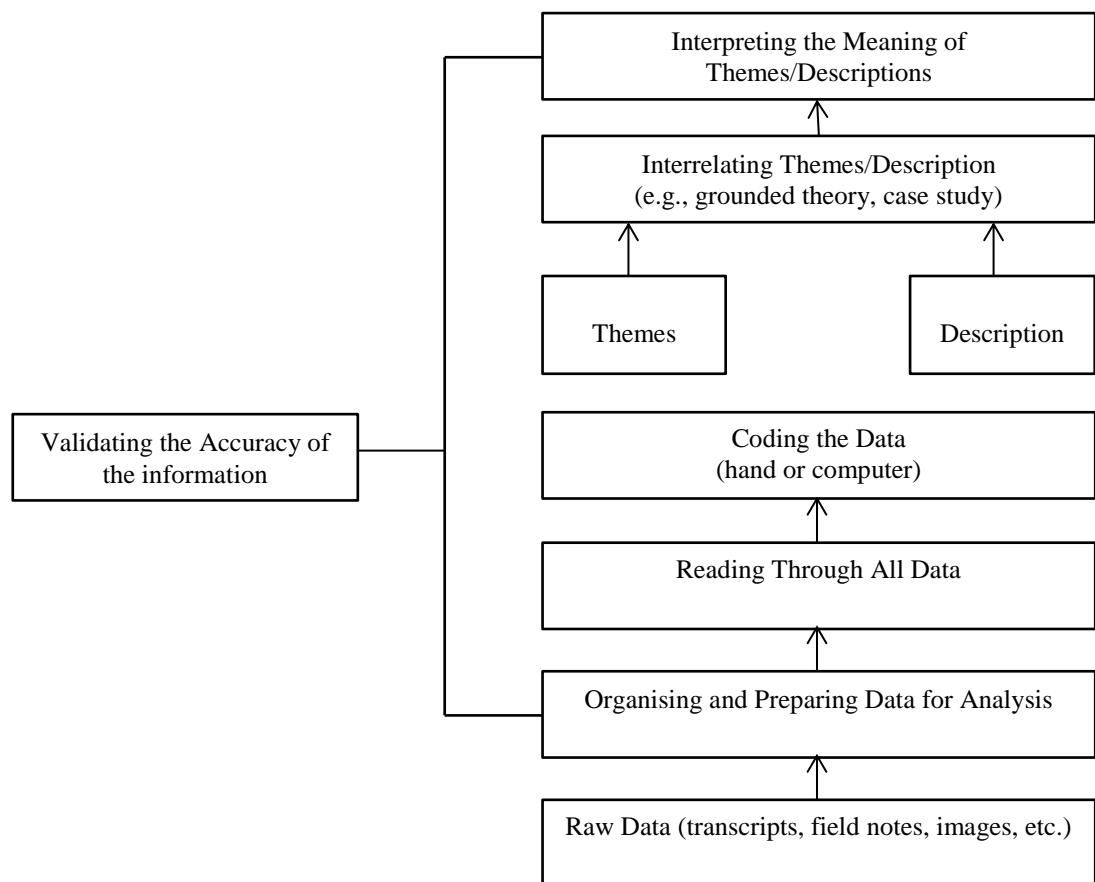
Table 3.7: Purposeful sample of principal interviews across both regions.

The selection of inspectors was not based on purposeful sampling and consisted of contacting the respective chief inspectors of both the departments of education in NI and the ROI. Having explained the purpose of the study, agreement was given by both inspectorates for the author to interview inspectors (Appendix 6). In the ROI, because of time demands, the DESI provided one inspector for the interview. However, in order to bring breath of balance to the research, the author contacted two more inspectors from the ROI who were willing to participate in the research outside of their normal working conditions. Therefore, three inspectors from the ROI and three inspectors from NI agreed to participate in the study.

3.10.3 Interview coding and analysis

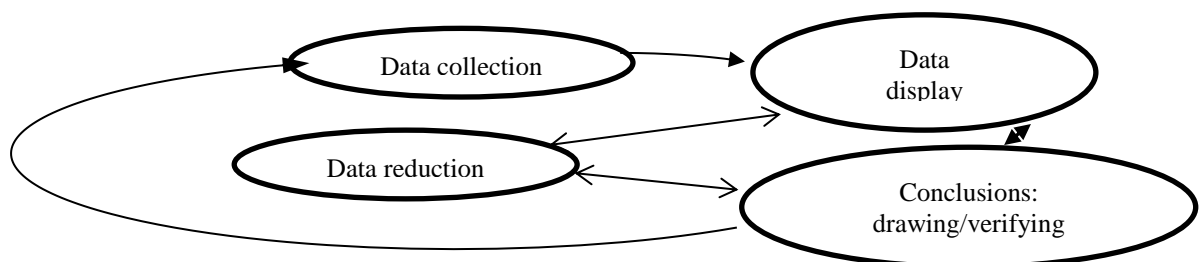
Coding according to Miles and Huberman (1994) is analysis. ‘To review a set of field notes, transcribed or synthesised, and to dissect them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts intact, is the stuff of analysis’(p.56). The coding and analysis strategy for this study used a combination of Creswell’s (2008) data analysis process (Figure 17) and Miles and Huberman’s (1994) ‘Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model’ (Figure 18) and consisted of six stages.

(Figure 17: Data Analysis in Qualitative Research)



(Source: Creswell, 2008, ch.9, para.23, fig.1)

(Figure 18: Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model)

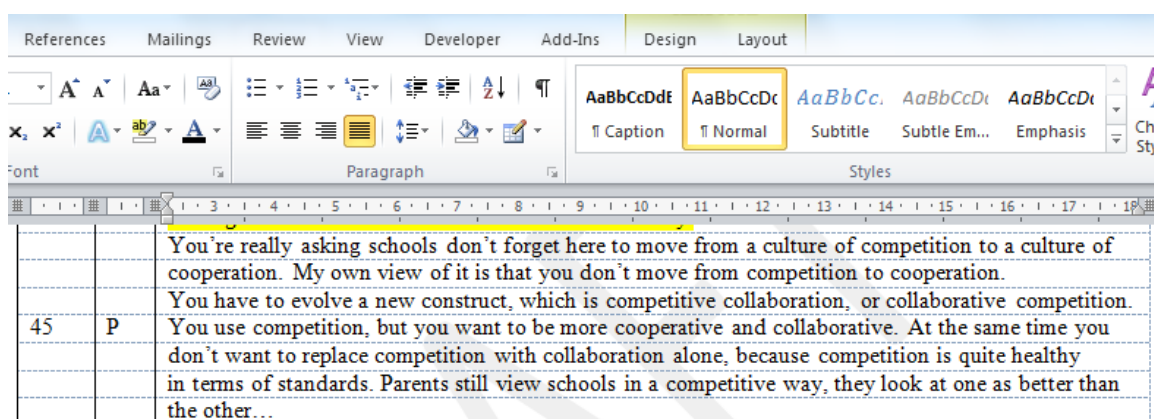


(Source: Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.12, fig.1.4)

Stage one – Transcription of Interviews

Interview data was initially coded according to the participant, region, and where the unit of information is located. For example, when referring to the code PROI1/23, the first letter identifies that the person as a principal, NI (or ROI) identifies the region, the number identifies the principal and the number after the forward slash symbol is where the unit of information is located. Moreover, when referring to the code INI1/45, I, identifies the person as an inspector, NI (or ROI) identifies the region, 1 identifies the inspector and 145 is where the unit of information is located (an example of which is given in figure 19)

Figure 19: Stage one: sample transcription of interview data



Stage two – Data immersion

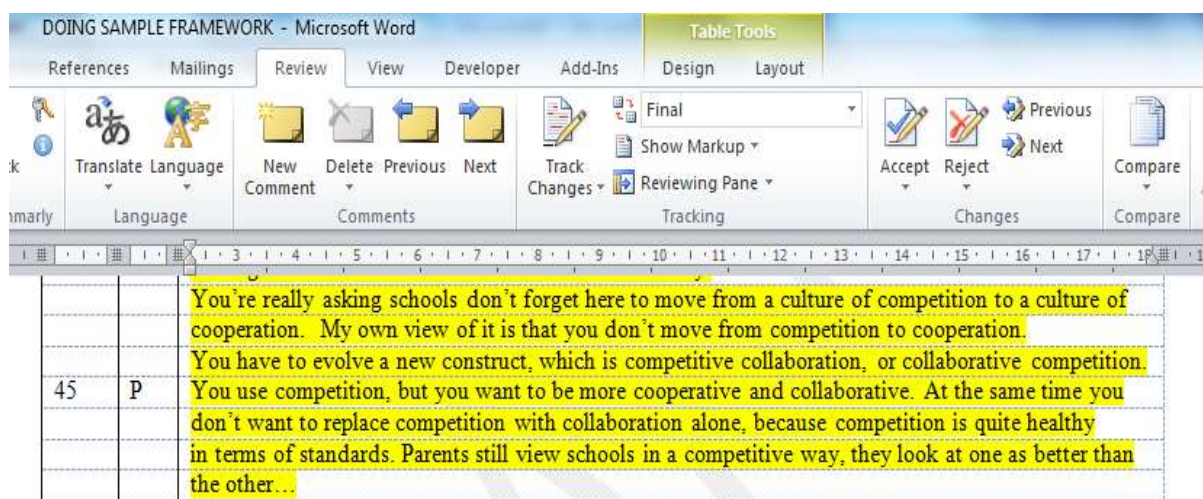
Before each statement was classified, interview data was read, reread and examined through a process of data immersion/crystallisation which according to Borkan (1999) 'provides a means to move from the research question, the generated text and/or field experience, and the raw field data to the interpretations reported in the write-up' (Borkan 1999, p.180).

Stage three – Coding and analysis

According to Creswell (2008, ch.9, para.28), 'one further issue about coding is whether the researcher should (a) develop codes only on the basis of the emerging information collected from participants, (b) use predetermined codes and then fit the data to them, or

(c) use some combination of predetermined and emerging codes'. The interview analysis for this phase of the study used predetermined codes in the first stage of the analysis by assigning and reassigning a conceptual label to each statement's location in the input/process/output/outcomes layer (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Sample interview coding and analysis (1)



Following on from this, sub themes began to emerge. For example within the unit of text shown in figure 20, the unit of text was initially classified as 'Future resources', followed by the emergence of two sub themes referred to as 'Networking' and 'Co-operative competition' an example of which is shown in figure 21.

Figure 21: Sample interview coding and analysis (2)

Table 30: Coding Framework (Input-Internal Resources)				
Participant	Phrase/Word/Term	Unit of Text	Theme	Sub Themes
INI1	You're really asking schools don't forget here to move from a culture of competition to a culture of cooperation. My own view of it is that you don't move from competition to cooperation. You have to evolve a new construct, which is competitive collaboration or collaborative competition. You use competition, but you want to be more cooperative and collaborative. At the same time, you don't want to replace competition with collaboration alone because competition is quite healthy in terms of standards. Parents still view schools in a competitive way, they look at one as better than the other	45	Future Resources	Networking, Co-operative competition
INI1	People talk, I think personally, rather glibly about moving from competition to cooperation. I actually do think it's a new construct. And where part of it is ... and completely to answer your question, part of that is actually sharing practice effectively and it's not so much that you share a practice in a way you handle a pass the package round, but you help each other solve problems, which is really what organisation is about in terms of improvement.	49	Future Resources	Networking
	I mean time and then the set of tools, perhaps, that would provide the starting point, planning time. Really it needs to be incorporated formally into the school year. Not just, not in the context of an economic crisis like WSE-MILL, you know.	361	Future Resources	Time, economic correction
	The biggest resource is time. Teachers in education are for the most part highly intelligent and for the most part highly positive and even if you gave them the time they'd use it. The other resources will come on afterwards.	132	Future Resources	Time

It was then possible to converge interview data with the other phases of the study in order to provide an overall interpretation of the research.

3.11 Ethical considerations

‘Particularly because of the potential power relations, the researcher needs to be clear that the subjects fully comprehend the nature and outcomes of the research and that anonymity and confidentiality are assured’ (Moyle 2007, p.245).

Because of the diverse range of participants involved in this study, coupled with the fact that external evaluators collectively make up two organisations that can easily be identified, careful ethical considerations were given throughout the course of the research and related specifically to confidentiality and informed consent. Based on these ethical considerations a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research was developed to make clear for the researcher and participants the aims, procedures and purpose of the study. In terms of the internal evaluators who participated in the study, ethical issues centred on anonymity and confidentiality.

In line with DCU’s ethical guidelines on carrying out research, this form of research was considered *low level* and an assurance of confidentiality was given to all participants. Furthermore, all person, place names, and school types were removed from the interview transcripts and confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

While ethical considerations relating to the use of inspectors also involved an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. However, these ethical issues also related to who would sign-off on the final interview transcript. In this regard, the author sent a copy of the interview transcripts (with omission of participant and place names) to all inspectors who participated in the study, so any data that inspectors wanted omitted from the transcript could be omitted at this stage. After the author had transcribed the interviews, inspectors were sent a copy of the interview transcript with a return stamped, self-addressed envelope to the author’s address. It is worth noting that inspectors were satisfied with the initial draft transcript and no significant data were removed from the final interview transcripts bar the omission of grammatical errors.

Furthermore, in order to assure the totality of informed consent that specified interview transcripts would only be used for the purpose of this study, it was decided not to make interview transcripts publicly available.

3.12 Limitations of the study

An article by Ioannidis (2007), entitled ‘Limitations are not properly acknowledged in the scientific literature’, highlights the importance of acknowledging limitations in academic research. However, more specifically, ‘limitations are important to understand for placing research findings in context, interpreting the validity of the scientific work, and ascribing a credibility level to the conclusions of published research’ (p.324). Although various research methods were used to triangulate and subsequently improve the validity of the research and find solutions to the initial research question, the author also acknowledges the following limitations that could inadvertently affect the overall interpretation and analysis.

At the time of the research, barring research carried out by McNamara and O’Hara, Dillon (2012), Matthews (2010), Mulkerins (2008) and O’Connor (2001), very little research had been carried out on evaluation capacity in post-primary schools in the ROI. In the case of NI, barring research carried out by the ETI, there was an even greater paucity for research of this type. Indeed, outside of the educational community of NI, the OECD and SICI, a lack of knowledge relating to the system of evaluation in NI was evident, much to the frustration of the author. In this regard, very little was known about evaluation or, for that matter, inspectors’ and principals’ perspectives on evaluation policy and practice in NI. Consequently, at a micro level there was little if anything to garner from peer-reviewed literature in terms of conceptions of evaluation policy and practice through the juxtaposition of different lenses in NI.

Triangulation was used in order to gain a greater understanding of the aggregated questionnaire responses. However, although extremely grateful to both inspectorates to facilitate the author with his research, it was also felt that if access to a greater number of external evaluators was made available, this would have increased the quality of the research.

While many questionnaires measure attitudes towards either IE or EE (see Vanhoof and Van Petegem 2007; McCrone et al. 2009), the researcher was unable to locate a research instrument that measured attitudes towards both systems of evaluation (internal/external) as interconnected units; therefore, the reliability of the questionnaire was not known prior to the research.

A significant limitation of this study is that in order to understand how best to blend both internal and external evaluation, the researcher did not examine evaluation from the perspective of other key stakeholders involved in the process, such as parents, students, and other members of the school community. However, and by way of comment on a significant limitation to the study, ‘the cooperation among all those involved is imperative if we are to navigate into the twenty-first century successfully’ (Brauckmann and Pashiardis 2010, p.346).

Finally, caution is advised where reference is made to present evaluation policy and practice in NI and the ROI, given that quantitative data collection for this research was carried out in May 2009. Since then, many new and suggested evaluation initiatives in both the ROI and NI have been implemented in order to create and support a dual culture of evaluation in education, with for example, in the case of the ROI, the production of DESROI SE guidelines for teaching and learning and the DESROI website (www.school-selfevaluation.ie). In this regard, more up to date quantitative research on external evaluation policy and practice in the ROI (2013) can be found from an examination of the EU funded study ‘Studying the impact of school inspection on improvement of schools’ (<http://schoolinspections.eu/>).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter described the research design and methodology used in the study. It opened with a description of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods paradigms and followed with a discussion on why a mixed methods methodology was selected. The questionnaire development, analysis and design were discussed, including, for example, descriptive and school type/region comparison statistics, and aggregated questionnaire responses. Interviews that formed the second phase of the research were also discussed, including the selection of participants and how the interviews were coded and analysed. Finally, ethical considerations and the limitations of the research were discussed. The methodological approach described in this chapter formed the basis for the research findings and the discussion outlined in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained in the study. Data was initially collected through the use of self-completed questionnaires that were sent to post-primary school principals in the ROI and NI. To gain a greater understanding of the aggregated questionnaire responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of principals and inspectors from both regions.

Based on the conceptual framework described in Chapter 3, this chapter is divided into five overlapping sections: input (system performance indicators), process (value adding activities), output (recommendations, enabling actions), outcomes (school improvement), and commitment to the various evaluation activities taking place. However, in order to gain a greater understanding of the quantitative data, each section contains a discussion about the similarities and differences in qualitative responses and how both systems can respond to these findings.

4.2 Input

4.2.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the input phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes participant reactions to the present and perceived resources required for IE and EE. The second subsection describes participants' perceptions of evaluator capacity. Within each subsection, questionnaire responses are initially described. To explore the aggregated questionnaire responses further, the results from an analysis of qualitative interviews are discussed.

4.2.2 Resources (internal evaluation)

4.2.2.1 The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for internal evaluations

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in this statement by region (Table 4.2.1). Only 20% of principals in the ROI either agree or agree strongly with this statement, whereas in NI, this value is considerably higher (56%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	42	160	87	68	6
	<i>%</i>	11.6%	44.1%	24.0%	18.7%	1.7%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	12	32	53	3
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	12.0%	32.0%	53.0%	3.0%

$U(1) = 8781.000$, $Z = -8.276$, $p = 000$

Table 4.2.1: The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for internal evaluations (by region)

This significant difference is further illustrated using the Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 4.2.2), which shows that the greatest number of principals who either agree or agree strongly with this statement are from schools in NI.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	3	24	8	13	0
	<i>%</i>	6.3%	50.0%	16.7%	27.1%	0.0%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	27	43	25	25	2
	<i>%</i>	22.1%	35.2%	20.5%	20.5%	1.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	12	93	54	30	4
	<i>%</i>	6.2%	48.2%	28.0%	15.5%	2.1%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	2	9	21	0
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	6.3%	28.1%	65.6%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	9	23	32	3
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	13.4%	34.3%	47.8%	4.5%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 73.034$

Table 4.2.2: The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for internal evaluations (by school type)

4.2.2.2 More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to conduct internal evaluations

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between both regions' principals' attitudes towards the need for additional resources from the Department of Education. In the ROI and NI, 94% and 68% of principals, respectively, agree or agree strongly that more resources are required to conduct IEs (Table 4.2.3).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	9	10	213	128
	<i>%</i>	0.6%	2.5%	2.8%	58.8%	35.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	15	16	52	16
	<i>%</i>	1.0%	15.0%	16.0%	52.0%	16.0%

$U(1) = 11752.500, Z = -6.079, p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.3: More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to conduct internal evaluations (by region)

This significant difference is illustrated further using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The highest number of principals who either agree or agree strongly with this statement are from schools in the ROI (Table 4.2.4).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	0	0	30	18
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	2	4	72	44
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	1.6%	3.3%	59.0%	36.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	7	6	112	66
	<i>%</i>	1.0%	3.6%	3.1%	58.0%	34.2%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	5	5	18	4
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	15.6%	15.6%	56.3%	12.5%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	10	11	33	12
	<i>%</i>	1.5%	14.9%	16.4%	49.3%	17.9%

$P = 0.000, df = 4, \chi^2 = 37.980$

Table 4.2.4: More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to conduct internal evaluations (by school type)

4.2.2.3 Rather than each school spending time and resources developing their own internal evaluation procedures, schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of internal evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant regional difference in principals' attitudes towards schools being provided with a generic set of tools for self-evaluation. In the ROI, 89% of principals either agree or agree strongly that schools should be provided with these generic tools, whereas in NI, this figure is considerably lower (60%) (Table 4.2.5).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
Republic of Ireland	Count	2	19	18	228	96
	%	0.6%	5.2%	5.0%	62.8%	26.4%
Northern Ireland	Count	4	24	11	50	8
	%	4.1%	24.7%	11.3%	51.5%	8.2%

$U(1) = 10780.000$, $Z = -6.703$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.5: Rather than each school spending time and resources developing their own internal evaluation procedures, schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of internal evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type where the highest number of principals who either agree or agree strongly with this statement being from schools in the ROI (Table 4.2.6).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	2	3	28	15
	%	0.0%	4.2%	6.3%	58.3%	31.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	1	6	8	76	32
	%	0.8%	4.9%	6.5%	61.8%	26.0%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	1	11	7	125	49
	%	0.5%	5.7%	3.6%	64.8%	25.4%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	2	13	3	13	1
	%	6.3%	40.6%	9.4%	40.6%	3.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	11	8	36	7
	%	3.1%	17.2%	12.5%	56.3%	10.9%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 51.475$

Table 4.2.6: Rather than each school spending time and resources developing their own internal evaluation procedures, schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of internal evaluation (by school type)

4.2.2.4 Discussion and issues emerging

As is illustrated in Tables 4.2.1 to 4.2.2, there is a significant difference in principals' attitudes towards the existing resources provided for IE. In the ROI, 55.7% of principals do not believe that existing resources are useful for IE, as opposed to 12% of principals in NI. This significant difference is further emphasised by the need for more IE resources (Tables 4.2.3 to 4.2.4). Although there is a need for additional resources in NI (68%), there is an overwhelming need for more resources in the ROI (94%).

However, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, the types of resources required are identifiably different.

In the ROI, principals believe that the existing resources are not sufficient for embedding a culture of evaluation in schools. According to PROI14, 'If the fundamental organisational supports and resources are not in place you are wasting money in that. It's a waste of time unless and until you have the basic structures and resources in there. Once you have those then you can evaluate positively, then you can come in and do an external inspection' (132).

This perspective was also echoed by another principal who states that 'You're back to reinventing the wheel each time aren't you? It's like all of these policies. We should all be given a template.' (PROI1/40). In this regard, and similar to the DESROI's *School Self Evaluation Guidelines for Post-primary Schools (Teaching and Learning)* (2012b) and *Together Towards Improvement* (DESNI 2003), PROI2 states, 'If you had the material it would be easier to work through it. If you have to devise the material and put everything together it won't happen' (PROI2/38).

It is also worth noting that a number of ROI principals believe that resources already exist for school development planning, which appears to differ from the view of resources available for IE. PROI15 refers to the five-year school development plan, stating, 'I would not have done that only for SDPI, I wouldn't have those templates there for the planning only for SDPI' (436).

In addition, some ROI principals believe that more case studies, would benefit many schools and would also assist schools with the realisation of sentient external expectations of IE processes, including for example, elements of best practice for a particular educational initiative. 'Case studies where you could be looking at x school and what they did to go about it, now it doesn't have to be you know in depth' (PROI22/389). IRO2 also believes that there is a need for more case study research to be carried out by the inspectorate as opposed to mass scale WSEs.

So, there is a balance that needs to be struck between them, but definitely, it is not an efficient way of going where every school has to learn from a visit of an inspection team one at a time, and the inspectorate has made some inroads there. They are producing documentations about it, *Looking at Geography*, or looking at this and looking at that. A composite and we have to do more of that. Because of the business of inspections, of getting more inspections done; sometimes the time isn't found. (IROI2/157)

From both the perspective of PROI22 and IROI2, it appears that the benefit of more case studies being conducted by the inspectorate would be that of a closer alignment between internally presumed and externally assumed notions of quality, which would inevitably lead to self-organisation in schools. 'Self-organizing is the process by which people mutually adjust their behaviours in ways needed to cope with changing internal and external environmental demands' (Cilliers 1998 cited in Anderson et al. 2005, p.673).

In NI, PNI3 believes that schools have been provided with the resources needed to conduct IEs, and the resources provided by the ETI, such as *Together Towards Improvement*, have resulted in IE becoming embedded into the day-to-day operations of the school. PNI3 also believes that this has resulted in self-evaluation activities being less complicated than had been initially envisaged by staff.

Sometimes at the beginning when you first hear this idea of self-evaluation. You get frightened by it and what does that mean. I think that sometimes people use language that hides the task. I'm a firm believer that language should elucidate the actual processes rather than hide and make things over difficult. (PNI3/38)

Although all the principals who were interviewed in NI did not feel that they required more externally devised resources for IEs in the form of specifications, tools, or templates, one must ask why 68% of principals in NI believe that more resources are required for IE (Table 4.2.3). Based on an analysis of qualitative data, the required resources were not so much of a procedural nature, i.e. evaluative tools and frameworks. There was a need for more human resources and shared evaluative knowledge among schools. In this regard, a number of principals who were interviewed in NI believe that to expedite the true potential of IE, schools should move towards sharing evaluative knowledge among and between various educational establishments in NI. PNI2 refers to an example of sharing best practice among and within PNI2's community through the

Area Learning Communities³ initiative, stating, ‘without treading on anybody's toes, we are beginning to think yes, we've evaluated this, and there is something really good going on, and the kids really like this. How can we make the lessons learned from this more widely known and explicit for all staff of both schools’ (PNI2/79). The potential for shared evaluation knowledge was also highlighted by PNI9 who referred to it as potentially becoming ‘like a carousel of best practice’ (PNI9/162). PNI8 states that this repository of evaluative knowledge could also be used as ‘a bank of expertise out there that you could tap into easily and readily’ (PNI8/258). PNI9 states, ‘everyone can buy into or extract from it as and when they need it and, again, get at the cutting edge of innovation in terms of teaching and learning’ (PNI9 /162). With the potential use of C2K.NET⁴, and having already established the Area Learning Communities initiative, NI could be ideally positioned to realise the enormous potential of having a repository of evaluative knowledge that can be shared among and between schools, and in a networked world, it could also be used as an evaluation system of best practice at this particular junction of the evaluation continuum. As stated by PNI6,

Now, the other thing in Northern Ireland is the new Area Learning Communities. That has huge dynamic potential. It will mean that instead of us focusing on our own institution, we'll start looking at the education of the child within the broader region.. (PNI6/138)

Although there are many benefits to supporting organisational learning through a process of networking among schools, asking schools to move from a traditional culture of competition to a culture of cooperation has many perceived difficulties. A study by Pedder and MacBeath (2008) on England’s *Learning How to Learn Project* found that there were considerable gaps between teachers’ practice on the one hand and values on the other. In this regard, where attempts were made by schools to use networking as a means of improving organisational learning, ‘schools typically seemed to struggle in developing ways of supporting networking as a means of developing expertise with staff at other schools’ (Pedder and MacBeath 2008, p.221). INI1 discusses networking challenges between schools.

³ ALCs are voluntary coalitions of schools. These forums can be used for planning collaborations to meet the needs of pupils in an area and for focusing on quality and sharing good practices (DENI 2010, p.4).

⁴ C2k is a 10-year government-funded project set up to implement and manage one of the largest online education systems in the world. It is funded by the Department of Education, under the auspices of the Western Education and Library Board (WELB 2012).

You're really asking schools don't forget here to move from a culture of competition to a culture of cooperation. My own view of it is that you don't move from competition to cooperation. You have to evolve a new construct, which is competitive collaboration or collaborative competition. You use competition, but you want to be more cooperative and collaborative. At the same time, you don't want to replace competition with collaboration alone because competition is quite healthy in terms of standards. Parents still view schools in a competitive way; they look at one as better than the other. (INI1/45)

However, INI2 believes that although the antagonistic nature of schools helping each other solve problems is significant (what INI2 refers to as collaborative competition), networking among schools does lead to improvement; therefore, it should be looked upon more favourably as a means of improving organisational effectiveness. INI1 states,

People talk, I think personally, rather glibly about moving from competition to cooperation. I actually do think it's a new construct. And where part of it is... and completely to answer your question...part of that is actually sharing practice effectively and it's not so much that you share a practice in a way you handle a pass the package round, but you help each other solve problems, which is really what organisation is about in terms of improvement. (INI1/49)

In many ways, INI1's perspective on cooperative competition, where schools help each other solve problems through mutual collaboration, is in line with MacBeath's (2006) assertion that 'networking implies a collegial relationship, founded on voluntarism and initiative. It is built on reciprocity and a measure of trust. The ties that bind are conditional not on authority but on mutual gain, give and take, learning and helping others learn' (MacBeath 2006, p.15).

Another issue relating to the availability of evaluation resources in the ROI and NI is that both regions perceived the lack of resources as a lack of time available to conduct self-evaluations. PV6 states, 'I mean time and then the set of tools, perhaps, that would provide the starting point, planning time. Really it needs to be incorporated formally into the school year. Not just, not in the context of an economic crisis like WSE-MLL, you know' (PV6/361).

The human resources required to conduct IE activities within the day-to-day operations of the school was also identified by a number of principals in both the ROI and NI as a barrier to embedding a culture of evaluation in schools. PS5 states that 'The biggest

resource is time. 'Teachers in education are for the most part highly intelligent and for the most part highly positive and even if you gave them the time they'd use it. The other resources will come on afterwards.' (PROI14/83).

However, while recognising the importance of day-to-day operational activities within the school, what PNI8 refers to as the 'engine room stuff' (PNI8/278), IROI2 believes that the skills of middle management and the lack of time allocated to planning were not always fully utilised compared to other sectors of society.

Sometimes, the middle management people can have done a course or a management course, and sometimes their skills are not used. This thing and taking soundings across the schools, but it's the business culture in schools that's the greatest challenge. 'We're too busy to plan for the future' which sounds reasonable on a day-to-day basis but is not a defensible position in the modern era. (IROI2/147)

As a solution to the lack of time available for IE, PROI14 suggests the renegotiation of teacher contracts is one area that could alleviate time constraints on senior managers in the ROI. PROI14 states that time could be obtained 'by negotiating a new contract but have it as part of their time' (PROI14/53). PROI22 also states that evaluation duties traditionally carried out by principals could also be devolved to middle management, 'an individual teacher maybe or the deputy principal as a person in charge of evaluation' (PROI22/374). The belief that evaluation duties could be devolved to middle management was also affirmed by IROI2, who states,

I think it should be designated that one assistant principal, at the very minimum, should be a whole-school planning coordinator who will assist the principal, not taking from the principal's responsibility, but their job description would be simply to assist the principal in school planning and self-review, and that's it. That's their post of responsibility. (IROI2/211)

Although IROI3 agrees with IROI2 that evaluative responsibilities could be devolved to other staff members, devolving evaluation duties to middle managers could also result in the creation of newly formed power structures where middle managers take on the role of internal-inspectors and view the position as one of legitimate power as opposed to the informational aspect of evaluation. IROI3 states, 'to be involved in that sort of work is some people can find it very interesting and a sort of position of power maybe' (IROI3/578). Nonetheless, IROI3 adds,

In order for the principal to be really leading the place educationally, he needs time, so you know he can't be involved in all of it anyway. Some of it has to be delegated, so I would think that it should be seen in the school as a really important role and that would be part of the motivation for it. (ibid/584)

In reality however, due to considerable reductions in human resources before and after the economic upheaval in NI and the ROI coupled with ever-changing curriculum requirements, such as, in the case of the ROI, the introduction of the new junior cycle curriculum, the likelihood of increasing human resources for the purpose of leading IE in the present economic climate seems unlikely without taking away what are deemed essential middle management responsibilities in the day to day operations of the school. The minister for education (ROI) states that 'far greater reductions in the number of public servants are being made in other sectors relative to those in schools. But there are limits on the number of teaching posts we can afford' (Quinn 2012). In this regard, PROI1 believes that schools would have difficulty fully embracing all of the various elements of IE. According to PROI1, 'if you want to progress anything you have to progress it on a group basis, a mentoring basis; timetabling people for regular meetings, that's how you do your evaluations. You have to put time into it. I don't know how you do it but that's what you do if you know what I mean and once you get the timetabling. How you get the time for that, I don't know.' (PROI1/38).

On the other hand however, PNI13 states that IE should not be seen as an addition to the job specifications of teachers and senior management; it should be seen as part of their everyday working conditions. 'You see the thing is, it's like a tartan cloth. It has to be woven into what people do rather than being seen as this big kind of thing that sits at the end of things' (PNI13/862).

In terms of specific tools required for IEs, three themes emerged based on an analysis of qualitative interviews and appear to be centred on: (1) the present availability of evaluative tools required to conduct IE, (2) the capacity of schools to develop their own evaluation tools and instruments, and (3) the use of data to ascertain the quality of education in various socioeconomic educational settings. When NI principals and inspectors were asked if the present availability of tools was sufficient to carry out IE, they stated that schools had been provided with the necessary tools. 'I don't honestly think we need more tools. I suppose we need better management training at middle

management level’(PNI13 /868). PNI12 also believes that the tools required to conduct effective planning and evaluation are already present in schools in NI. For example, PNI12 referred to a software package for IE and monitoring of the school development plan.

So, in working in line with self-evaluation and the school development plan, if everybody connects up here in the morning...it has a dashboard that comes at the bottom, so if you’ve got a class teacher...up on that dashboard will come where they fit in to the school development plan, and what their responsibility is...and the date for it to be completed. As you work up the management structure to HOD level, they will see themselves and all the members within the department. If you work up the faculty, they’ll see all of the departments, all of the people, see the deadlines, who has completed, and when it’s to be completed...I will have an overall view of everything. (PNI12/1061–1069)

Although INI2 believes there are more elements to evaluation than data analysis (‘I mean, if inspection is only data driven, just send me the details by email, and I’ll write you the report by email’ [INI2/123]), it appears that data analysis has become a rudimentary task in many schools in NI. Furthermore, it also appears that inspectors and principals in NI do not only use whole-scale comparative data in the form of test-based scores derived from state examinations, they also use externally provided contextual and comparative value added indicators to ascertain, contrast and predict student levels of attainment.

I mean, the department publishes the annual statistics in banding. They use free school meals as the proxy for the socioeconomic circumstances in the school, and therefore, they band the results so that a school can look at its exam performance against the data for schools of a similar type in terms of a socioeconomic context, as indicated by the proxy of free school meals. Now, there’s always scope for debate around that; lots of interesting arguments and schools use increasingly more as well predictive analysis they get from...for example, University of Durham produces various analyses, predictive analysis for A level, predictive analysis, GCSE, Yelis, Alis, and so on. (INI1/63)

In the ROI, although some principals are of the belief that a variety of tools and instruments already existed (‘I do think that those, I mentioned them already, those MLL questionnaires are useful generic tools’ [PROI22/280])—a number of principals in the ROI are of the belief that more tools are required for IE. PROI5 refers to the school

plan as follows:

I also think that it's important to use Internal Evaluation to see where we are progressing and that we are all progressing and having a goal. I know that sounds obvious, but you have to have a goal. Set five-year goals if you like. We will be addressing that now with the five-year plan and see how it has fared out after five years. We will be doing that next year. Now, we will need tools to evaluate, and we haven't actually got that yet, but we will need the tools. (PROI5/17)

On the one hand, although inspectors and principals as part of the WSE-MLL model of evaluation, use comparative national data (in the form of terminal state examinations) to ascertain the quality of education provided in post-primary schools. 'We actually sit down and we are given the same results that the school have' (IROI3/530). On the other hand however, in the absence of any comparative contextual data, evaluators in the ROI are left with no alternative but to statistically judge the quality of education in post-primary schools based on a very narrow analysis of high-stakes externally devised examinations. Indeed, according to the CIROI, 'we also need to draw assessment information from a range of sources. Terminal state examinations, for example, while useful, cannot give us long-term comparable data on student learning, simply because the examination must change each year' (Hislop 2012, p.20).

IROI3 also believes that schools should not only compare student performance on state examinations to national averages, but they should also be tracking student performance from their initial entry into the school.

Schools should be looking towards not only analysing English, how many A's, who's doing higher level, who's doing ordinary level, but they should be able to take [Name students] Leaving Cert and go okay and track the product the whole way through. (IROI3/540)

In many ways, however, the previous statements also highlight the lack of available contextual data in the ROI's education system. McNamara and O'Hara's (2012a) study on principal's perceptions towards EE found that there was 'an increasing perception that inspectors are gathering data in sufficient quantities and of sufficient quality to allow them to comment on schools in a manner that is both relevant and rooted in available data' (p.18). In the case of contextual data however, IROI1 states that there is a lack of available data within the Irish education system.

There are issues around schools' abilities to collect data, to analyse data, to use data to compare data and then the national availability of data for comparative purposes and that national data in a contextual framework. So, in other words, if you belong to a school in DEIS band one, you may not have the same expectations of standards for your school. You would aspire to having them, but you can't jump that quickly. So, you may need to be able to have a comparison with the general run of schools. (IROI1/132)

Moreover, IROI1 also believes that there is a lack of data for the purpose of evaluating the added value that schools contribute to student learning across various socioeconomic school settings.

The other element that is vitally important is to know that there is the value added standard as well as the actual standard. So, if I am teaching in a [NAME OF NON-DISADVANTAGED AREA] and all of my students come in at X level, am I really adding value even if 90% of them go to third-level institutions? Is it my doing as a school, or is it that they would reach that anyway because of a whole lot of other factors? So, I think that value added is one thing that you have to take into account, and then the other thing is that the national norms, but the national norms on a contextual basis. So, there are all those skills and systems that need to be put in place. Okay, we do have the exam system at post-primary level; we have nothing at primary level... We have the National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy that happens about every four years...but they're not available in any sort of contextual bands either. So, we depend on small-scale projects in relation to what we do as inspectors ourselves to look at. Well, what is it that's happening in DEIS primary schools, for instance? So, we need a lot of systems in place, and we need up-skilling of staff in schools in order to ensure that this Internal Evaluation will work to everybody's benefit. (IROI1/136)

The view by IROI1 that there is a need for value-added frameworks to be embedded into the education system of the ROI resonates with other regions such as Scotland that have attempted to ascertain the added value that schools contribute to student outcomes. Lawn and Grek (2012) describe how comparative data was used by the Scottish inspectorate in their staff development package in *Using examination results in school self-evaluation: relative ratings and national comparison factors* (Scottish Office of Education Department 1991).

This was the first attempt at developing the self-evaluation regime in Scotland, the new policy paradigm of measuring, describing and assessing education. Comparison and competition through data would from now on become major features for the inspection of schools. (Lawn and Grek 2012, p.137)

However, due to the financial constraints on the ROI government, it appears that the use of value-added data will not be available in the immediate future. Furthermore, as stated by the CIROI, ‘adjusting test results for socioeconomic factors is a disputed science and in any case, it is a most expensive process—one we could certainly not afford readily at present’ (Hislop 2012, p.22). None the less, for those who are proponents on the use of value-added data, it appears that for the moment, many schools in the ROI will be left with no alternative but to provide an account of how they compare with every other school in the ROI, as is the practice with present evaluation procedures for WSE-MLL.

By way of contrast and in the absence of CVA data sets in the Irish Education system, Gorard (2010) questions the emphasis placed on CVA measures when referring to the school effectiveness model in the United Kingdom.

One clear finding that is now largely unremarked by academics and unused by policy-makers is that pupil prior attainment and background explain the vast majority of variation in school outcomes. This finding is clear because its scale and consistency over time and place dwarfs the error component in the calculation (largely because the error does not have a chance to propagate in the same way as for CVA analysis). (Gorard 2010, p.761)

The author states that if policy makers have a greater understanding of CVA and understand that CVA cannot be used to differentiate school performance to any significant degree of certainty, they may begin to question the usefulness of the ever-increasing dominance of school effectiveness models more generally and look towards more valuable processes and potential outcomes for active citizenship rather than mono focal interpretations of paper and pencil test scores.

Schools are mini-societies in which, according to surveys, pupils may learn how to interact, what to expect from wider society and how to judge fairness (Gorard & Smith 2009). Schools seem to be a key influence on pupils’ desire to take part in future learning opportunities (Gorard et al. 2007) and on their occupational aspirations (Gorard & Rees, 2002). All of these outcomes have been largely ignored in three decades of school effectiveness research. It is time to move on. (Gorard 2010, p.762)

Evidence suggests that pupil prior attainment and socioeconomic status have the most significant effect on student performance, potential learning and occupational aspirations. In this regard, given the view that Inspectors are traditionally deemed to be what Lawn and Grek (2012) refer to as ‘class room connoisseurs’ (p.136), one wonders if a significant portion of inspectorate resources in the ROI and elsewhere should be devolved to not just inspect, but also to support principals, teachers and students in areas of intense socioeconomic deprivation given the reality that ‘more than 200,000 children in the ROI are living below the poverty line’ (Stack 2012).

In conclusion, and without delving into the varied perspectives on the extent to which the various tools, methods and resources can actually contribute to the quality of evaluations and subsequent school improvement initiatives, it would be reasonable to suggest that if IE in the form of externally devised frameworks are to become embedded into the day-to-day operations of schools, as is the case of NI, that schools in the ROI should be provided with the requisite tools and resources needed to bring an externally devised process of evaluation to fruition. However, in the absence of externally devised evaluation frameworks, as is the case with other high-performing OECD countries such as Finland, it would also be reasonable to suggest that schools are best able to decide what data sets, evaluation tools, resources and training is required for creating individual, student, teacher and subsequent collective whole school improvement.

4.2.3 Resources (external evaluation)

4.2.3.1 Inspection documents for schools makes clear the inspection process

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant regional difference among principals' attitudes towards documentation clarifying the inspection process, and more than 70% of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly with this statement (Table 4.2.7).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	5	48	44	236	29
	%	1.4%	13.3%	12.2%	65.2%	8.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	1	7	18	61	12
	%	1.0%	7.1%	18.2%	61.6%	12.1%

$U(1) = 16997.500$, $Z = -0.920$, $p = 0.358$

Table 4.2.7: Inspection documents for schools makes clear the inspection process (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type. More than 67% of principals from all school types agree or agree strongly that inspection documents makes the inspection process clear (Table 4.2.8).

		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	5	2	36	5
	%	0.0%	10.4%	4.2%	75.0%	10.4%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	20	18	73	10
	%	1.6%	16.3%	14.6%	59.3%	8.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	3	23	24	128	14
	%	1.6%	12.0%	12.5%	66.7%	7.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	1	1	8	22	1
	%	3.0%	3.0%	24.2%	65.6%	3.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	6	10	39	11
	%	0.0%	9.1%	15.2%	59.1%	16.7%

$P = 0.122$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 7.282$

Table 4.2.8: Inspection documents for schools makes clear the inspection process (by school type)

4.2.3.2 More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to prepare for external evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference by region among principals' attitudes towards this statement, where no more than 48% of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that more resources are required to prepare for EEs (Table 4.2.9).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	10	114	64	123	52
	%	2.8%	31.4%	17.6%	33.9%	14.3%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	3	28	27	37	4
	%	3.0%	28.3%	27.3%	37.4%	4.0%

$U(1) = 16682.500$, $Z = -1.139$, $p = 0.255$

Table 4.2.9: More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to prepare for external evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.2.10).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	2	15	14	13	4
	%	4.2%	31.3%	29.2%	27.1%	8.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	45	12	41	23
	%	1.6%	36.6%	9.8%	33.3%	18.7%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	6	54	38	70	25
	%	3.1%	28.0%	19.7%	36.3%	13.0%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	1	10	7	11	3
	%	3.1%	31.3%	21.9%	34.4%	9.4%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	18	20	25	1
	%	3.0%	27.3%	30.3%	37.9%	1.5%

$P = 0.432$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 3.811$

Table 4.2.10: More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to prepare for external evaluation (by school type)

4.2.3.3 Pre-inspection literature from the Department of Education clarifies all issues relating to external evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference by region between principals' attitudes that pre-inspection literature clarifies EE issues where the majority of principals from both regions agree or agree strongly with this statement (Table 4.2.11).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count %	17 4.7%	58 16.0%	79 21.8%	193 53.2%	16 4.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	14 14.1%	20 20.2%	59 59.6%	6 6.1%

$U(1) = 16093.500$, $Z = -1.754$, $p = 0.079$

Table 4.2.11: Pre-inspection literature from the Department of Education clarifies all issues relating to external evaluation (by region).

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.2.12).

<i>School type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Comprehensive</i>	Count %	1 2.1%	5 10.4%	9 18.8%	32 66.7%	1 2.1%
<i>Community</i>	Count %	5 4.1%	24 19.5%	29 23.6%	60 48.8%	5 4.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	11 5.7%	29 15.0%	42 21.8%	101 52.3%	10 5.2%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	6 18.8%	5 15.6%	21 65.6%	0 0.0%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	8 12.1%	14 21.2%	38 57.6%	6 9.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	8 12.1%	14 21.2%	38 57.6%	6 9.1%

$P = .137$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 6.982$

Table 4.2.12: Pre-inspection literature from the Department of Education clarifies all issues relating to external evaluation (by school type)

4.2.3.4 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.2.7 to 4.2.12 show that there is no significant difference in principals' attitudes towards the existing or necessary resources that are available for EE. More than 70% of principals in both regions believe that inspection documents makes the inspection process clear, and no more than 48% of principals in both regions believe that more resources are necessary for EE. This was further emphasised by principals in both regions. PROI2 discussed the traditional model of WSE, and states that the pre-inspection literature and support afforded by inspectors to schools in preparation for WSE was also very beneficial to the PROI2's school, both on a practical and professional level.

In my particular case the inspector came outside and sat down with us and on three occasions before they came in for the week. We knew exactly what they were looking for. I found that much better than having to read through reams of paper. You would also form a relationship with the person before they came in... (PROI2/12)

In NI, the professional conduct, support and advice given by the DI and inspection team before the inspection took place was viewed as archetypal of the standards laid out in the ETIs *Charter for inspection* (ETI 2012).

They work under very strict guidelines in that they have a protocol of how they work in schools. There is a few weeks advance notice of an inspection, and again, they will come in and work with senior staff and work with teachers, parents, and students prior to the inspection and put at ease some of the doubts. (PNI6/16)

In the ROI, PROI2 also believes that pre-inspection literature for the traditional model of whole school evaluation (WSE) clearly sets out what is expected from schools. ‘The thing about it is, though, is that every school they are going to, they are directly looking at the same things and using the same criteria. They all have the same headings; they all have the same agenda’(PROI2/7).

However, with the introduction of WSE-MLL, some principals were initially unaware of what was actually required of schools in preparation for the inspection compared to the other inspection models, such as WSE, especially regarding the level of data required for the evaluation. For example, in preparation for the BOM’s presentation to the inspectorate, PROI18 was unable to find, apart from headings, any detailed guidelines as to what was required.

I think that, you know, the guidance that you’re given on even preparing for a WSE [WSE-MLL], in terms of preparing the Board of Management brief, is actually very minimalistic. They’re actually, they are not guidelines. There’s only a certain amount of things that you must have, and even for a school plan that everyone’s school plan varies, so much is variable. (PROI18/2-4)

It also appears that PV6 was unaware of what evidence was actually required for WSE-MLL. ‘If the inspectorate asked for these specific things rather than leaving it to the vision of the or the clairvoyance of the principals as to what they might or might not look for, it would be helpful’(PV6/46). Furthermore, it appears that with a far greater

emphasis being placed on data analysis during WSE-MLL's, PROI18 was unaware of or did not have the resources to comment in detail on the level of data analysis required for WSE-MLL.

That would be one of my difficulties that I think around in terms of the need for the sharing of statistics and professional organisation that in terms of, you know, schools are. They're coming in and they're saying to you, well you're actually doing very well in your [Name of subject] statistics, but do you realise that you have far too many doing ordinary level at whatever, in comparison to the national average...And they say this to you, and they're expecting you to comment whereas I think you should have access to that. (PROI18/40–42)

Nonetheless, it would be reasonable to suggest that there are always going to be issues in the initial stages of any new initiative, and WSE-MLL appears to be no exception. As with previous inspection models such as WSE, principals and schools will quite readily become aware of what is actually required for WSE-MLL.

Well, I had, like I would have spoken to four or five principals of other schools who had WSE-MLL and they all—all the advice was the same thing as well, you know, and they were all saying, 'Look be careful here, they're going to actually go for you here and they're going to ask you this', oh just be very, very careful, etc. in everything that you're doing. (PS8/190)

Although PS8 used the process of networking with other principals to ascertain what was required for WSE-MLL, PS8's intense preparation for WSE-MLL also brings into question the reality of partnerships and reciprocal trust that exists between schools and the inspectorate. In this regard, PS8's preparation for WSE-MLL appears to be centred on intense preparation for a perceived forensic examination to be carried out by the inspectorate. In many ways, it resonates with that of a defendant preparing for an impending court trial where principals who have been through the process take on the part of legal counsel, while inspectors take on the role of judge and jury and the principal, *habeas corpus*, takes on the role of the defendant. In this regard and given the fact that schools in the ROI are given 14 days' notice for inspection models, such as WSE-MLL and subject inspections, IROI3 discussed the benefits of unannounced inspections. 'I think that until we walk in off the street, we are doing ourselves a disadvantage, and I think we are doing the school a disadvantage' (IROI3/208–210).

While one can empathise with the view that unannounced inspections can alleviate the intense pressure put on school principals prior to an inspection taking place. On the other hand however, the view that there is a need for unannounced inspections to gain a more realistic and trustworthy interpretation of the quality of teaching, learning and leadership in schools also reflects the practice of unannounced inspections in Ireland in the nineteenth century. In this regard, one questions whether progressive models of evaluation, such as unannounced inspections are actually progressive, especially when the dictate of the new relationship between inspectors and schools is centred on reciprocal partnerships and trust. This can be seen from a comment made by an inspector reporting to a special committee of inquiry in Ireland in 1837 that referenced the benefits of unannounced inspections in 19th century Ireland.

I would not venture to report positively on the character of the school unless I come upon it unawares, and when I cannot succeed in doing so, I always take another opportunity of coming upon it unexpectedly before I make up my mind as to the character of the school. (Ó'Éideáin 1967 cited in O'Connor 2001, p.13)

4.2.4 Capacity (external evaluation)

4.2.4.1 The inspectorate has the necessary skills required to conduct external evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference by region between principals' attitudes towards this statement even though a minority of principals in both regions do not agree that inspectors have the necessary skills required to conduct inspections (Table 4.2.13).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	28	132	90	104	9
	%	7.7%	36.4%	24.8%	28.7%	2.5%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	3	16	18	59	2
	%	3.1%	16.3%	18.4%	60.2%	2.0%

$U(1) = 11803.000$, $Z = -5.361$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.13: The inspectorate have the necessary skills required to conduct external evaluation (by region)

This significant difference is further illustrated using the Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 4.2.14) where only a minority of principals in all school types do not agree that inspectors have the necessary skills required to conduct EE's.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	1 2.1%	15 31.3%	12 25.0%	19 39.6%	1 2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	8 6.5%	49 39.8%	32 26.0%	32 26.0%	2 1.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	19 9.8%	69 35.8%	46 23.8%	53 27.5%	6 3.1%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	7 21.9%	6 18.8%	19 59.4%	0 0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	3 4.6%	8 12.3%	12 18.5%	40 61.5%	2 3.1%

$P = 0.137$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 34.164$

Table 4.2.14: The inspectorate has the necessary skills required to conduct external evaluation (by school type)

4.2.4.2 Discussion and issues emerging

Adding significant confidence to the perception among principals regarding the professional capacity of inspectors, only a minority of principals in both regions believe that inspectors do not have the skillset required to conduct EE's (Tables 4.2.13 to 4.2.14). However, from an analysis of qualitative data, it appears that where the professional capacity of inspectors is questioned, issues surrounding professional competence is centred on principals' belief that inspectors themselves had not been principals and, therefore, would not have the practical skillset required to evaluate senior management.

I do feel that we should be given the courtesy of having somebody on the team who has done our job. I know myself when I came out of the classroom and I did X years as a deputy and then became a principal. Nobody could describe to you what it is like being a school principal (PROI10/4)

On the other hand however, a number of other principals (PROI4/12 and PROI7/7) state that if inspectors have not been principals, the overall quality of the inspection process could be merely one of empathy, as opposed to any significant change in the final outcome of the evaluation. PROI7 states, 'I think that the benefit of somebody who has been in that position or knows about management, at least they would have more empathy and more appreciation and an understanding of what is actually involved. So there is an argument for that' (PROI7/4). In terms of a contextual understanding of, for example, a school type that an inspectorate team might not be familiar with, IROI1

believes that the introduction of associate assessors could assuage perceptions that the assessors were insufficiently cognisant of the school context/clientele.

For instance, I mean if you are going into a school or a disadvantaged school, and the school feels, 'really the particular people are coming in here have never worked in a disadvantaged area, they really don't understand our problems'; one could argue a principal from another disadvantaged area could be an ideal associate to come in for that particular evaluation, so that would be a contextual factor. There are also factors where the recruitment of post-primary inspectors has always been on a subject basis and that was because, probably because, of the traditional role in relation to the state examinations, and so there would be an argument sometimes put forward by schools..., that these people do not have expertise in leading and managing schools, and that's another area where associate evaluators could be of benefit to the external. It has not happened; it has been discussed and it may happen in the future. (IRO11/100)

McNamara and O'Hara (2012a) also studied principals' perceptions of inspections, and 67% of principals in the ROI agree or agree strongly that inspectors 'have the required knowledge and skills to adequately assess the school' (2012a, p16). Indeed, the assertion that ROI principals' main concerns with inspector competence relate primarily to a lack of empathy towards school management appears to be largely confirmed by similar Irish studies (Mathews 2010; Dillon 2011). As stated by Dillon (2011), 'the principals were concerned about the inspectors' lack of managerial experience and a consequent inability to appreciate the demands of school management' (Dillon 2011, p.86). This perspective resonates with PROI who states,

You don't necessarily have to have been an inter-county player yourself to train a football team or manage an inter county side. What you do need to have if you're not a senior county manager, you need to have around you people who were and know the difficulty people working at that level have and I find that is the problem. (PROI3/8)

The question one then asks is, should existing principals be recruited on a full-time basis to the inspectorate, as is the case with the ROI, or should the inspectorate introduce associate inspectors to the inspection process alternatively, as is the case with NI? In relation to this point, Cuddihy (2012) engaged the Labour Party spokesman on education and skills to ask a parliamentary question in May 2010 concerning the number of appointed principals who were previously deputy principals in the academic years 2005–2009. This highlighted the lack of significant senior management

experience that was present in schools in the ROI. From the parliamentary question, it was found that ‘the majority of those appointed as principals arrived to the position without the experience of having been a deputy principal’ (Cuddihy 2012, p.79).

In this regard, while one could assume that there is a perceived need to increase the number of inspectors who have managerial experience in schools, there also appears to be an overwhelming need to maintain experienced deputy principals and principals in ROI schools. The recruitment of principals and deputy principals to the inspectorate for this purpose could be viewed as a reverse-logic model at this juncture of educational change. Nonetheless, in December 2011, the DESROI initiated the appointment of inspectors who must have ‘management experience at principal and/or deputy principal level in a second-level school for a minimum of five years’ (Public Appointments Service 2011, p.4).

While principals in NI have positively accepted the addition of AAs to the inspection process for a variety of reasons, such as principals using the evaluative knowledge gained in their own schools, PNI6 believes the introduction of AAs has also allowed principals and inspectors to form a greater degree of reciprocal trust and partnership and also for principals to gain a greater understanding of EE processes and the standards required for inspection.

Some years back, the ETI invited a number of principals and vice principals to become associate inspectors, and it meant that those people were taken for three solid days and they got the same training as the inspectors for those few days and it gave them a greater understanding of what inspectors look for in the school, the standards that they expect, and they then had the chance to go out and work with the inspectorate and inspection teams. In other words, and that is the Robin Hood of you steal from the rich and you give to the poor. You see the ideas, and you bring it back. It has another affect in that you are a principal who can relate to the management of the school you’re inspecting, and that brings more credibility to the whole process. (PNI6/48–50)

It also appears from an analysis of inspectorate interviews that the ETI are positive towards the use of AAs in the inspection process for a variety of reasons.

Most inspection teams, especially for a standard inspection, will have an associate assessor assigned to the team, and the benefit for us in the inspectorate is that it provides you with somebody on the team who is from another school, often similar type of school who can bring that currency to the investigation we carry out in the school, and they contribute significantly to the internal challenge function within the

inspection team, which is quite important for us that within the inspection team, we have a number of ways of challenging each other on the judgments that we're making, based on the evidence that we're gathering while we're in the school. So, you've evidence from many sources, data, documentation, interviews, and observation of teaching and learning discussion with pupils and looking at people's work and making judgments about the standards. You gather evidence all the time from multiple sources, and then you're forming an evaluative judgment about that area that you're inspecting...so the assessor can bring a further challenge in from a different perspective to that process during the inspection. (INI1/69)

In terms of practically embracing the mutual terms of coexistence between IE and EE and when referring to an evaluation of the role of the AA that was carried out by the ETI, INI1 affirms the belief that 'the evaluations of the associate assessor's role reinforces the fact that they regard this as extremely beneficial in terms of their experience. We also regard it as a very good system, a check on our processes' (INI1/69). In the ROI, although the inspectorate is open to the introduction of AAs, 'such opportunities would enable principals and senior teachers to experience evaluation in school settings other than their own... In addition, I believe that such teachers would also contribute valuable insights and learning to the Inspectorate' (Hislop 2012, p.3).

However, while recognising the context in which evaluations operate, IROI1 asserts that there are acknowledged benefits to the introduction of AAs in the ROI, but practical challenges need to be addressed, such as IR issues, before AAs could be introduced to the inspection system of the ROI.

And even from an inspectorate point of view, appointment of associate inspectors or evaluators would have to be subject to the agreement of the particular unions, not just the inspectorate unions but also the teachers unions...So yes, the idea, particularly where there are lacuna in the inspectorate, whether they are perceived or true, but if schools feel that there is a lack of expertise in relation to a particular issue or aspect of our evaluation, then that breaks down the trust or the mutual respect and in those circumstances; one could see that good associates would be excellent to fall upon. (IROI1/94)

4.2.5 Capacity (internal evaluation)

4.2.5.1 Staff at this school has the skills required to conduct internal evaluations

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference among principals' attitudes towards whether or not school personnel have the skillset to conduct IE's (Table 4.2.15). In fact, 38% of principals in the ROI are of the belief that staff at their schools do not have the skills required to conduct IE's. However, in NI, only 11% of principals disagree or disagree strongly with this statement.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	15	122	72	137	16
	<i>%</i>	4.1%	33.7%	19.9%	37.8%	4.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	10	11	70	8
	<i>%</i>	1.0%	10.0%	11.0%	70.0%	8.0%

$U(1) = 11272.500$, $Z = -6.156$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.15: Staff at this school has the skills required to conduct internal evaluations (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference among school types (Table 4.2.16).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	15	14	15	1
	<i>%</i>	4.3	31.9	29.8	31.9	2.1
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	7	31	15	60	9
	<i>%</i>	5.7	25.4	12.3	49.2	7.4
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	6	76	43	62	6
	<i>%</i>	3.1	39.4	22.3	32.1	3.1
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	1	4	25	2
	<i>%</i>	0.0	3.1	12.5	78.1	6.3
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	9	7	45	6
	<i>%</i>	1.5	13.2	10.3	66.2	8.8

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 50.601$

Table 4.2.16: Staff at this school has the skills required to conduct Internal Evaluations (by school type)

4.2.5.2 Teachers need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between principals' attitudes towards the need for more IE training. More than 90% of principals in the ROI and 81% of principals in NI either agree or agree strongly with this statement (Table 4.2.17).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i> %	8 2.2%	15 4.2%	10 2.8%	177 49.0%	151 41.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i> %	0 0.0%	7 7.0%	12 12.0%	57 57.0%	24 24.0%

$U(1) = 14222.000$, $Z = -3.598$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.17: Teachers need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.2.18).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i> %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 2.1%	27 56.3%	20 41.7%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i> %	2 1.6%	3 2.4%	4 3.3%	55 44.7%	59 48.0%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i> %	6 3.1%	12 6.3%	5 2.6%	96 50.3%	72 37.7%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i> %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 18.8%	16 50.0%	10 31.3%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i> %	0 0.0%	7 10.4%	6 9.0%	40 59.7%	14 20.9%

$P = 0.001$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 18.138$

Table 4.2.18: Teachers need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations (by school type)

4.2.5.3 Principals and vice principals need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between principals' attitudes towards the requirements for more principal and vice principal IE training. Results showed 87% of principals in the ROI and 73% of principals in NI believe that more training about how to carry out IEs is needed (Table 4.2.19).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i> %	4 1.1%	24 6.6%	18 5.0%	212 58.4%	105 28.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i> %	0 0.0%	10 10.0%	17 17.0%	55 55.0%	18 18.0%

$U(1) = 14738.000$, $Z = -3.243$, $p = 0.001$

Table 4.2.19: Principals and vice principals need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a significant difference by school type (Table 4.2.20), although the majority of principals from all school types either agree or agree strongly that principals and deputy principals need more training on how to conduct IEs.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	0	2	31	15
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	64.6%	31.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	4	5	71	41
	<i>%</i>	1.6%	3.3%	4.1%	57.7%	33.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	20	11	111	49
	<i>%</i>	1.0%	10.4%	5.7%	57.5%	25.4%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	3	9	15	5
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	9.4%	28.1%	46.9%	15.6%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	7	8	39	13
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	10.4%	11.9%	58.2%	19.4%

$P = 0.001$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 18.194$

Table 4.2.20: Principals and vice principals need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations (by school type)

4.2.5.4 Self-evaluation involves all staff

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of principals in each region towards the reality that self-evaluation involves all staff members (Table 4.2.21). Of the principals, more than 90% in the ROI either agree or strongly agree with this statement, and 96% in NI agree or strongly agree.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	5	19	10	216	112
	<i>%</i>	1.4%	5.2%	2.8%	59.7%	30.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	4	0	47	49
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	47.0%	49.0%

$U(1) = 14474.000$, $Z = -3.490$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.2.21: Self-evaluation involves all staff (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a slightly significant difference based on school type (Table 4.2.22).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	3	3	27	15
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	56.3%	31.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	7	2	78	34
	<i>%</i>	0.8%	5.7%	1.6%	63.9%	27.9%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	4	9	5	112	63
	<i>%</i>	2.1%	4.7%	2.6%	58.0%	32.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	3	0	16	13
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	9.4%	0.0%	50.0%	40.6%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	1	0	30	36
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	44.8%	53.7%

$P = 0.004$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 15.601$

Table 4.2.22: Self-evaluation involves all staff (by school type)

4.2.5.5 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.2.15 to 4.2.16 illustrates that a minority of principals in NI (11%) believe that their staff do not have the necessary skills required to conduct IEs. PNI5 states, ‘I think our staff are very well good at it you know, and we are probably. In the last number of years where I think that there is very little that would baffle them in terms of evaluation at this stage’ (PNI5/24).

In the ROI, 38% of principals believe that their staff do not have the skills required to carry out IEs. The need to strengthen the evaluative capacity of school personnel in the ROI is affirmed from an analysis of principal interviews. PROI7 states, ‘I think that in order to establish norms, in order to establish a more uniform kind of approach to prevent people from going in the wrong direction, it might be advisable to give some general principles in terms of IE but also to give some basic training to work out the instruments for IE’ (PROI7/31). PROI9 also believes that there was a need for more evaluator training.

The main disadvantage for me would be where people do not have proper training to do it correctly and where people will do it for their own agenda and they fail to see the benefits of it. (PROI9/22)

Although quantitative results signify that principals and teachers require more evaluation training in both regions (Tables 4.2.15 to 4.2.20), what is strikingly different is the type of training required in both regions. From an analysis of qualitative interviews, it appears that evaluator training requirements in NI are centred primarily on how best to share evaluative knowledge among and between peers.

However, in the ROI, the training seems to be centred not only on the rudiments of IE practices, such as how to collect and analyse data, but also on the need for training on how to evaluate the professional capacity of school personnel, the importance of which was described by PROI14.

Now, I remember years ago having a heated discussion with a number of senior department officials. Now, they were saying that school principals were falling down in their duties by not disciplining underperforming teachers...Well, I said it is easier said than done. And you can't even begin to approach the question unless you have been properly trained and formally accredited in having the training, so you can then say that this is a valid objective assessment. Their reply was, 'sure every boss knows who's performing and who isn't'. Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. Sometimes they get it wrong sometimes they like some people and they don't like other people. (PROI14/59-61)

Given the external requirement for Section 24 of the Education Act 1998⁵ to be more fully instigated, PROI14 believes that without proper training to evaluate staff, the outcome of the evaluation could be construed as victimisation as opposed to a systematic, fair and impartial assessment of staff competencies.

You can either do it properly or professionally, or it cannot be done. I said, you provide people with training, you provide people with the time, with the structures, and it will be done. I said, otherwise it's just victimisation, and that is how it would be presented by the unions. (PROI14/61)

Furthermore, PROI18 also asserts that very little training was provided on the rudiments of self-evaluation, and PROI18 believes that a stronger bond between inspectors and principals is required, particularly where matters of staff underperformance are concerned.

I think in terms of the support, you're nearly all being seen in terms of your Section 24, or whatever it is you know, this one the disciplinary thing or what is it the under-performing teacher...I think that is one where the inspector will be playing a role, but I think even before you even get to that, I think that, inspectors and principals should be meeting together around, well you know, what is an induction, you know, an improvement plan. Principals have no training on this; I think that there's a lot there you know. (PROI18/226-228)

⁵ Section 24(3) of the Education Act 1998 provides for the suspension and dismissal of teachers by boards of management.

Given the requirements for principals to take on the role of inspecting the quality of teaching and learning, it appears that some principals in the ROI believe that the introduction of internal evaluator training should be on the agenda for introducing IEs into schools in the ROI. Consequently, IE training should start with senior management followed by the middle management team and the remainder of the staff. As stated by PROI21, 'I think there are two things: one, we need training in the area starting at the top with the principals and the deputy's, and then I suppose, your senior leadership team, your middle managers, and your subjects' (PROI21/300).

Further increasing the challenge of creating a culture of evaluation in education, PROI14 is of the view that the promotion of IE is also, in part, due to the cost savings that result from requiring principals and schools' to conduct evaluations on school's performance areas, that would traditionally be carried out by inspectors.

It's interesting that now that the chief inspector said they are moving towards a bigger emphasis on self-evaluation. Now that would be more credible. Now the reality is the reason why they want to do that is, they can't pay and they don't want to pay and the reason why they didn't want an associate on it is because it will probably cost too much. The reason why they're cutting back on Whole School Evaluation is also the costs exceeded far more than they actually thought it would. (PROI14/41)

IROI1 also affirms that the traditional model of WSE is resource intensive from the point of view of the inspectorate and schools where 'it takes a huge amount of time and resources on the part of inspectors. It also puts a huge amount of pressure on schools, particularly on principals of schools, and that is the feedback that we are getting' (IROI/61). IROI2 also discusses WSE, stating that 'it's very resource hungry. There are five inspectors on a Whole School Evaluation. That's only the in-school phase' (IROI2/90).

Furthermore, while IROI1 believes that the skills required for IE should involve the ability to collect and analyse benchmark data and relate them to national norms, 'teachers not only need to collect and analyse data and relate it to national norms. They also need to collect and analyse benchmark data and then look at what they're adding' (IROI1/138). IROI1 also believes that teachers' need the skill set to work collaboratively with other partners, such as parents and students, to identify barriers to learning, 'Or what do the students learn and what do they not learn and what were the

barriers to learning? The other aspect of that, and I'm back to the trust thing, is the skill of working collaboratively, particularly in schools where the tradition has been to work in isolation, and that is... a skill' (IROI1/144). The importance placed by IROI1 on trust and the skills required for school personnel to be able to work collaboratively together is also affirmed by PNI13.

You need big people skills. You need to do the preparation before you do the act. If you haven't got self-evaluation within a school, you've got to prepare for it. You know, you can't just suddenly toss it on top of people. You've got to convince them first of all that you're with them and you're for them and you appreciate and respect them and that you value them so that they've confidence in you. You know, to be very crude about it, that you're not trying to screw them in some way or another. If you can get that up and running and a bit of good will, you can say to them, 'Look it, if we do X, Y, and Z, things are going to be better, and here's why they're going to be better'. (PNI13/778–792)

In the case of NI, although principals believe that more training is required for IE (Tables 4.2.17 to 4.2.20), from an analysis of qualitative interviews, principals also believe that they have been provided with the required rudimentary training needed to conduct IEs. 'I was lucky enough to be invited by the Northern Ireland centre for competitiveness where they do assessor training, and when you do assessor training, it gives you an opportunity to have an input as to what happens' (PNI5/12). However, having learned the fundamentals of IE, to expedite the true potential of IE, the evaluator training required by principals in NI appears to be centred more on sharing evaluation knowledge between schools.

When you talked about a repository of knowledge, I think that these are absolutely excellent directions to go, but you have to do them in a particular way to bring people with you. (PNI2/81)

The need for more peer-to-peer training among schools was further emphasised by PNI3 who states,

As a principal, I think that self-evaluation needs to be coherent. I think that it simply makes sure and monitors that the practice is in every single school. I think that there is very good practice going on. There is very good practice, and if you had more meetings in which principals were showing the absolute simplicity of it and showing how it works in their school. (PNI3/62)

Finally, although approximately 90% of principals in both regions believe that IE involves all staff (Tables 4.2.23 and 4.2.24), issues surrounding the professional capacity of other members of the community and their involvement were questioned. In this regard, there appeared to be mixed views among principals as to whether students should be involved in the process. However, this appears to be a common issue in other regions where ‘the perceived value and validity of student evaluations of teaching (SETs) is at least mixed, and has been the focus of much divisive debate’ (Moore and Kuol 2005, p.58). PNI13 has a positive disposition towards students being part of the evaluation process, stating that ‘pupils are involved in evaluation too, you know, and that’s going to be the next big step forward is what they refer to as pupil voice because you’ll not fool the pupils. They’ll know whether you’re any good or not and fairly quick’ (PNI13/1052-1058). On the other hand however, PNI10 believes that students attend schools for the purpose of learning, and the introduction of evaluation initiatives, such as *Student Voice*, is actually grounded in political correctness as opposed to providing any significant benefit to either the school or the students involved in the evaluation process.

Let me tell you, this thing here in the North they have this thing called *Student Voice*. Well in England, they’ve even got kids on interview panels...which is absolutely ridiculous, but again a lot of it is politically correct, Ms. Marple. And there’s also a lot of people in jobs which are not really jobs, but you know the thing...Oh we could dream this one up or we could dream that one up. I mean, at the end of the day, what do you want schools to do? I mean, schools, like hospitals, should be concerned with either curing the people or educating them, instead of, you know, thinking of Mickey Mouse ideals. The average teacher didn’t go in to sit there and think up great thoughts. You went in there to teach children...and that’s, I think, a lot of it in the last 20 or 30 years has been lost. (PNI10/307–319)

In the ROI, although issues surrounding students becoming part of the evaluation process never arose, issues related to the voluntary nature of boards of management and the capacity of board members to conduct evaluation activities appeared to be an issue. However, IROI3 believes that the effectiveness of a BOM is in part based on the quality of leadership exhibited by the principal.

I think that, particularly in all schools, you will have good boards and bad boards. But where a board is good or seen to be good, generally speaking, it will be led by a very good principal...and the principal leads the pack from the middle. He leads up, and he leads down. Where you don’t have that you’ve a problem and where there is instability in staff, you would often find that the staff members, in a

school where there's disadvantage or whatever, they are focused on the working conditions, perhaps, of the teachers and of the behaviour of students, and they are not able to sit back and sort of think of the bigger picture. (IROI3/26-32)

However, a number of ROI principals believe that principals often deal with issues for which that board members are responsible but do not have the capacity or time to address, such as staff appraisals and the evaluation and development of the school plan⁶. PROI21 states that 'it's beyond their area of expertise, but yet they have responsibility for this, so what happens in reality is the school principal has to take responsibility for it' (PROI21/248–250).

Moreover, due to the voluntary nature of boards of management, PROI16 believes that principals can only expect board members to take on a limited amount of duties.

You're reluctant to ask them to go way beyond the call of duty because, you know, there's only so much, and in many ways they are a rubber stamp...Now, not because they want to be but, let's be honest with you, that's how it is. (PROI16/224–226)

IROI2 also believes that the makeup of a board is also an issue of concern from the point of view of EE and, like PROI16, questions what can actually be expected from the BOM given the voluntary nature of BOM's.

They are part-time; they meet once a month. They meet nine times a year; two or three of those could be taken up with emergency time issues, so there is probably a need for change, really, in management structures and also training of boards and getting people to get in and be on the board who are committed to it. It's a difficult. It is a key question in evaluation, External Evaluation, what can we really expect boards of management to do in the area of planning. Somebody had it dictated in the education act, but that may be over-ambitious to do it. (IROI2/121)

The above statements, which related to the capacity of BOMs in the ROI, supports a case study of a BOM by the author (Brown 2011) who also examined issues relating to the professional capacity and structural makeup of a BOM in the ROI. It was found that instead of becoming embedded in the legislative operations of the school, the BOM acted as 'a prima facie reflex stamp of approval for the principal and other staff members of the school' (Brown 2011).

⁶ 'A board shall, as soon as may be after its appointment, make arrangements for the preparation of a plan (in this section referred to as, the school plan) and shall ensure that the plan is regularly reviewed and updated' (Education Act, 21(1), 1998).

Given the fact that BOMs are being externally required to become more proactive in carrying out the legislative operations of planning and evaluation as is the case with WSE-MLL⁷, IROI2 commented:

I think one of the agendas with the new model, and there are many, is to encourage boards to take their roles more seriously. However, we still have that fundamental problem that you're dependent on who you get and how are people selected. They are trusted souls in the community, but they may not be the best planners in the world. (IROI2/135–137)

The question remains: how can BOM's in the ROI properly carry out all of the legislatively required duties such as evaluation and action planning for improvement? PROI17 states that 'it's important that schools would have somebody who has been involved in education. You find that a lot of immediately retired principals are jumped upon' (PROI17/420). Furthermore, IROI1 believes that although board members can fill a variety of duties, there are also issues surrounding the capability of schools to form a BOM that has the capacity to carry out all of the required duties of BOMs.

And there is a problem though, and I don't think anybody could deny that, and that is the problem that they are a voluntary board and particularly in areas of disadvantage. It is difficult for schools to get a correctly constituted board. It's difficult for them to get people, certainly from the locality, who would have the capacity and the willingness on a voluntary basis to do the work that needs to be done. So, there is a building capacity in relation to Boards of Management and volunteers as well. (IRO1/71)

In this regard, and in recognition of the acknowledged difficulties relating to the structural makeup of BOMs in the ROI, IROI1 suggests that one solution to realising the legislatively required duties of BOMs in the future, would be to reduce the number of separate BOMs per school. This would extend the remit of education boards who would manage a number of schools.

Now, it's a major, major issue because, I mean my personal view, whatever at post-primary level, at primary level, we have 3400 schools, and to find that many Boards of Management, in my view, is not possible, and there may be some time in the future a situation where there will be a board who will run a number of schools. (IROI1/77)

⁷ 'At the beginning of the inspection we are asking boards of management for their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school so that we get some sense of the capability of the school to conduct self-evaluation' (DES 2010, p.20).

4.3 Process

4.3.1 Introduction

This section presents the process phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes the present IE standards used in schools. The second subsection investigates participant's opinions of whether or not schools should develop their own IE methods, procedures, tools and frameworks or if they should be externally provided. The final subsection ascertains participants' perspectives on the extent to which present IE and EE processes are understood. As with previous sections, questionnaire responses are initially described. However, in order to elucidate further the questionnaire responses, an analysis of qualitative interviews are discussed.

4.3.2 Standards

4.3.2.1 Does your school have a self-evaluation policy?

As can be seen from Table 4.3.1, only 7.5% of schools in the ROI have a SE Policy, whereas in the NI, this is considerably higher (53%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	27	335
	%	7.5%	92.5%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	53	47
	%	53.0%	47.0%

Table 4.3.1: Does your school have a self-evaluation policy (by region)?

An analysis by school type (Table 4.3.2) also reveals similar data.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Community comprehensive</i>	Count	6	42
	%	12.5%	87.5%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	12	111
	%	9.8%	90.2%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	9	183
	%	4.7%	95.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	20	12
	%	62.5%	37.5%
<i>Non-grammar</i>	Count	33	34
	%	49.3%	50.7%

Table 4.3.2: Does your school have self-evaluation policy (by school type)?

4.3.2.2 Does your school have a set of procedures for conducting self-evaluations?

Table 4.3.3 shows that almost 27% of schools in the ROI have a set of procedures for carrying out IE, but in NI, this value is considerably higher (81.8%).

Region		Yes	No
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	97	266
	%	26.7%	73.3%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	81	18
	%	81.8%	18.2%

Table 4.3.3: Does your school have a set of procedures for carrying out self-evaluations (by region)?

An analysis by school type also reveals similar data (Table 4.3.3).

School Type		Yes	No
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	12	36
	%	25.0%	75.0%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	37	86
	%	30.1%	69.9%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	49	144
	%	25.4%	74.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	25	7
	%	78.1%	21.9%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	55	11
	%	83.3%	16.7%

Table 4.3.4: Does your school have a set of procedures for carrying out self-evaluations (by school type)?

4.3.2.3 External evaluations should be based on the school's internal evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of principals in each region towards whether EE should be based on IE. Adding confidence to the value placed on IE by schools, only 13% of principals in the ROI and 5% of principals in NI either disagree or disagree strongly with this statement (Table 4.3.5).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	5	42	67	220	29
	%	1.4%	11.6%	18.5%	60.6%	8.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	5	10	67	17
	%	0.0%	5.1%	10.1%	67.7%	17.2%

$U(1) = 14069.500$, $Z = -3.814$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.3.5: External evaluation should be based on a school's internal evaluation (by region)

An analysis by school type also reveals similar data (Table 4.3.6).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	1	6	2	34	5
	%	2.1%	12.5%	4.2%	70.8%	10.4%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	1	10	32	72	8
	%	0.8%	8.1%	26.0%	58.5%	6.5%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	3	26	33	115	16
	%	1.6%	13.5%	17.1%	59.6%	8.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	2	2	23	5
	%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	71.9%	15.6%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	3	8	43	12
	%	0.0%	4.5%	12.1%	65.2%	18.2%

$P = 0.002$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 17.177$

Table 4.3.6: External evaluation should be based on a school's internal Evaluation (by school type)

4.3.2.4 External evaluation should be based on the school's development plan

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a slightly significant difference between the attitudes of principals in each region concerning whether EE should be based on a school's development plan. Of the ROI principals, almost 61% either agree or agree strongly with this statement, whereas in NI, this value is higher (72%), as shown in Table 4.2.7.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	3	90	50	178	42
	%	0.8%	24.8%	13.8%	49.0%	11.6%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	1	13	14	54	17
	%	1.0%	13.1%	14.1%	54.5%	17.2%

$U(1) = 15317.500$, $Z = -2.431$, $p = 0.015$

Table 4.3.7: External evaluation should be based on the school's development plan (by region)

An analysis by school type also reveals similar data (Table 4.3.8).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	1 2.1%	10 20.8%	6 12.5%	27 56.3%	4 8.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	26 21.1%	22 17.9%	58 47.2%	17 13.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	2 1.0%	55 28.5%	22 11.4%	93 48.2%	21 10.9%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	5 15.6%	4 12.5%	18 56.3%	5 15.6%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	1 1.5%	7 10.6%	10 15.2%	36 54.5%	12 18.2%

$P = 0.094$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 7.935$

Table 4.3.8: External evaluation should be based on the school's development plan (by school type).

4.3.2.5 To ensure that internal evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures to carry out internal evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test (Table 4.2.15) revealed that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of principals in each region regarding whether IE should be conducted using the same procedures and methods across schools. Of the interviewees, almost 78% of ROI principals either agree or agree strongly with this statement whereas as in NI, this value is lower (48%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count %	5 1.4%	51 14.2%	24 6.7%	221 61.4%	59 16.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count %	2 2.0%	36 36.0%	14 14.0%	43 43.0%	5 5.0%

$U(1) = 11899.000$, $Z = -5.797$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.3.9: To ensure that internal evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures to carry out internal evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a significant difference by school type (Table 4.3.10).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	0 .0%	5 10.4%	5 10.4%	27 56.3%	11 22.9%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	2 1.7%	23 19.0%	7 5.8%	75 62.0%	14 11.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	3 1.6%	23 12.0%	12 6.3%	120 62.5%	34 17.7%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	1 3.1%	16 50.0%	4 12.5%	10 31.3%	1 3.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	1 1.5%	20 29.9%	10 14.9%	32 47.8%	4 6.0%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 42.048$

Table 4.3.10: To ensure that internal evaluation is of acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out internal evaluation (by school type)

4.3.2.6 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.3.1 to 4.3.10 illustrate that there is a significant difference in principal attitudes towards schools using the same methods and procedures for carrying out internal evaluation. However, there appears to be a similar attitude between the majority of principals in both the ROI and NI concerning whether EEs should be based on a combination of a school's evaluation and development plan (Tables 4.3.5 to 4.3.8). What is somewhat significantly different, however, is the fact that only 7.5% of schools in the ROI have a SE policy vs. 53.0% in NI. Moreover, only 26.7% of schools in the ROI have a set of procedures for conducting IEs vs. 81.8% in NI (Tables 4.3.1 to 4.3.4).

In the case of the ROI, principals' reasoning behind why schools do not have an IE policy and subsequent evaluation procedures varied from the quality of leadership to the belief that the development of IE policies and procedures detracts from the core purpose of schooling, which is that of teaching and learning.

School is for teaching, teaching and learning. Yes, there should be some form of evaluation, but as I said earlier, sometimes when there's an inspection, it's all about the inspection and forms and impressing someone rather than go in and work with your teacher, and we don't have the time for it. (PROI15/349–351)

Further to the point made by PROI15, PROI18 believes that the need for explicit IE policies or procedures is actually dependent on the quality of leadership in the school, and, where good leadership exists, there is less of a need for explicit IE policies and

procedures. PROI18 states, 'I think again it depends on where your school is at, where your leadership of the school is at' (PROI18/242). PROI15's view that evaluation is centred too much on form filling as opposed to improving the quality of teaching combined with PROI18's apprehension towards having IE policies in place, resonates with Ball et al.

Above all, policy is only ever part of what teachers do. There is more to teaching and school life than policy. There are 'discretionary spaces'(Fenwick and Edwards 2010: 126) in and beyond policy, corners of the school where policy does not reach, bits of practice that are made up of teachers' good ideas or chance or crisis-but this space for action is also produced or delimited by policy. (Ball, Maguire and Braun 2012, p.6)

In the case of NI, although schools use a set of IE standards and procedures in the form of *Together Towards Improvement*, PNI10 is also apprehensive about having in place a documented set of IE policies and procedures. This is based on the view that if documented IE policies and procedures were not adhered to, there would be a fear of external reprimand. 'I mean I don't know. We never had a policy. The thing I never liked, I never liked having too many policies because if you have a policy that's always something for someone to hit you over the head with. "*It says in your policy here*", you know, so I never had a policy' (PNI10/389).

However, PROI22 believes that, although schools might not presently have IE policies and procedures, having a set of IE policies and procedures in place would nonetheless allow for operational improvement in the school.

I think that's a very good idea, and I mean, we are all humans, and I you know, I myself did a WSE-MLL a year ago, and I'm working on it, you know yourself, meeting deadlines it's human nature if you knew. I knew I've a deadline to meet of, you know, last May, I would probably have prioritised the implementation of the recommendations. (PROI22/112)

Further to the point made by PROI22, IROI2 also believes that schools should have a set of systematic IE policies and procedures. However, IROI2 points out that having a set of IE policies and procedures should not only be about complying with external demands but rather, 'it's a living document and it's not just to keep external evaluators happy, so it's organic to the school' (IROI2/96). Although IRO1 also believes that

schools should have a set of IE policies and procedures, ‘I would say to you yes, the aspiration is that all schools should have it, and it’s very important that all schools will eventually have an internal system of evaluation’ (IROI/118). However, IROI1 cautions about schools developing their own IE policies and procedures until there is confidence in the system that school personnel have the capacity to develop policies and procedures that are grounded in both the validity and reliability of the evaluation taking place. IROI1 states that ‘there are a vast number of schools who need support in order to set them in train to ensure that they will be rigorous in relation to Internal Evaluation’ (IROI/118). Furthermore, while recognising the importance of schools having IE policies and procedures in place and recognising the context of a system as is it practically exists, IROI1 believes that allowing schools that do not have the capacity to develop their own evaluation policies and procedures could be detrimental to various aspects of school life for a variety of reasons.

I think it would be, at this stage, it could actually be detrimental to let schools loose who haven’t got the capacity to do what they want to do correctly, and that’s not the fault on the part of schools. I think a lot of schools have seen the benefit gained from whole school evaluation, External Evaluation, and I think the important thing, and I think I suppose it is part of what the system has to ensure, is that schools would have the capacity to do it properly when they’re doing it. Otherwise, they may feel that they are engaged in rigorous self-evaluation, and they may be seeing either things in a better light than they are or in a worse light in their own schools, and they can either be damaging the morale of the staff or damaging the life chances of these students. So, I think it is very important that the system ensures that the support is provided to the schools, but yes I do. (IROI/118)

In many ways, IROI1’s assertion about the importance of schools having the capacity and the skill set required to carry out ‘rigorous’ evaluation highlights the dilemma facing most regions where IE systems are affixed to already existing EE systems. Macbeath’s use of Perkins (2003) metaphor, ‘taming the wild’ and ‘wilding the tame’ illustrates this challenge.

One the one hand, although there is a need for schools to demonstrate elements of externally created evaluation best practices where ‘the wild is tamed by clear targets, predetermined outcomes and focusing of teachers’ attention on templates of good practice’ (MacBeath 2012, p.131). On the other hand however,

Wilding of the tame’ suggests recognition of domestication and a conscious attempt to loosen the ties that bind teachers to mandated practice. This is explicitly stated in the process of learning to jump through the hoops before ‘going wild’. (MacBeath 2012, p.131)

However, when referring to schools being explicitly driven by external mandates, MacBeath (2008b) cautions that ‘schools that play safe, driven by external mandates set tight parameters around what can be said and what can be heard. Such schools are antithetical to the notion of a learning organization which, by definition, is always challenging its own premises and ways of being (p.145).

In NI, principals also believe that schools should have clearly defined IE policies and procedures that should be linked directly to the school’s plan. PNI12 states, ‘I think so, absolutely. To me, the whole thing of self-evaluation has to be in the school development plan. It has to be there clearly as a priority, and there has to be clear documentation showing how it has actually taken place’ (PNI12/416–418).

However, PNI8 asserts that although schools might have a documented set of IE policies and procedures; this does not ensure that they are following these policies and procedures in practice. According to PNI8, ‘Well, I think if you have an Internal Evaluation policy document that doesn’t necessarily mean that you do it in practice... but I think in terms of a set of procedures that has to become part and parcel of your culture and the way that your staff think’ (PNI8/132–134).

INI1 states that ‘you need a steering wheel. You need a highway code’ (INI1/263). INI1 also believes that where IE policies and procedures are solely developed for the purpose of external compliance, although external compliance may be achieved, quite often however, where IE policies and procedures are developed for external compliance alone, the net product can often be that of a low quality school plan.

The issue then for us is that you can have a school development plan that conforms to the departments circular. In other words, there’s a checklist in the annex that has to contain the following things, and you can go down. You tick it; tick each one against the school development plan. A school’s action plan may appear to conform and comply clearly to the requirements of the circular and still be a very poor school development plan because what we need to investigate when we’re in the school is the process of forming the school development plan. (INI1/95)

INI3 also believes that all schools should have an IE policy, stating that ‘the answer to that is yes, but again, I come back to say that should be written on one-page’ (INI3/37). However, INI1 asserts that schools need to not only view IEs as a form of external compliance. INI3 states that for IE to be fully embedded into the cultural fabric of the school, schools need to take ownership of IE, as opposed to seeing it as solely fulfilling an externally devised compulsory mandate.

The whole point is the processes; the whole point is what's done. I mean back to what I've said, the tool is the important thing, not the policy. Now you're into prescription and non-prescription. The thing about quality assurance is, people have to own it. If they don't, it's not going to work. You can have a view of quality assurance, I could have a view, the inspectorate could have a view, but the important people are the people that are operating it. So, if you're going to have a documented internal, if you're going to say that strategically all schools should have a documented Internal Evaluation policy and they should, but you have to think very carefully about how you make sure it doesn't become; the schools don't say, oh it's ETI's or it's the departments or whatever. (INI1/37)

In this regard, and realising the terms of co-existence between IE and EE, both INI1 and INI3 are of the view that documented school IE policies and procedures should not be based solely on external compliance; rather, schools should have a set of IE policies and procedures that is also centred on the transformational aspect of education within the school. Therefore, if IE policies and procedures are to improve the quality of education provided, the IE activities described by PNI8, INI1 and INI3 should also be similar to Sedikides and Strubes' (1997) metaphor for IE, rather than being solely focussed on devised mandates for external compliance. As Sedikides and Strubes (1997) state, ‘Self-evaluation: To thine own self be good, to thine own self be sure, to thine own self be true, and to thine own self be better’.

Further to the point made by principals and inspectors that schools should have systematic IE policies and procedures, when they were asked whether or not it should be a legislative requirement for schools to conduct IE's, responses varied considerably.

It shouldn't have to be a law, and it shouldn't be someone coming in here to beat us with a stick, to say you have to because that gets people's back up. There should be some inspectorate should be more, and I know this was the aim, to be supportive and advisory and not feel, but people still feel someone is coming in to tell me whether I can teach or not. And if someone makes a comment about my teaching what right have they, they don't know what it's like here day in day out. (PROI15/430)

On the other hand, a number of principals favoured legislative IE requirements, particularly where aspects relating to IR issues are concerned.

Yeah, I think it does because once the unions and different groups have flexibility of not doing something, and like from a legislative point of view, you either put it into the Education Act as an appendix or an addendum or else you actually go then and you go to the department, then through a circular. (PROI17/400)

Moreover, PROI16 also believes that having IE as a legislative requirement in schools would also alleviate the resistance to IE among teachers. 'I think it should be, absolutely... I think if you don't, you add nothing. I mean if you don't do a self-evaluation, you know, and there is unbelievable resistance to it, you know' (PROI16/110–112). From an external perspective, there would be perceived benefits to having IEs as a part of a legislative framework given, in the case of the ROI, the success of other initiatives, such as school development planning.

School development planning, I think, would not have been embedded as quickly, and I'm not saying it was very quick, as it was if it didn't have a very strong legislative framework. Certainly, the inspectorate as a body has become a more powerful body, in my view, since the Education Act in 1998 because we are on a legislative footing, particularly, I would say, at post-primary level. Now, that is coupled with other things like moving the state examinations away from the inspectors. So, a legislative framework might not be a bad thing. (IROI1/190)

In the ROI, it would be reasonable to suggest that the perceived benefits of having IE legislation would include standardising the legitimate power structures that principals and inspectors have towards ensuring that IE occurs in schools and in many ways supports the assertion that, 'When it has not been possible to state evaluation standards in advance, evaluation results may get "thrown in a political arena", where evaluators may not be able to do more than provide some sort of structure or set out "rules of the game" (Scheerens, Glas and Thomas 2007, ch.2.3.1, para.5).

In the case of NI, INI2 believes that because IE and school development planning are inextricably linked, by association, IE is already a legislative requirement.

Well you see, in our country, here, school development planning is legislative. So, that's the self-evaluation. It's not explicitly talked about. Does it need to be explicitly talked about and mentioned? I'm not sure because again it's back to this whole idea if you're doing it and you're making a difference and you're bringing about improvement but you don't actually talk about Internal Evaluation so what? You know, you're still doing it. Unfortunately then, for some schools, if it's not legislation, it doesn't happen. (INI2/367-375)

However, INI2 also believes that for IE to be explicitly driven by legislation, the necessary support services would need to be available to schools, which is quite possibly why IE is not explicitly mentioned in legislation. INI2 states that 'it's a very difficult one because to make it legislatively driven, then you have to make sure that you have a support service that can help the school, and we don't have it really at the minute. We just don't have the bodies' (INI2/377).

Although INI3 believes that all schools should carry out IE, the interviewee states,

I'm not convinced about this. I mean, what's your view on this. I think you can legislate for lots of things. I keep coming back to this. Self-evaluation has to be owned by people. Now don't get me wrong, you need to reach a situation where all schools are carrying out their own self-evaluation. I'm quite clear on that, okay? It's how you get there. (INI3/85)

INI3 is also of the view that the driving force for IE from both an internal and external perspective should not be entirely centred on legitimate power structures; rather, IE should be centred on the influential constructs of referent, informational, and expert power.

If you combine it with an inspection system where an essential part of it is where we are looking at the school self-evaluation system. That in itself is a driving force. I'm not saying that should be the reason for schools doing self-evaluation, but that's quite a powerful combination. But the trick for the inspectorate is to not make it a coercive model. It's to actually, it's about persuasion. Don't get me wrong, the expectation is that every school should be carrying out their own self-evaluation. (INI3/87)

Although there appears to be consternation and debate as to whether or not IE should be legislatively driven, if IE is an overtly externally driven requirement, the questions one then asks are:

- (1) Should all EE's be centred on an analysis of the school's development plan and IE policies and procedures given the external mandate for IE?
- (2) Should all schools follow the same QA methods and procedures to bring about a standardisation of perceived concepts of quality in schools?
- (3) Given the variety of school contexts, should all schools develop or adapt evaluation policies and procedures as they fit within the context of their schools?

Almost all of the ROI principals and inspectors are of the view that regardless of the varied views of EE, the starting point for EE has to begin with the school plan.

It would be incumbent on the inspector to take full cognisance of the internal review on planning, and that's one of the things the External Evaluation does, it focuses the school's mind both in the preparation for the inspection and the carry out of improving their review and planning mechanism. (IROI2/57)

However, prior to the introduction of WSE-MLL, where WSE was for the most part centred on analysis of the school plan as opposed to an analysis of IE processes, IRO1 questions whether the documents contained within the school plan actually brought about school improvement.

The school development plan at the moment forms a significant part of it [WSE] and when and if... because some schools do. A very small number of schools do have very good self-evaluation systems in place, and they would show that in general to the inspection team, and they are used very much not only in terms of reporting but there are good documents in place. But to what extent are these documents influencing what's actually happening in the classrooms? (IROI1/114)

In contrast to the ROI, the importance placed on evaluating the school plan in NI is also a very significant part of the inspection process.

The school development plan is a starting point for every inspection, and the school self-evaluation within that and the action plans in a coordination of those action plans, interviewing of the individuals in the school who have a management responsibility for each action plan. Those are all significant elements of an inspection. You couldn't have an inspection without that. It's a central plank, one of the central planks along with data analysis. (INI1/95)

Further to the point made by INI1 that the school plan is the starting point for inspection, inspectors also believe that IE and school development planning should exist as one single entity, and they should not be seen as separate self-contained units.

I have the analogy. You see, people always talk about the school development plan. The school development plan is a way. Maybe you haven't heard this expression about how the school principal keeps the bus on the road. There's so many things happening just to make sure that you don't go off, but self-evaluation is how you keep the bus on the road but you've evidence for it. So if you ask for my vision, that's it, self-evaluation leading to improvement. There's people producing evidence and there's the inspectorate quality assuring it, but it has to be combined with formal inspection. There's often a debate, you know, okay, can we rely on quality assurance alone? I'm not sure. I think that you need inspection as well. You need the two things combined, but you need the right combination. (INI3/145)

In addition to the view that a school's development plan and IE processes should form the starting point of all inspections; embracing the contextual terms of co-existence for IE and EE to mutually and beneficially co-exist, INI2 is of the view that in order for inspectors to fully understand and in consequence support the schools improvement agenda, the schools' IEs and improvement plan, from both an accountability and improvement perspective, should form the initial basis for all EE activities. According to INI2, 'if we subscribe to the theory... that you can only take a school from where it is, you can't take it from where you think it is or where it thinks it is but actually where it is, then that has to form the basis of everything' (INI2/166–168). In this regard, INI2 is of the view that IE should form the basis for all planning activities and in consequence cannot be separated from the development of the school plan. 'How can you separate a school development plan from internal evaluation? You know, schools used to say 'oh we don't do self-evaluation', but I'd say are you not creating a school development plan?' (INI2/178–180). The view by INI2 that there was less of a focus on IE by schools in the early stages of school development planning is also affirmed by INI1 in terms of school development planning in a minority of schools in NI in the early 90s.

They were highly descriptive, so they would at length describe what had been done, but they did not evaluate the effort, the outcome of the, the effectiveness, the outcome in terms of pupils learning. And the language was descriptive, and the language and the actions described were what I would call enabling actions. So, setting up a committee, writing a paper, spending money on white boards, these were all, you know, setting up a homework club. These are all enabling actions. The question is, what effect did they have? And evaluation reports often described the enabling actions. We formed a committee, we had a meeting, we rewrote the specifications of the subject, we wrote new tests, we set up a homework club, we sent a questionnaire to parents, we bought interactive white boards...and the question you're left with is, so what? (INI1/252)

By way of contrast, from an analysis of principal interviews in the ROI, in the early stages of planning and evaluation, there appeared to be an almost universal assumption that school development plans should consist of lengthy artefacts detailing initiatives that were put in place to bring about school improvement. The quality order of the day appeared to rotate around the belief that the greater the size of the document, the greater quality of the plan, which would result in a higher quality final planning report. However, according to IROI3,

You just want to see that the stuff in the class is good and then know that right they are being taught everything they need to be taught and the way they are doing it is grand. That's all you want. (IROI3/228)

It is no wonder therefore that the DESROI (2012) has taken on far greater responsibilities for the official implementation and introduction of SE in ROI schools, with various inspectorate led supports being offered to schools, such as inspectorate advisory visits and 'a dedicated website, www.schoolself-evaluation.ie [which] has been developed to support the implementation of school self-evaluation' (DESROI 2012).

Finally, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, while principals believe that there should be a minimum quality threshold for evaluation and planning, the majority of principals in both the ROI and NI are also of the view that, when frameworks of quality indicators are provided externally, they should also be adaptable to the context and culture of the school. Furthermore, the methodology and process of evaluation should be grounded in what the evaluator is trying to ascertain as opposed to an isomorphic process of evaluation.

Both the ROI and NI principals believe that schools should decide what methods and procedures to use for IEs. PROI21 states that the method of application should be dependent on what issues are being evaluated. 'It depends on what the issues are in your school' (PROI21/328–332). This perspective supports PROI1's assertion that the same method of application applied to all populations and cultures is not viable and could actually be invalid.

So, when you are evaluating, you really need to know what your clientele, excuse the expression, is and evaluate for those. It's like the IQ test they used to do years ago. Do you remember Muhammad Ali? And he did very badly in the IQ test, and the thing was the IQ test was

done for White Americans and given to a Black American, and of course it didn't match at all as it wasn't measuring like-for-like. So there is another thing with the evaluation. You know, you have to know what to evaluate, who you are evaluating with, and the people you are evaluating that you cannot simply have an evaluation like a whole school evaluation without taking into account the different people involved. (PROI1/2)

PROI1 believes that the problem with evaluation systems is that they place far too much emphasis on a one-size-fits-all model of evaluation, which is then applied to all populations and cultures. PROI1 asks, 'can we have a one-size-fits-all situation when we do anything? And maybe when we are doing evaluations, are we trying too much to do that' (PROI1/4)? In many ways, the above statement supports the growing evidence, which suggest that strategies to understand and value the culture of the participants should also form an integral part of all evaluation activities. Hood et al. (2005) state that 'if evaluators become more responsive to cultural context and adopt strategies that are congruent with cultural understandings, the face of evaluation can be profoundly changed for the better' (Hood et al. 2005, p.1).

IRO2 states that the method of application should be decided by the school, as schools are best placed to understand the context in which they operate. 'They know their team better than any external evaluator, so they should be good judges of how best to use their team' (IROI2/183). Although a number principals and inspectors believe that the school should decide what evaluation methods to use, they also believe that the consistency of standards required to conduct evaluations is also necessary.

PROI18 states that schools should be allowed to use different methods. However, there should also be a minimum evaluation standard regardless of the methodology used in the evaluation. 'You know and I think that yes, acceptable standard yes, and should we use all the same, I think, only for an acceptable standard that they should be the same, and after that, the schools are able to raise the bar' (PROI18/350). INI1 also believes that although schools should choose their own evaluation methods, there are also key principles, in terms of the rigour of application, that need to be adhered to.

No. I don't think you can use the same methods, but there are certain key, there must be certain key principles about consultation, communication, a common approach within the school to setting targets and to evaluating, and the quality of, improving the quality of evaluation. (INI1/252)

IROI1 also believes that the evaluation procedures and methods are not the main issues relating to standards, but rather, the issue concerns a homogenous set of quality frameworks and quality indicators that should be used by all schools.

My answer to that is no. The same methods, the same procedures, no, but set of standards, yes, benchmarks yes, criteria, yes...and frameworks. I would be very worried if we were prescribing that there is only one best way to...because again, we're back to context. We're also back to skills within schools and we're back to...whether there are people on particular staffs who could excel in something like this, and why should we be putting a method on somebody when they're well able to put a method on themselves. However, I think they need to be supported so that the methods are rigorous. And I think that's the biggest thing. The notion of gathering evidence that is actually measuring what it is you want to measure and that, therefore, you are ending up with a valid evaluation of where your own school is at is very, very important. So, the method has to ensure that that happens, but it doesn't have to be necessarily the same method for everybody. (IROI1/182–184)

Recognising, the variable capacity of schools in the ROI to carry out IE, IROI1 also believes that schools could be provided with a list of methods to choose from, such as those provided by the SDPI in the early stages of planning.

So, I think that's fine, and I think we can provide them with a menu, if we need...say these are ways that you could do it. And I think in fairness to SDPI in particular, the post-primary and even more so in the primary, they would have worked very much on that model of providing this support, but enabling schools to do it their own way, where at primary level, perhaps initially, there was a more focused approach in relation to looking at... I suppose the Scott analysis and then moving on from there to priorities, making sure that your priorities were in keeping with your mission statement. So, it wasn't a generic way, but it was a more focused way. (IROI1/184)

In addition, in terms of the rigor of externally acceptable frameworks, procedures, and standards, a number of principals believe that if standards are too tightly bound to a one-size-fits-all policy, the effect could overwhelm the available skillset in the school. PNI9 states that 'contextually, it depends on where the school is at at any one given time. I think it's very unfair to impose a rigid system on a school that's maybe not ready for it, or maybe there's a personnel change, or maybe it's not a strong profile, or the intake, or new leadership' (PNI9/227). Moreover, IROI2 believes that too rigid a system could have a debilitating effect on creativity within the school.

And the other thing is, which is a problem with too rigid an external, is to take risks and experiment, try things to encourage innovation, and what I said before, to keep motivation and morale high. There's not much point in a planning self-review that drags everybody into a frustration and dizziness and adds too many extras, you know. (IROI2/195)

Furthermore, while interviewees believe that due consideration should be given to the quality of IE processes, INI2 recommends that evaluation should not only be a process-driven exercise. By way of explanation, INI2 believes that if evaluation is wholly centred on analysing QA processes, it mainly confirms a school's strengths and weaknesses, rather than looking for viable solutions for school improvement.

You see, the question we used to ask ourselves away in those quality assurance days was, did that whole process help a problem or did they just underpin strength. Do you know what I mean? And that was interesting. I mean, that's interesting as well when you look at self-evaluation. If it's not effective, well then you can say it hasn't helped the problem. All it's done is confirm the identity of the problem, or something like that, and then that's not right. That's not enough. (INI2/496–498)

Furthermore, INI2 also believes that a problem with education, and by association evaluation, is that there is a wrongly held assumption in the field of educational evaluation that there can only be one process-driven solution to one problem.

You see, sometimes part of our problem in education is we think that there's only one solution for every problem. Do you know what I mean? And I think we've got to realise that there are different solutions because again, you know I'll go back to this bit where everybody is not starting off at the same point, and I would like—only I'm maybe at the wrong end of my career now, I think there is...if we were to revisit what we did with that quality assurance of the Internal Evaluation we'd get it right this time. We'd make sure that it wasn't something that was driven by a process or a great big report, and I think there's a place for that. (INI2/810–816)

Finally, if given the belief that there is a minimum external standard required for IE, the question is, should schools develop their own research instruments to conduct various evaluation activities, or alternately, given the varying quality and capacity of schools to develop their own research instruments, should schools be provided with a generic set of tools for conducting IEs in order to attain a minimum standard?

In the ROI, IROI3 believes that schools should develop their own IE tools; however, IROI3 also feels that schools are not yet at this stage of the evaluation continuum yet.

And they need help. We cannot take them out of the school to teach them how to do it, and have them become specialists in that area is just not possible, so we need to be giving them scope. However, there needs to be scope within what they are given to allow them to change. (IROI3/596)

IROI1 states that although schools should be provided with a framework of IE standards, rather than IE tools being provided nationally, schools could be taught where the IE tools are available.

Yes. You need to have a framework. You need to have criteria that is very clearly agreed and written, and then you need to have tools available that schools can adapt to their own needs. Those tools do not necessarily have to be nationally provided, and they might even be provided on a commercial basis. (IROI1/168)

On the other hand, INI2 was reticent to talk about a framework of tools, stating, 'I don't like to talk about a framework of tools because I think that tethers the whole thing too much, but then you have to remember, you know, they're not all starting at the same point and for those who need a bit of help give it to them' (INI2/313). INI2, like IROI3, believes that in terms of professional capacity, schools were at different stages of the evaluation continuum; therefore, when schools needed evaluation tools, they should, as a point of logic, be provided with them.

And that's what I mean when I started off the conversation today where it became this add-on process and this toolkit to be followed, producing a document. That's not what it's about, you know, getting back to it being totally embedded in the way of working with the school. So, I'm reluctant to talk about frameworks or toolkits, but if somebody needs them, of course. But it's like learning, it's differentiation, isn't it? (INI2/321–327)

Although there were mixed opinions among principals and inspectors as to whether or not schools should be provided with the required tools to conduct evaluations at a national level, one commonality among the principals and inspectors who were interviewed in NI and the ROI was that when tools and resources, such as methods and procedures, are externally provided, they should have the flexibility of being somewhat adaptable within the context of the school environment.

According to PROI7, ‘it depends on the type of school that you are and the ethos of the school and all of those things, but you could certainly do things there that are appropriate for your own school’ (PROI7/29). INI1, similar to IROI1, feels that a balance between acceptable standards and the context of the school are necessary.

I think there are plenty of tools, and I think it’s perfectly acceptable that schools should use their own instruments for an Internal Evaluation. We provide *Together Towards Improvement*, which is a framework of quality indicators and questions and descriptors, and many schools wish to use it, but my view would be, and I think that would be the inspector’s views, it’s not compulsory to use it...What we expect is that schools are engaging in self-evaluation, and if they have developed other tools, then we’re very interested to know what those tools are. We want to know how effective they are in giving insight. We’ll tell other schools about them...unashamedly...but we would always say to that, with *Together Towards Improvement*, if you want to add other criteria and questions to it, to reflect the reality of your school because every school is different, then you should do that, if you want to modify it, as long as you’re not taking away from it. (INI1/229–231)

Moreover, regardless of the purpose and function of the IE tools, PNI8 states that training should also be provided when externally devised tools and frameworks are provided to schools.

So, I think it’s more important that the tools come with a skills training approach...You know, just handing out pieces of paper or circulating documents that have to be filled in a particular way doesn’t mean that people understand why they’re doing it like that. (PNI8/174–176)

4.3.3 Accessibility

4.3.3.1 The process of internal evaluation is easy to understand

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference between the ROI and NI with regard to the understandability of the IE process. More than 36% of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that the process of IE is easy to understand.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	15	151	65	112	19
	%	4.1%	41.7%	18.0%	30.9%	5.2%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	2	24	15	51	8
	%	2.0%	24.0%	15.0%	51.0%	8.0%

$U(1) = 16917.000$, $Z = -1.058$, $p = 0.290$

Table 4.3.11: The process of internal evaluation is easy to understand (by region)

Further analysis using a Kruskal-Wallis test reveals similar results (see Table 4.3.12).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	12	16	17	3
	%	0.0%	25.0%	33.3%	35.4%	6.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	6	53	15	40	9
	%	4.9%	43.1%	12.2%	32.5%	7.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	9	87	34	55	7
	%	4.7%	45.3%	17.7%	28.6%	3.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	7	7	17	1
	%	0.0%	21.9%	21.9%	53.1%	3.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	16	8	34	7
	%	3.0%	23.9%	11.9%	50.7%	10.4%

$P = 0.008$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 13.922$

Table 4.3.12: The process of internal evaluation is easy to understand (by school type)

4.3.3.2 The process of external evaluation is easy to understand

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference by region towards this statement. Of those surveyed, 72% of principals in the ROI and 66.6% of principals in NI agree or agree strongly with this statement (Table 4.3.13).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	6	54	42	239	22
	%	1.7%	14.9%	11.6%	65.8%	6.1%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	2	10	21	64	2
	%	2.0%	10.1%	21.2%	64.6%	2.0%

$U(1) = 13578.500$, $Z = -4.041$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.3.13: The process of external evaluation is easy to understand (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference by school type (Table 4.3.14).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	2	1	41	4
	%	0.0%	4.2%	2.1%	85.4%	8.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	19	16	81	5
	%	1.6%	15.4%	13.0%	65.9%	4.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	4	33	25	118	13
	%	2.1%	17.1%	13.0%	61.1%	6.7%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	4	9	19	0
	%	0.0%	12.5%	28.1%	59.4%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	6	12	44	2
	%	3.0%	9.1%	18.2%	66.7%	3.0%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 23.597$

Table 4.3.14: The process of external evaluation is easy to understand (by school type)

4.3.3.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.3.11 to 4.3.14 shows that, although a significant number of principals in both the ROI and NI are of the view that the process of IE is not easy to understand, this appears not to be the case in terms of understanding EE processes. However, a number of principals in the ROI feel that the understandability of the evaluation process is dependent upon the availability of the relevant instruments needed to conduct IEs.

In NI, however, there appears to be a general view among principals that the instruments needed to conduct IEs are already available, resulting in a more accessible process of evaluation for school personnel. One principal states that ‘self-evaluation gets all of these technical terms, but essentially; it’s a very simple process’ (PNI4/60). Another principal from NI states,

We have the results for every department, not only how they did against internal departments but also against equal schools across Northern Ireland. We would have data on individual teachers within that department. If one teacher was getting substantially less grades than everybody else you have all of that data at the click of a button in every school in Northern Ireland. I have never yet met a teacher who doesn't look at data like that. (PNI3/36)

4.4 Output

4.4.1 Introduction

This section presents findings relating to the output phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes participant reactions to recommendations of EE and is preceded by participant perceptions relating to follow-up inspections conducted by the inspectorate. The second subsection examines perceptions towards the transparent aspect of evaluation by exploring participants' reactions to the public availability of IE and EE reports. The final interlinked subsection examines the participative element of evaluation by exploring participant perceptions of the formal and informal nature of EE along the accountability and improvement continuum. Within each subsection, questionnaire responses are initially described. However, to explore the aggregated questionnaire responses further, results from an analysis of qualitative interviews are discussed.

4.4.2 Recommendations

4.4.2.1 Were the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources?

Table 4.4.1 shows that 76% of principals in the ROI and 97% of principals in NI believe that the recommendations outlined in the EE report were reasonable based on the present availability of school resources.

Region		Yes	No
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	145	46
	%	76%	24%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	87	3
	%	97.0%	3.0%

Table 4.4.1: Were the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources (by region)?

Analysis by school type also reveals that the majority of principals from all school types feel that the recommendation outlined in their EE report were reasonable based on the availability of school resources (Table 4.4.2).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	24	5
	%	82.8%	17.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	39	18
	%	68.4%	31.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	82	23
	%	78.1%	21.9%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	28	1
	%	96.5%	3.5%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	59	2
	%	96.7%	3.3%

Table 4.4.2: Were the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources (by region)?

4.4.2.2 Has the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at in relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report?

Tables 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 show that the inspectorate has been in contact with approximately 6% of schools in the ROI to see what stage they are at in relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the schools EE report; in NI, this value is higher (64%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	12	180
	%	6.2%	93.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	57	32
	%	64.0%	36.0%

Table 4.4.3: Have the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at in relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report (by region)?

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	1	28
	%	3.4%	96.6%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	1	56
	%	1.8%	98.2%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	10	96
	%	9.4%	90.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	18	11
	%	62.1%	37.9%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	39	21
	%	65.0%	35.0%

Table 4.4.4: Have the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at in relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the external evaluation report (by school type)?

4.4.2.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.2 show that principals in the ROI and NI believe that based on the availability of resources, the recommendations outlined in the EE reports were reasonable. PNI3 also states that EE recommendations allow for the standardisation of teaching practices in the school. According to PNI3, ‘one of the things that all teachers have been encouraged to do is state their learning intentions at the beginning of the class, write it up on the board, and keep on referring to it now throughout the lesson’ (PNI3/50). Furthermore, PNI6 feels that if there are certain elements of practice that require attention, having an EE and subsequent recommendations in place ensures that expected quality standards are followed.

And let's be honest, if it is negative, then somebody needs to say it. If there's something wrong with it and if it's not getting said by the senior people or the governors of that institution, then those children have a right to a high-quality education, and therefore, somebody needs to be able to say it. (PNI6/43)

In the ROI, principals also found that the recommendations outlined in the WSE report have brought about positive change in the school.

The recommendations were actually very sensible, and in my opinion, our school is a better school because of the Whole School Evaluation. We had things that were, well, okay, but we improved them. And if you've improved, that's for the good of the parents, the students and the teachers. (PROI2/16)

Although principals in both the ROI and NI feel that the recommendations outlined in the inspectorate report allowed for positive change to occur in the school, principals in the ROI were of the view that some of the recommendations tend more towards systemwide educational priorities as opposed to contextually focused recommendations for improvement. By way of explanation, although principals in the ROI are of the belief that the recommendations were achievable and consequently resulted in school improvement, PROI14 is of the view that inspectorate recommendations were seasonal and based on an externally driven pre-set agenda.

The problem is they are written to a formula. This is the problem with templates. They have a formula and they insert stuff in it. Now I can tell you without fear of contradiction, if you look at every [School type] school and they will say that school management needs to pay attention to the post of responsibility structure. (PROI14/104)

In addition, PROI12 feels that where few faults were found, the inspectorate focussed in on minor details to comply with template requirements of the DESROI. and also for schools to understand that excellent is never excellent enough.

If the general picture is good, there is no point in nit picking. We felt that they were saying, 'well you could do this better', even if 95% of what you're doing is perfect. Instead they focus on the 5% instead of the 95%. (PROI12/18)

Furthermore, although PROI8 has a positive disposition towards the recommendations in the WSE report, PROI8 also feels that statements relating to the relationship between the managers of the school who were described in the WSE inspection report had little relevance to what the evaluation was actually about. 'For example, they commented on the relationship between myself and the deputy principal. Now I just thought that was a strange one. They commented that we got on well together'(PROI8/10).

In addition, in terms of the school context, although principals are of the belief that EE recommendations are achievable, they are also of the view that the inspectorate was too insipid in that the recommendations could actually relate to a number of schools in the ROI. In this regard, P35 feels that certain parts of the WSE report held little relevance for the school; rather, evaluation reports are comprised of collective recommendations for schools at a national level.

I went through the whole school evaluations. Well, I scanned and my scanning was based on could you rub out the name of the school and put in [name of participants] school. (PROI3/27)

Criticisms relating to recommendations in EE reports have been highlighted on a number of occasions not only in Ireland but in other countries also. Where recommendations were too complex, as was found with Ehren's study (2006), 'the only improvements the schools accomplished were of a very simple kind (e.g., changing a rule for students)' (Ehren 2006 cited in Schildkamp 2009, p.86). However, in the ROI, criticisms relating to recommendations appeared to agree with McNamara et al. (2008b), i.e. because WSE was negotiated through social partnerships, WSE reports according to McNamara et al have resulted in a restrained approach towards the final evaluation report.

Because it is such a compromise, it exemplifies serious flaws including a very under-developed focus on data and evidence, a very limited role for key stakeholders such as parents and pupils and an extremely cautious approach to the content and use of the final evaluation reports. (McNamara et al.2008b, p.xi)

However, IROI3 is of the view that WSE-MLL has addressed many of the earlier criticisms of WSE, such as the length of the report. IROI3 states, 'now, we are getting to that stage where the MLL report and the new inspection is bullet pointed and there's no colourful stuff in it at all. It's very, very plain, very cold, and so we are getting to that stage now which is good' (IROI3/254–256). This also supports PROI6's assertion that WSE attempts to capture too much in a short period of time.

They're there trying to evaluate everything from the students council to subject teaching to the cleanliness of the toilets. Sorry but that's not feasible. I think that teams looking at more finite things in the schools are better than looking at everything. (PROI6/10)

It also appears that changing models of evaluation, such as WSE-MLL will allow for more frequent inspections, as it appears that a considerable amount of inspection resources for WSE were allocated to writing the report vs. actually conducting the EE in the initial stages of post-primary inspection in the ROI.

It's quicker, and the other thing is the timeline between the evaluation and the report had become a problem about the issuing of the report, but these are shorter, 6 pages to 15 pages, and they can be put out there quicker, and the experience would be the quicker the report is written after the evaluation, the more accurate, the quicker the report gets to the school, the more impact it has. (IROI2/94)

Regarding follow-up inspections, it also appears that the WSE-MLL will free up more inspection resources and allow for more frequent inspections of the recommendations from previous reports.

Follow up has been a big challenge for the External Evaluation process, and the challenge of doing a cycle of returning to a school hasn't really been achievable with staffing numbers. That would be helpful if the school knew that there would be a formal review externally in a set period of time, they could work towards that, but the new model of inspection, which is shorter and leaner, is based on follow up and checking the recommendations of previous reports...because it's a smaller model with less inspectors, one could expect more frequent follow up on recommendations that's actually based on the outcomes of previous reports. (IROI2/21–23)

The importance placed by the inspectorate on schools following through on previous recommendations can also be seen with the introduction of WSE-MLL, where a considerable amount of attention is now focussed on an analysis of the recommendations from previous inspections.

They asked me today, 'is it Tuesday', and you know, it's Wednesday. Then they ask you, 'is it Thursday', and you say, 'no it's Wednesday'. Then they ask the lady down the front office, 'Is it Wednesday', and she'll say, 'Yes, it's Wednesday', like they asked several different agencies in the school, 'Have you implemented the recommendations of the report'. (PROI17/114–116)

Although it appears that in the initial stages of WSE, inspection was in part centred on system approval, now that inspection has been established in schools, it appears that follow up through WSE-MLL and other inspection models, such as incidental inspections, allows for a far greater inspection frequency. A greater emphasis is also being placed on recommendations from previous inspections. The CIROI states,

However, to date, the Inspectorate has not been able to follow up and verify the extent to which recommendations have been implemented other than where we have had very serious concerns about the operation of schools. This has mainly been a resource issue and the reform of our inspection models is intended to free up some time for more systematic follow-up actions in a proportion of schools (Hislop, 2012, p.29).

In the case of NI, although follow up on recommendations from previous inspections is a rudimentary task within the ETI, it also appears that not only is compliance to recommendations expected, but a significant amount of support is also provided to ensure that the required improvement actions are taking place.

What happens then is that the advisory service within the education library boards has a role to play and to step in. They attend the report feedbacks, and they hear the findings, and they then step in for schools that have low levels of performance on inspection, and they work with the principal and the senior leaders to address whatever's faulty (inadequate) in the school development, or the action plan, or the evaluation, or the staff development, or whatever it is. Their action then is taking place. (INI1/144)

Moreover, it also appears that the DI plays a significant role in monitoring and supporting the improvement actions during the follow-up inspection cycle.

The district inspectors' visit is a monitoring check that it's happening, so when the follow-up inspection takes place, the district inspector is not going in cold 12 months or 18 months a year. The district inspector is going in knowing that progress is being made or not, and therefore...I would say, all of these reasons why in 85, 87% of cases, we see improvement. (INI1/144)

The belief that inspectors in NI play a significant role in not only inspecting but also supporting the recommendations outlined in the evaluation report is affirmed by PNI12 who states that the supportive role of DIs in NI is an essential component of realising the recommendations outlined in the evaluation report. PNI12 states that 'the fact that they're actually prepared to come in and to support you based on the recommendations is actually, most certainly, they're taking responsibility for the recommendations' (PNI12/97).

In the ROI, however, support given to schools to realise the recommendations following an inspection appears to be limited for a variety of reasons, such as a reduction in inspectorate and support personnel. As stated by the CIROI, 'the Education Act is quite

clear that responsibility for the implementation of recommendations from inspection reports is the responsibility of the school, its board and staff' (Hislop 2012, p.29). PROI19 affirms this view when referring to a request for assistance from the inspectorate following a recommendation outlined in a WSE-MLL report.

So, we got a recommendation from them that we needed to look at our admissions policy. So, that was fine. I had a look at it; I emailed the inspector that I, the lead inspector at the time, and said we were taking his advice very seriously. We were looking at the recommendation and trying to put it right by the end, you know, for next year's enrolment. I asked him if I did a bit of work on it, would he have a look at it to see does it meet the criteria that he felt was fair. The answer was no he couldn't, and it has been forwarded internally for processing. (PROI19/95)

4.4.3 Transparency

4.4.3.1 External Evaluation reports should be published on the Internet

		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count %	13 3.6%	84 23.1%	81 22.3%	156 43.0%	29 8.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count %	3 3.1%	9 9.2%	19 19.4%	54 55.1%	13 13.3%

$U(1) = 14092.500$, $Z = -3.353$, $p = 0.001$

Table 4.4.5: External evaluation reports should be published on the Internet (by region)

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference among the attitudes of principals in each region towards Internet publication of EE reports. However, of the surveyed principals, only a minority of principals in both the ROI and NI do not agree that EE reports should be published on the Internet (Table 4.4.5).

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference where the highest proportion of principals who agree with this statement are all from schools in NI (Table 4.4.6).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	2	15	9	18	4
	%	4.2%	31.3%	18.8%	37.5%	8.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	7	24	31	54	7
	%	5.7%	19.5%	25.2%	43.9%	5.7%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	4	45	41	85	18
	%	2.1%	23.3%	21.2%	44.0%	9.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	1	2	6	17	6
	%	3.1%	6.3%	18.8%	53.1%	18.8%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	7	13	36	7
	%	3.1%	10.8%	20.0%	55.4%	10.8%

$P = 0.010$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 13.227$

Table 4.4.6: External evaluation reports should be published on the Internet (by school type)

4.4.3.2 Internal evaluation reports should be published on the Internet

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of the principals from each region towards the publication of IE reports on the Internet. In contrast to inspection reports, a significantly higher number of principals in both the ROI and NI do not agree that IE reports should be published on the Internet (Table 4.4.7).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	45	143	91	66	18
	%	12.4%	39.4%	25.1%	18.2%	5.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	8	34	26	29	3
	%	8.0%	34.0%	26.0%	29.0%	3.0%

$U(1) = 15978.000$, $Z = -1.914$, $p = .056$

Table 4.4.7 Internal evaluation reports should be published on the Internet (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is no significant difference based on school type, as shown in Table 4.4.12.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	3	22	10	9	4
	%	6.3%	45.8%	20.8%	18.8%	8.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	22	42	34	20	5
	%	17.9%	34.1%	27.6%	16.3%	4.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	20	80	47	37	9
	%	10.4%	41.5%	24.4%	19.2%	4.7%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	3	12	8	8	1
	%	9.4%	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%	3.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	5	21	18	21	2
	%	7.5%	31.3%	26.9%	31.3%	3.0%

$P = 0.206$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 5.905$

Table 4.4.8 Internal evaluation reports should be published on the Internet (by school type)

4.4.3.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.4.5 to 4.4.6 show that a minority of principals in the ROI (26.7%) and NI (12.3%) disagree or disagree strongly that EE reports should be published on the Internet. Furthermore, in terms of the transparent aspect of IE, while IROI2 feels that schools should be moving towards publishing their own IE reports on the Internet, ‘if the External Evaluation reports are now public, presumably Internal Evaluation reports should be in the public domain as well. It will be on the school website for example. They will be open in that way and that would help on the transparency side’ (IROI2/227).

However, both regions see balancing transparency and trust between inspectors and schools as dilemmas. Moreover, although IROI1 stressed the importance of transparency within the public domain, IROI1 also believes that when inspection findings do not result in the publication of a publicly available report, schools are more forthcoming with evidence to the inspectorate. ‘Now, there has been quite a difference between inspections where we are publishing reports and inspections where we are not publishing reports because we feel we get a greater degree of honesty when we’re not publishing reports, and that’s understandable’ (IROI1/34). This perspective was supported by IROI3 who states, ‘if they were more honest or enabled to be more honest about their practice, we would be in a better position to be able to assist them, but then you can see why they are not going to do that. So, in order for that to work, we have to not publish the report’ (IROI3/10).

It appears, therefore, that the use of informal inspections without the production of a publicly available inspection report is a positive step that would allow schools to be more open to the inspectorate by furnishing the inspectorate with their own evaluation reports; from this, the inspectorate could inevitably be more supportive with the advice in the form of recommendations given to schools. However, for this mutual trust to be effective, the terms of reciprocal trust would need to be clearly defined. Indeed, and particularly relevant to IE reports produced for external accountability, Perryman (2009) when referring to the system of evaluation in England highlights the dilemma facing most evaluation systems that try to find a balance between transparent public accountability and the requirement for schools to be trusting of the inspectorate. According to Perryman,

The problem with self-evaluation documents produced for evaluation is that an honest warts-and-all approach is simply not possible. Over-emphasise strengths, and a school could be criticised for complacency with a management team unable to plan for progress, but identify too many weaknesses, and there is a risk of giving a skewed picture which may influence the judgement of the inspectors negatively. (2009 p.621)

4.4.4 Participation

4.4.4.1 Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a slightly significant difference between principals' attitudes towards inspectors conducting more formal visits by region. Of the survey participants, 19% of principals in NI either agree or agree strongly with this statement; in the ROI, this value is considerably higher (41%), as shown in Table 4.4.9.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	14	141	59	123	26
	%	3.9%	38.8%	16.3%	33.9%	7.2%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	3	47	30	19	0
	%	3.0%	47.5%	30.3%	19.2%	0.0%

$U(1) = 14762.000$, $Z = -2.876$ $p = 0.004$

Table 4.4.9: Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type, as shown in Table 4.4.10.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	9	6	23	10
	%	0.0%	18.8%	12.5%	47.9%	20.8%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	6	50	18	45	4
	%	4.9%	40.7%	14.6%	36.6%	3.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	8	83	35	55	12
	%	4.1%	43.0%	18.1%	28.5%	6.2%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	1	16	10	5	0
	%	3.1%	50.0%	31.3%	15.6%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	2	30	20	14	0
	%	3.0%	45.5%	30.3%	21.2%	0.0%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 30.748$

Table 4.4.10 Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis (by school type)

4.4.4.2 Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals in each region about inspectors conducting more informal visits to schools. More than 75% of principals from both regions agree or agree strongly with this statement (Table 4.4.11).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	5	30	39	234	55
	%	1.4%	8.3%	10.7%	64.5%	15.2%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	4	20	71	4
	%	0.0%	4.0%	20.2%	71.7%	4.0%

$U(I) = 16073.000$, $Z = -1.913$, $p = 0.056$

Table 4.4.11: Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.4.12).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	2 4.2%	6 12.5%	28 58.3%	12 25.0%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	3 2.4%	8 6.5%	14 11.4%	83 67.5%	15 12.2%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	2 1.0%	21 10.9%	19 9.8%	123 63.7%	28 14.5%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 21.9%	25 78.1%	0 0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	3 4.5%	13 19.7%	46 69.7%	4 6.1%

$P = .170$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 6.417$

Table 4.4.12: Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis (by school type).

4.4.4.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.4.9 to 4.4.12 illustrate that principals in both the ROI and NI are of the view that inspectors should visit schools more frequently on an informal basis.

The view that inspectors in the ROI should have more of an informal advisory role was also mentioned by a principal in the ROI. PROI14 states that ‘they need to be contactable more informally as well as formally’ (PROI14/83). Similar views relating to the frequency of EEs were also echoed by principals in NI with one principal affirming, ‘at least have an opportunity to invite them in more informally’ (PNI8/14).

It is also interesting to note that twice as many principals (41%) from the ROI believe that inspectors should visit schools more frequently on a formal basis than principals from NI (19%) (Tables 4.4.9–4.4.10). While one could presuppose that these values might infer that principals in the ROI place a higher value on formal EE than principals in NI, it might also infer that schools in the ROI are at a different IE implementation stage and are, therefore, more reliant on the inspectorate to conduct evaluations. Moreover, in the absence of internal accountability in the ROI compared to other ‘jurisdictions’, the only viable alternative to internal accountability is EE conducted by the inspectorate.

As stated by PROI4,

I think there is an advantage, especially for those principals that are unable to garner the support of teachers by showing them the new methodologies and new ways of doing things, etc. And I think that having an outsider with a fresh pair of eyes can be really beneficial, and so on. (PROI4/2)

The perception by the majority of principals in NI that formal evaluation should be less frequent while informal advisory evaluations should be more frequent might also infer that schools in NI are less reliant on the inspectorate to conduct evaluations because the school is in a position to conduct its own IE.

Although it was generally perceived in both regions that one of the main benefits of informal inspections is that informal visits do not result in the production of a publically available inspection report. However, from an analysis of interviews, the supposed purpose of informal inspections by principals in the ROI compared to both inspectorates and principals in NI seems to be centred on, in the case of the ROI, context and dealing with underperforming teachers. In NI, however, the need for more informal visits appears to be centred more on support as opposed to assisting the school with its own internal accountability agenda.

Furthermore, in the ROI, a number of principals (PROI15, PROI6/6, and PC7) are of the view that inspectors should visit schools more often on an informal basis to understand the culture and context of the school. In this regard, PROI6 believes that inspectors might not understand the culture and context in which the school operates.

Very often they might not understand the socio-economic background of the school perhaps. It doesn't understand what particular stage that subject Department is at in terms of the type of staff. Another one is they don't have sufficient information and have the wrong background information. All they seem to want really are timetables and numbers. (PROI6/6)

The belief by PROI6 that inspectors in the ROI, due to the limited amount of time spent in schools, are not always able to gauge the various cultural aspects of the school is expanded on by IROI3.

Schools are best placed to improve themselves. We are outside people. We come in, and we spend as much time as we can, which isn't very long, in a school. We try and look at where they are at and try and progress them. Having said that and with the best will in the world, we are not involved in every, we can't know about every cultural aspect of the school. (IROI3/98)

Indeed, due to the various socioeconomic and ability groupings that exist in most schools in the ROI, PROI15 supports PROI6's and IROI3's assertion about the importance of IE and the practical limitations of EE.

Within the one school, you go in to [name of teachers class] today, and she has her higher level Irish class, everything goes swimmingly well, not a problem. If you go into [name of teachers class] on a Thursday, and she has the 3B 7's where you could have 10 boys, they mightn't be able to read or write. They mightn't have a book between them, and they can't sit still and parenting and all that is a disaster... So an inspector goes into evaluate the two classes. Now, they are very different. Should the inspector be aware of the type of? Now at the same time, it's down to a teacher to prepare for the two classes... So, there's where the evaluation, there's where your Internal Evaluation, comes in. You don't say I've a first-year class. There's the class that I'm giving, whether it's there, there, there, or there. So, how does the inspector take that into account? (PROI15/577-589)

Principal criticisms relating to inspectors not taking into account the school context and the socioeconomic grouping of students, etc. do not appear to be unique to the ROI, but they appear to be similar to criticisms about school inspection in other regions. Hargreaves offers a description of similar challenges to the system of EE in England.

Indeed, teachers not infrequently reject the diagnosis of inspectors, especially where the report is generally unfavourable, and they have at their disposal a number of excuses for so doing--the week the inspectors spent in the school was atypical; their selection of lessons for observation was inadequate for the conclusions drawn; they were unfamiliar with a school like this; they took insufficient account of intake factors, such as the ability and social background of students. (Hargreaves 1995 p.119)

In many ways, however, the above statement highlights an inequitable problem with the Irish education system and the need to promote more frequent EEs in a proportionate manner. While there could be a false assumption that schools can be socially recognised based on DEIS status for example, this also assumes that inspectors can gauge the social context of the school prior to the inspection. However, in reality, this is not true, except

in small pocketed areas of extreme social affluence or disadvantage, with the latter becoming more widespread in recent years. By way of explanation, although schools at one end of the socioeconomic spectrum in the ROI are given extra support by being part of the DEIS scheme, one could assume that inspectors could gauge to a minuscule degree, the context in which schools operate based on whether or not a school is in the DEIS scheme or not. However, as previously stated, as far back as 2009, when unemployment levels stood at 5% in the ROI, the majority of students from non-employed backgrounds attended non-DEIS schools (Smyth and McCoy 2009). Furthermore, given the infusion of social deprivation into all areas of society, it would be reasonable to suggest that in the absence of initiatives such as Free School Meals, inspectors in the ROI are unable to gauge the social context of the school based on school type. PROI1's avowal on the significance of IE and the realistic expectations and limitations of EE is warranted in the case of evaluation.

In terms of the perceived benefits of formal and informal visits, PROI16 is of the view that, where formal inspections take place, individual teachers should be named so that an internal improvement can be initiated.

Now, I know it's very delicate because obviously you go into a lot of things. I think it's useful like that because at least if you have that, you have something to come back and say look... You can work on it with them, you know. (PROI16/40–44)

PROI16's assertion that formal inspection findings should be more personalised and focus on individual teachers as opposed to a collective subject department is also supported by PROI20 who refers to a situation where principals were unable to tackle underperforming teachers because the subject department collectively received a favourable report.

I know several principals who have had the experience of, you know, trying to tackle under performance of a teacher, and then the teacher to produce a report and say, 'Look, there's the report from my, the last inspection of my department'. So, I think I would actually like to see a bit more meat on some of the ones. (PROI20/111–113)

In terms of the supportive role of informal visits, although PROI21 feels that inspectors should not be called upon to support the school in the development of, for example, school policies. However, where complex areas for improvement are found, PROI21 believes that inspectors should support schools.

You know, I definitely think if they come in and do the report and they identify areas that need to be dealt with, then they have to make some commitment to supporting the school, not for physical things, like developing a policy as any school can do that, but there are schools where there are serious problems...where there's industrial relations, where there's bitching in staffrooms, those kind of things, where they impede progress at every turn. That's the reality, and if it is the reality, you need to have support to remove that. (PROI21/440–444)

By way of contrast, PROI22 is of the view that the role of inspectors is to inspect schools and, in this regard, supporting the school in the realisation of the inspection recommendations is not the role of the inspectorate.

I don't really see the inspectorate as being, kind of you see, I see that as a kind of a management role kind of thing, and I don't necessarily see the inspectorate as evolving in that role as kind of, you know, support service for client schools. (PROI22/24–28)

This view is supported by IROI1 who feels that because of the autonomy afforded to schools in the ROI, schools, not the inspectorate, are primarily responsible for the quality of education provided.

The second side to that question, and I don't want to ignore it, and that is, should we be the people who follow it up? And I think we really need to take into account school autonomy here. I don't think that you can actually separate what you're talking about here and school autonomy. So, who has the responsibility of running the school...who has responsibility for the quality within that school? Should it be external evaluators? I personally would be of a fairly strong view that it shouldn't because: 1) we cannot be the keepers of every school. There aren't enough of us in place in order to do that. But 2) I don't think it would be healthy. Schools are autonomous to a large extent. I mean, this is something that is debatable, but in the Irish context, post-primary schools are privately owned. They're publicly funded, but they're privately owned. (IROI1/63–65)

Because of the autonomy afforded to schools, IROI1 feels that the responsibility for ensuring that the recommendations outlined in an EE report are being met is not the primary responsibility of the inspectorate; rather, it is the responsibility of the principal and the BOM.

The autonomy that boards have is a very important aspect of education in the Irish system, and to what extent do we want external evaluators to take over that autonomy? So, that leads to another question, which is, how can voluntary Boards of Management step up to the mark in relation to taking on board what it is that comes out of either an internal or an External Evaluation...That's a huge other issue. (IROI1/65)

In addition, in terms of practical support provided to schools by the inspectorate, IROI2 believes that although evaluation is the primary function of the inspectorate, inspectors are also tasked with other duties outside of school inspection, which delineates the time available for school support on a practical level. IROI2 states that 'apart from evaluation, they do appeals, they do speeches. They do a range of other things that are not related. They inspect European schools. There are a range of activities. Now the priority is evaluation' (IROI2/41).

Moreover, IROI2 believes that if too much support is given to schools by the inspectorate, there could be a danger of what IROI2 refers to as a cultural dependency on the inspectorate, which could result in schools becoming too reliant on inspectors to solve school issues.

So, one of the difficulties with a lot of External Evaluations is the build-up of a cultural dependency...The chief inspector, the new chief inspector, was very keen on asking schools to reflect. For instance, at the IPPN conference, he would have said, 'if you do nothing else reflect on your practice'. This idea of schools being learning organizations and so on, (IROI2/45)

More pertinent to the supportive role of the inspectorate in the Education Act 1998. IROI2 believes that the inspectorate has a legislative responsibility not only to inspect the quality of education in schools, but also to support schools. IROI2 believes that similar to the role and function of the inspectorate in NI, a combination of quality assurance and advice would be the most favourable balance for the future role of inspectors.

I think most inspectors would feel that a combination of quality assurance and support. The inspectorate under the education act has quality assurance evaluative role but also has, clearly, a supportive and advisory role. I think in the last couple of years, there probably has been a tendency to try and maximize the numbers on evaluation and bring inspectors back into evaluation so we're doing more supportive and advisory work. (IROI2/49)

In the case of NI, although formal and informal visits by inspectors seem to be a central part of educational accountability, the support afforded to schools at a macro and micro level also seem to be a core component of the day-to-day operations of the inspectorate.

This is routine for us. District inspectors routinely visit schools in their district formally and informally. Informally, simply because the principal wants to have a chat about something or...That would be the pastoral role of the district inspector to have that informal discussion because principals often need someone within the school to talk to them...and talk to other principals, of course, but sometimes they want to talk to... an inspector. (INI1/55–59)

The importance placed on the advisory role of the inspectorate is affirmed by PNI9 who states, 'I have no hesitancy at all in ringing up an inspector and saying, "here look you wouldn't come in, and spend a morning with me here. I want you to see this at first hand." And then together, we'll write a report which hopefully will effect change' (PNI9/427–431).

INI3 and INI2 also believe that although informal visits are required, they should be negotiated and agreed upon with a purpose.

We have the formal inspections work, but then we have informal, like district visits, and for a long time we've worked on the theory that there was one theme and everybody visited according to that, and my theory is that is not right. You visit a school on a day visit, but you visit them taking them from where they are with their particular priorities and their whole improvement agenda. (INI2/64)

The belief that informal visits must have a negotiated purpose if they are to benefit the school on the one hand and the inspectorate on the other is affirmed by INI3. INI3 also believes that to maximise the benefits gained from informal visits, 'first-hand evidence' should be provided by the school to the inspectorate prior to and during the visit. INI3 states, 'I think it needs to be visited with a purpose. It has to be the purpose. The key bit is if the external evaluators visits the schools, schools already have first-hand evidence

to hand for the inspectorate to quality assure' (INI3/4). Furthermore, INI3 believes that to bring about school improvement, ideally, schools should request the DI to quality assure a certain aspect of their school plan, which would have the benefit of feeding directly into the improvement agenda of the school and also satisfy the accountability agenda of the inspectorate.

I think the district inspector is crucial in that and you know an ideal situation would be where a school would ask the inspectorate to validate a key focus of their work that they are working on that would fit in the school development plan, and that would be very useful, and we do that already. We have some guidance on that. (INI3/6)

Further to the point made by INI3, PNI8 believes that schools and the inspectorate could negotiate an agreed 'bespoke package', and the DI could then quality assure and inspect an aspect of the plan that was negotiated between both parties.

I think, I suppose just what I said there, where schools and the inspectorate would work more closely together with regard to a bespoke package for what are you going to work on this year. Why are you driving this through, where is the baseline data that you've taken this notion from, and how are you going to evaluate this in the end? Okay, we'd be happy with that and do a negotiated outcome if you like and then come back at the end of the year or at the end of the three-year development plan or whatever. (PNI8/76)

In terms of mutual collaboration, it appears that the interviewed principals and inspectors in NI believe that informal visits should be used for the purpose of school-wide improvement while also satisfying the accountability agenda of the inspectorate. However, both parties should focus on a particular aspect of school-wide planning and evaluation that would satisfy both the school improvement agenda and the accountability agenda of the inspectorate.

Furthermore, if one compares the perceived purpose of informal visits from the point of view of principals and inspectors in NI, where issues relating to a professional partnership and collaboration between schools and the inspectorate are concerned, the dichotomy between principals' and inspectors' perspectives on the terms of coexistence between IE and EE in NI appear to be extraordinarily minute. However, INI2 affirms that in order for both parties to benefit from informal visits, they must be negotiated with an agreed purpose.

I think that it's important that the visits should be regular, not so regular that they become cosy...but absolutely regular with a clear purpose and focus but shared and something that's negotiated and understood by both. That, in other words, I get the most out of it, and the principal gets the most out of it. That it's not just checking a list. (INI2/68-70)

Finally, although unannounced inspections are infrequent in schools in NI, PNI8 also believes that informal visits in the form of unannounced inspections are counter intuitive to building professional trust among the various partners.

Well, I think society is changing, and those sort of unexpected things entrench this notion that you're being watched and that you're always accountable. And unfortunately, even at senior management will be comfortable with that, the rest of the staff aren't necessarily comfortable with that, and there's a lot of pressure already in the system that you try to filter out for them. So, for inspectors to do that it's not helpful...I mean, everything is designed to be, review what you do, plan how to make it better, and then do it, and then review it again. Inspectors coming in, you know, uninvited or unexpectedly is not going to help that process. (PNI8/26-28)

This perspective on the use of unannounced inspections for the sole purpose of external accountability supports another principal in NI who states that 'I just think this whole thing of developing a culture of trust and that working and managing it, that really you see that this is a non-threatening process. It's about the pupils; it's not about catching teachers out or trying to whatever' (PNI12/828-832). An article in *The Guardian* (2012) on the misconception of unannounced inspections to increase the legitimate power structures of the inspectorate makes for interesting reading and resonates with PNI8's and PNI12's assertion relating to reciprocal trust and respect between schools and the inspectorate. The article describes how the education secretary of England, Michael Gove, had concerns about the introduction of unannounced inspections. The concerns related to the belief that Ofsted was being perceived by many as similar to 'an arm of the Spanish inquisition'. Gove affirms PNI12 and PNI8's assertion about the need for reciprocal trust between the inspectorate and schools and the requirement for transparency and accountability. Gove states,

People fear it [no-notice inspection] sends a message that we don't trust the profession, that Ofsted has become an arm of the Spanish Inquisition or Sean Connery's *Untouchables* that they have to be ready to storm in without any notice in order to deal with something that has gone drastically wrong. That was never the intention. (*The Guardian* 2012)

In the case of the ROI however, where unannounced inspections have been introduced, it appears that the purpose of these inspections is centred on the opportunity for inspectors to give advice to principals and teachers on how to improve teaching and learning and also to allow for authentic interpretations of students' learning experiences.

"The inspections will provide us with authentic information about the everyday learning experience for students in schools" said Minister Quinn. They will also create excellent opportunities for inspectors to advise teachers and principals on how to improve teaching and learning. (Quinn 2011b)

4.5 Commitment

4.5.1 Introduction

This section presents findings related to the antecedent variables that principals perceive as having an effect on the commitment of a school to engage in the process of evaluation, including for example, the length of time taken to conduct an evaluation, the stress levels caused by evaluation, etc. The first subsection examines the indirect effects of evaluations by analysing participant's perceptions towards changes in staff morale or changes in stress levels before, during or after an evaluation. The next subsection examines the popularity of evaluations among staff, the frequency in which evaluations occur and the perceived importance placed on evaluations as mechanism for school improvement. Within each subsection, questionnaire responses are initially described. However, to explore the aggregated questionnaire responses, results from an analysis of qualitative interviews are discussed.

4.5.2 Indirect effects of evaluation

4.5.2.1 External evaluations place a lot of stress on staff

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA analysis revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals from each region towards EE's effects on stress. The majority of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that EEs add stress to staff members (Tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	2	14	23	205	119
	%	0.6%	3.9%	6.3%	56.5%	32.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	10	2	50	37
	%	0.0%	10.1%	2.0%	50.5%	37.4%

$U(1) = 17487.500$, $Z = -0.459$, $p = 0.646$

Table 4.5.1: External evaluations place a lot of stress on staff (by region)

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	4	4	26	14
	%	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%	54.2%	29.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	0	5	7	74	37
	%	0.0%	4.1%	5.7%	60.2%	30.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	2	5	12	106	68
	%	1.0%	2.6%	6.2%	54.9%	35.2%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	1	0	15	16
	%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	46.9%	50.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	9	2	34	21
	%	0.0%	13.6%	3.0%	51.5%	31.8%

$P = 0.126$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 7.189$

Table 4.5.2: External evaluation places a lot of stress on staff (by school type)

4.5.2.2 External Evaluations increase staff morale

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitude among principals in both regions concerning EEs effects on staff morale where almost 33% of principals in the ROI and 52% of principals in NI do not agree that EE increases staff morale (Table 4.5.3).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	19	99	114	116	12
	%	5.3%	27.5%	31.7%	32.2%	3.3%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	12	39	29	18	1
	%	12.1%	39.4%	29.3%	18.2%	1.0%

$U(1) = 13434.500$, $Z = -3.917$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.5.3: External evaluations increase staff morale (by region).

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.4).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	2	9	13	22	2
	%	4.2%	18.8%	27.1%	45.8%	4.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	5	29	51	30	6
	%	4.1%	24.0%	42.1%	24.8%	5.0%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	12	62	50	64	4
	%	6.3%	32.3%	26.0%	33.3%	2.1%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	5	15	10	2	0
	%	15.6%	46.9%	31.3%	6.3%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	7	23	19	16	1
	%	10.6%	34.8%	28.8%	24.2%	1.5%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 23.721$

Table 4.5.4: External evaluations increase staff morale (by school type)

4.5.2.3 Internal evaluations place a lot of stress on staff

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes between principals concerning IE's effect on stress (Table 4.5.5).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	16	148	116	70	13
	%	4.4%	40.8%	32.0%	19.3%	3.6%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	5	39	19	36	1
	%	5.0%	39.0%	19.0%	36.0%	1.0%

$U(1) = 16835.500$, $Z = -1.171$, $p = 0.241$

Table 4.5.5 Internal evaluations place a lot of stress on staff (by region)

However, further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a slightly significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.6).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive Community</i>	Count	2	22	18	4	2
	%	4.2%	45.8%	37.5%	8.3%	4.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	6	52	29	30	6
	%	4.9%	42.3%	23.6%	24.4%	4.9%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	8	75	69	36	5
	%	4.1%	38.9%	35.8%	18.7%	2.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	7	6	19	0
	%	0.0%	21.9%	18.8%	59.4%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	5	31	13	17	1
	%	7.5%	46.3%	19.4%	25.4%	1.5%

$P = 0.003$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 15.759$

Table 4.5.6 Internal evaluations place a lot of stress on staff (by school type)

4.5.2.4 Internal evaluation increases staff morale

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitudes between principals from both regions concerning the effect IE has on stress (Table 4.5.7). However, the majority of principals in the ROI and NI either agree or agree strongly that IE increases staff morale.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	0	6	50	222	83
	%	0%	1.7%	13.9%	61.5%	23.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	6	21	62	11
	%	0%	6.0%	21.0%	62.0%	11.0%

$U(1) = 14537.500$, $Z = -3.431$, $p = 0.001$

Table 4.5.7: Internal evaluation increases staff morale (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.8).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	0	7	25	16
	%	0.0%	0.0%	14.6%	52.1%	33.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	0	1	15	79	28
	%	0.0%	0.8%	12.2%	64.2%	22.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	0	5	28	119	39
	%	0.0%	2.6%	14.7%	62.3%	20.4%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	4	6	20	2
	%	0.0%	12.5%	18.8%	62.5%	6.3%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	2	15	41	9
	%	0.0%	3.0%	22.4%	61.2%	13.4%

$P = 0.003$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 15.984$

Table 4.5.8 Internal evaluation increases staff morale (by school type)

4.5.2.5 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.5.3 to 4.5.8 illustrate that the majority of principals in both the ROI and NI believed that IE increases staff morale more than EE, where, according to PNI3, ‘sometimes it (EE) leaves a post-inspection slump where people have put all their energies into meeting the demands of the inspection, and they’re absolutely exhausted at the end’ (PNI3/12). Furthermore, the importance placed on the broader education system’s ability to accept and receive constructive feedback is affirmed by IROI1.

I think, first of all, I suppose, the broader question, how can you improve External Evaluation, and I think it’s an on-going process. I think it’s no more than school improvement. I think we are in an on-going process of rolling out, implementing, getting feedback. And perhaps we don’t get enough feedback...(IROI1/90)

Although the importance placed on schools and inspectorates to receive and accept feedback is not questioned, what is questioned is the effect that stress can have on the validity of an evaluation. Although principals in both regions believed IE is less stressful than EE (Tables 4.5.1 to 4.5.6), the chief inspector of Ofsted, Sir Michael Wilshaw, when referring to changes in Ofsted inspection models states that teachers are not under any considerable amount of stress compared to other members of society. In *The Guardian*, Wilshaw states,

Stress is what my father felt, who struggled to find a job in the 50s and 60s and who often had to work long hours in three different jobs and at weekends to support a growing family...Stress is what many of the million and a half unemployed young people today feel—unable to get a job because they've had a poor experience of school and lack the necessary skills and qualifications to find employment. Stress is what I was under when I started as a head in 1985, in the context of widespread industrial action—teachers walking out of class at a moment's notice—doing lunch duty on my own every day for three years because of colleagues who worked to rule. (Shepherd, 2012)

However, studies have found that the stress caused by inspections can indeed have a negative effect on school improvement and can reduce the validity of evaluations (see Fitz-Gibbon 1995; Brown, Rutherford and Boyle 2000). According to de Wolf and Janssens (2007),

A third and final category of undesirable side effects is unrelated to strategic behaviour but involves other (undesirable) matters that are directly linked to control mechanisms. An example is the occurrence of stress, particularly stress experienced by teachers and school principals during school inspections. Some researchers simply regard the occurrence of stress as undesirable (see for example Cullingford, 1999) but stress can also hinder the assessment and jeopardise the validity and reliability of the assessment. (p.383)

From an analysis of qualitative interviews, a number of principals in NI and the ROI believe that a decrease in staff morale and an interrelated increase in stress seem to centre on challenges to professional autonomy and further to this, anxiety related to the possibility of more coercive, narrowing forms of EE becoming the norm.

In relation to a challenge of the professional autonomy of teachers, a number of principals in the study believe that being observed by another member of staff or a member of the inspectorate can cause stress. When discussing EE-related stress, PROI12 states, 'I would certainly say that with some teachers there is a fear, and they are worried that they won't perform well. And a number of teachers have a genuine fear of doing that' (PROI12/4). Although PROI21 believes that there is a concerted move towards internal teacher observation, PROI21 believes that, due to the individualistic history of teaching, unless teachers are newly qualified teachers, staff who have taught in isolation for many years without colleagues or inspectors observing their teaching practice could find evaluation in the form of peer-to-peer observation threatening.

Now, I know we are moving away from that and definitely with the teaching council is moving away from that, and you know. I would have access to classrooms of new teachers who come in as part of the induction policy in our school, but I wouldn't regularly have access to a classroom of a teacher who has been teaching for 20 years unless I was invited in to deal with a disciplinary issue. (PROI21/490)

The belief by PROI21 that peer-to-peer evaluations are only more recently being conducted in Ireland resonates with IROI2 who is of the view that there is a history of individualism in Irish education, which could also be a plausible explanation as to why peer evaluations have not occurred in many schools.

I don't think we are great planners. We're not great at keeping regulations and so on. So, I think there was a lot of idiosyncratic individualism in teaching, almost maverick-type, doing their own thing, and indeed, over time, the department had a similar profile of individualism. And there's an effort, I suppose, to be more collaborative, but it's not something that comes easy to us. We only seem to think that that's where maybe, and certainly historically, we thought that was for Britain and America and other people. It didn't apply to us. It's almost like our attitudes to the rules of the road and other laws that are there to be circumvented. (IRO12/163)

Furthermore, PNI6 believes that during an EE, 'sometimes, it is your best teacher who is most nervous. It doesn't make sense, but that is just the way it happens' (PNI6/24). However, PNI9 believes that building a continuous culture of openness among staff would considerably reduce inspection stress and result in a less anxious staff.

But the other thing is, if you build the culture, that climate of sharing best practice, I need to be bringing in a member of the inspectorate to a classroom today, tomorrow, or the day before. It could have been a head of department from a neighbouring school...As far as that teacher is concerned, the lines become blurred. It's someone in to see best practice, it's someone here to see what we're doing, so it doesn't really matter who it is, so they don't become self-conscious. (PNI9/421-423)

Moreover, it appears that where evaluations have been successful, trust and a double-loop process of evaluation between management and staff seem to be the driving forces to that success.

It is actually scary for teachers that somebody else is going to come in and observe them and comment on their practice, and I think and understand that. There are very few professions that allow it, but it is beneficial for the kids. Most importantly, it has to be totally and utterly nonthreatening. It has to be. And it's getting that culture in the school that simply part of the self-evaluation. It's part of improvement. (PNI6/88)

Harris (2002), while studying effective leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances, found that successful leadership activity appeared to be brought about by the alignment of a shared set of values among staff and principals in schools where principals communicated their personal vision and belief systems through their words, deeds and actions. Harris (2002) states, 'the heads in the study did 'walk the talk' through the consistency and integrity of their actions, they modelled behaviour that they considered desirable to achieve the school goals' (p.18).

Furthermore, while the current inspection framework in NI and the ROI does not necessarily appear to cause considerable anxiety among principals who were interviewed, the belief that more stringent forms of EE will become the norm did. When referring to the demands of evaluation systems in other regions, PNI4 states,

Teachers are going in with the best intentions in the world for two or three years and come out totally disillusioned and jack it in. The retention rate for teachers in their 20s is very, very low in England because nobody will stick with it. (27)

Furthermore, while PROI20 believes that WSE-MLL increased staff morale and that of the BOM in PROI20's school. 'When I read the report, I was delighted with it' (PROI20/453).

On the other hand however, PROI17 believes that because WSE-MLL is centred in the main, on management, leadership and learning, there is less focus on other aspects of education that might be deemed important to the school.

First of all, yes, it should be called management, leadership, and learning, absolutely yes, but under no circumstances should it be referred to as WSE. It is a far away. It has nothing to do with whole school whatsoever. They do not engage where a very large part of what makes schools run or the development of a school. (PROI17/16–20)

Finally, almost all of the principals who were interviewed believe that where staff morale increases as a result of EEs, almost always, an increase in staff morale relates to an affirmation of good practice and the ability of the school to continue its improvement agenda. According to PNI12, 'it was very positive. Now, the vast majority of it, which I thought was great, and then I was able to say to the staff, "fantastic feedback, fantastic report, and wouldn't it be great to welcome them in again"' (PNI12/402–408). PNI6 believes that EE is also affirming because the inspectors acknowledged that the school has the capacity to improve itself, which confirms that the school is moving in the right direction.

If you're getting an inspection and they are really saying that the school is in a strong position to carry forward school improvement, that is a strong report for a school, and it is saying you are on the right track. You're doing the right thing. Just keep doing them. That is very affirming for staff you know. (PNI6/41)

PNI6 believes that inspectorate's affirmation of a school that is in a position to continue its improvement agenda is significant. INI1 also acknowledges the significance of professional school commendation.

I think, also, there's the public relations value of a school that gets good reports, and part of that good report is that we can say with confidence in the report that the school is effective and has had some improvement or self-contained in some improvement. You find in inspection reports sometimes the comment that a school has issues to address, but it is self-sufficient within itself to address them, and that's high praise deserved. Or you might say the school has problems and issues and it isn't able to resolve them itself, and it needs help, external help. So, I think there are a number of principles that apply and strategies that apply here. (INI1/280)

4.5.3 Duration

4.5.3.1 Internal evaluation takes up a lot of time

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes between principals in NI and the ROI concerning the time IEs take. More than 75% of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that IE takes up a lot of time (Table 4.5.9).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	5	43	42	160	112
	<i>%</i>	1.4%	11.9%	11.6%	44.2%	30.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	17	5	48	30
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	17.0%	5.0%	48.0%	30.0%

$U(1) = 18064.500$, $Z = -0.032$, $p = 0.974$

Table 4.5.9 Internal evaluations take up a lot of time (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a slightly significant difference based on school type (table 4.5.10).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	1	8	3	22	14
	%	2.1%	16.7%	6.3%	45.8%	29.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	1	12	12	56	42
	%	0.8%	9.8%	9.8%	45.5%	34.1%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	3	23	27	83	56
	%	1.6%	12.0%	14.1%	43.2%	29.2%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	1	1	16	14
	%	0.0%	3.1%	3.1%	50.0%	43.8%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	16	4	31	16
	%	0.0%	23.9%	6.0%	46.3%	23.9%

$P = 0.040$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 10.033$

Table 4.5.10 Internal evaluations take up a lot of time (by school type)

4.5.3.2 External evaluations take up a lot of time

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals in different region concerning the time EEs take (Table 4.5.11). In fact, 88% of principals in the ROI either agree or agree strongly that EEs take a lot of time; in NI, this value is considerably lower (57%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	3	20	22	210	108
	%	.8%	5.5%	6.1%	57.9%	29.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	19	23	47	10
	%	.0%	19.2%	23.2%	47.5%	10.1%

$U(1) = 11169.000$, $Z = -6.417$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.5.11: External evaluations takes up a lot of time (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.12).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	3	7	28	10
	%	0.0%	6.3%	14.6%	58.3%	20.8%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	0	4	5	73	41
	%	0.0%	3.3%	4.1%	59.3%	33.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	3	13	10	110	57
	%	1.6%	6.7%	5.2%	57.0%	29.5%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	2	7	18	5
	%	0.0%	6.3%	21.9%	56.3%	15.6%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	17	16	28	5
	%	0.0%	25.8%	24.2%	42.4%	7.6%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 51.142$

Table 4.5.12: External evaluations take up a lot of time (by school type)

4.5.3.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.5.9 to 4.5.12 illustrate that the majority of principals in the ROI and NI are of the view that both IE and EE take up a lot of time. Although PROI8 is of the view that most of the time required of WSE is external, ‘the manpower is external and while they would take up a lot of time and your time when they are here. A lot of the work is done externally by external evaluators, so a lot of the work that is done is done externally and so the pressure on the organisation long term is minimal’ (PROI8/4). However, from further analysis of qualitative interviews, it is evident that most of the time allocated to external evaluation activities relates not so much to the actual occurrence of the EE but to the length of time devoted by schools for pre-evaluation activities. PROI12, when referring to WSE states, ‘I think that the paperwork with whole school evaluation is horrendous and not necessary, but teachers in schools see that they have to have everything to such a high standard that they will receive an unfavourable comment’ (PROI12/14). The belief that too much time is spent preparing for EE is affirmed by PROI14 who referred to the amount of time that PROI14’s school devoted to the development of school policies. PROI14 perceived this as being for the purpose of external compliance as opposed to school improvement.

You can’t take any time off to do them. You can’t have any planning time to do them. You must do them on Saturday mornings, Sunday evening. I mean it was so unrealistic and such crap in terms of related stuff. So we did the ones and we did enough to keep them off our backs. (PROI14/96)

Further to the points made by PROI12 and PROI14 that too much time is spent on pre and post evaluation activities such as writing extensive evaluation reports, PROI3 is of the view that this is also the case with IE. ‘The thing that people think is. Oh God, self evaluation, we should be filling out forms forever and what you worry about is in Ireland we are addicted to forms and filling out forms’ (PROI3/39). MacBeath et al. (2009) affirm PROI3’s view that there is an underlying assumption in evaluation policy and practice that evaluation should primarily consist of tasks such as form filling, etc. ‘There is a view, all too prevalent and all too deeply embedded in school practice, that school self-evaluation is a ritual gathering of evidence, an audit, an event, a process of form filling, a preparation for external review or inspection’ (MacBeath et al. 2009, p.6).

In line with the assertion of MacBeath et al. regarding the historical perception of evaluation, INI1 is of the view that some schools may do too much descriptive paperwork; instead of writing lengthy reports, schools should be moving towards 'executive summaries' that evaluate the outcomes of a particular improvement initiative. 'We've been trying to move schools from describing their enabling actions to evaluating the outcomes. And we're trying to move them from writing 20,000 word reports to writing short executive summaries of what happened' (INI1/256). INI3 affirms the belief that the length of the report is secondary to how the recommendations for improvement are evaluated. According to INI3, in the absence of first-hand evidence, some schools are inclined to write lengthy reports detailing, what INI3 refers to as, second hand evidence.

I think it's important for schools to understand that it's minimum of paper work, maximum of action, so that's what they need to consider. I often say that the best self-evaluation report a school could produce could be written on two pages. The hard thing is supplying first-hand evidence. I think if schools can be assisted in understanding what first-hand evidence is, as distinct from reporting evidence you can take very succinctly. Sometimes I think if organisations don't have first-hand evidence, then the temptation is to write a lot of paper. You know to describe, I suppose, second-hand evidence. (INI3/4)

In addition to the arguments made that too much time is devoted to pre- and post-evaluation activities, such as writing lengthy IE reports, this also appears to be the case in the ROI when reference is made to evaluation activities required of inspectors during the evaluation cycle for WSE. However, IROI3 also believes that, a decrease in the administrative duties required of inspectors for WSE-MLL, such as a reduction in the length of the inspection report, allows inspectors more time to advise and support schools with their improvement agenda.

Now it's changed, and we are being encouraged to be much more supportive. Now, we still don't have very much time, but as teachers, ourselves, morally and naturally we would be inclined to be supportive anyway. (IROI3/264)

Indeed, as the CIROI outlined to his colleagues at the ROI inspectorate conference 2011, 'we work to provide high quality advice and evaluation... our advisory role must grow... we have much to do in using all our expertise fully' (Inspectorate conference, Athlone, 2011, cited in Ó Murchú 2011 p.164). In line with IROI3's assertion that a

substantial amount of inspection time has been spent on evaluation activities, coupled with the CIROI's assertion that there is a greater need for inspectors to increase their advisory role, IROI2 also believes that the schedule of school evaluations used by the inspectorate might not be the best use of inspection resources. More time should be spent sampling schools rather than being involved in what Ehren et al refer to as 'a time series with switching replication and design replication' (Ehren et al. 2011, p.6). IROI2 states,

We may not need 1,000 reports to tell us how we need to improve our systems in schools, and I think we probably should do more sampling and less repetitive evaluations... And I think if the inspectors are going to concentrate on evaluation, sometimes it is at the detriment of the other bigger, wider, macro-educational issues, like the education of non-nationals, like traveller education, like special needs, like well-being, marginalized deprived communities that for education in marginalized deprived communities. So basically, sometimes, the total concentration on evaluation can lead to, so we have to marry the two, to marry the issues and big issues, and then evaluate the process. (275)

The belief by IROI2 that systemic evaluations take away from the time allocated for inspectors to focus on other important macro issues resonates with a number of principals who are also of the belief that, at a micro level, the time allocated to IEs can also have the effect of neglecting other areas of school life that are deemed more important to staff. PNI2 states, 'you're talking to me, and I'm enthusiastic about this, and I'm giving you all of the positivity, but if you talk to a member of the teaching staff and they will say, "self-evaluation for goodness sake, I have enough on my plate without all of this"' (89). The view by PNI2 that teachers feel that the time allocated to IE detracts from teaching and learning is also affirmed by PNI1 who states, 'it is a time investment really in what doesn't seem to be important to the majority of staff because they're trying to get on with the job at hand and they don't want to have to write up more paperwork, so that's the disadvantage of it' (22).

The amount of time that principals and teachers can allocate to IE appears to be limited, given the fact that principals in the ROI spend more than half their time dealing with administrative tasks and student behaviour (Ehren et al. 2011, p.23, Table 9). IROI2 and PROI3 are of the view that, in order for more time to be allocated to IE, there needs to be a change in the mind set of schools relating to how IE's can be carried out.

The principal being the main man in historical terms, and he is the main person, and everything is wrapped up. Some principals, nothing can move in a school without them having a say in it. They are out in the gate in the morning; they are in the gate in the evening. They want to find out where the rose bushes are being planted in the school garden. They have an opinion when maybe they should be more strategic thinkers within the school. (IROI2/153)

The belief of IROI2 that there needs to be a greater focus on strategic thinking as opposed to unsystematic planning is also affirmed by PROI3 who states that ‘what we need is a culture whereby it is a way of thinking, a way of doing, as opposed to “I’ll sit down on Thursday and spend four hours self-evaluating.” It’s really about how you think about the way your job is’ (PROI3/43).

4.5.4 Popularity

4.5.4.1 Internal evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals from each region concerning the popularity of EE with the major school staff members (Table 4.5.13). Only 37% of principals in NI either disagree or disagree strongly with the statement IEs are popular with staff, but in NI, this figure is considerably higher (61.6%).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	34	187	74	57	7
	%	9.5%	52.1%	20.6%	15.9%	1.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	3	34	23	40	0
	%	3.0%	34.0%	23.0%	40.0%	0.0%

$U(1) = 12640.000$, $Z = -4.856$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.5.13: Internal evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in the school (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.14), and the lowest number of principals who agree or agree strongly with this statement are from schools in the ROI.

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	3	20	16	8	1
	%	6.3%	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	11	68	23	19	2
	%	8.9%	55.3%	18.7%	15.4%	1.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	20	100	35	30	4
	%	10.6%	52.9%	18.5%	15.9%	2.1%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	2	11	10	9	0
	%	6.3%	34.4%	31.3%	28.1%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	1	22	13	31	0
	%	1.5%	32.8%	19.4%	46.3%	0.0%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 28.743$

Table 4.5.14: Internal evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in the school (by school type)

4.5.4.2 External evaluations is popular with the majority of staff in this school

A Mann Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principles from different regions concerning the popularity of EEs with staff (Table 4.5.15). More than 78% of principals in both regions disagree or disagree strongly that EEs are popular with staff.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	80	204	55	19	5
	%	22.0%	56.2%	15.2%	5.2%	1.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	25	58	10	6	0
	%	25.3%	58.6%	10.1%	6.1%	0.0%

$U(1) = 16762.000$, $Z = -1.143$, $p = 0.253$

Table 4.5.15: External evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 4.5.16) also reveals that there is no significant difference based on school type towards this statement.

		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	13 27.1%	21 43.8%	10 20.8%	3 6.3%	1 2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	30 24.4%	68 55.3%	19 15.4%	5 4.1%	1 0.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	37 19.2%	115 59.6%	27 14.0%	11 5.7%	3 1.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	12 37.5%	17 53.1%	3 9.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	13 19.7%	41 62.1%	6 9.1%	6 9.1%	0 0.0%

$P = 0.166$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 6.482$

Table 4.5.16: External evaluations are popular with the majority of staff in this school (by school type)

4.5.4.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.5.13 to 4.5.16 reveal that the majority of principals in both the ROI and NI believe that neither system of evaluation is popular in their schools. The difference in popularity between IE and EE, where IE appears to be more popular with staff in both regions, is significant, however. Although a number of principals from both regions suggest that issues such as time and increasing staff workloads are possible reasons why evaluation is unpopular (Section 4.2), from further analysis of qualitative data, another reason for the unpopularity of evaluation was that a culture of evaluation and feedback, particularly in schools in the ROI, does not exist. When referring to teachers' initial reactions to hearing about an imminent WSE-MLL evaluation, PROI20 states,

I was interested in how schools respond immediately when the word breaks, 'Oh we're going to have a WSE-MLL'. And I had to sit back and marvel at how staff kind of react somewhat negatively, as if it's this big bad wolf coming to your door rather than somebody who is going to actually help what's inside the school and maybe make some recommendations that everybody will benefit from. So therefore, it's kind of hard to know why this happens. (PROI20/6–8)

One of the reasons from the perspective of PROI10 as to why EE is not popular among staff is that the popularity of evaluations among staff is generational, and older teachers are less willing to engage in the process than younger teachers.

We don't have a culture of feedback in second-level education. I would visit teachers three times per year, but older teachers would die a death as they've spent most of their lives teaching in a completely different culture. (PROI10/16)

However, a number of other principals and inspectors (PROI3/32, IROI2, IROI3) believe that age is entirely unrelated to the popularity of IE in schools. IROI2 and IROI3 state,

The good teachers, they could be nearly hitting 70, and they learning new things all the time, they bring new stuff into the kids, they know about the children's lives, they are interested in what they, and they keep progressing. So, if you have a situation where things are stagnant, people aren't thinking, well you are in trouble. (IROI3/652)

If you take sporting management, the job of the managers to get the best out of their team, and we don't probably use that enough in education, and the principals' main job is to maximize the use of their team. You get the best out of them, and they feel good about themselves, and they're making a difference and contributing. Most people start off life by wanting to make a difference, and maybe if they see what they're saying is taken on board; there is more ownership. (IROI2/219–221)

Furthermore, PROI3 also believes that the popularity of IE among staff is entirely unrelated to age. Instead, an atmosphere of trust and the belief that IE is a potent vehicle for school improvement are the most important factors relating to popularity of evaluation among staff. PROI3 states,

What I would have found was age is not the barrier. I would disagree that as people get older, they are more resistant to change. I think that's a psychological thing. I think that people will change if they see something worthwhile in it for them. (PROI3/37)

In the modern era, assuming that only employing and retaining younger teachers in order to create a culture of evaluation in education is facetious. A number of principals believe that IEs would be far more popular among staff if they were non-threatening, promoted from the top down and not seen as a form of internal accountability. PNI6 believes that IEs have become embedded in the day-to-day operations of their schools as a result of having created a safe environment for staff to conduct IEs. According to PNI6, 'if you are going to get people to give you something, you have to give them something back. It has to be flexible. It has to be working in two ways. They have to

know that they are not being penalised.’ (124). PNI6’s assertion that evaluation has to be seen as non-threatening is supported by IROI3 who states,

Where we actually do the best work, and it’s where a principal will be honest, upfront, and shares the information with his staff, and encourages his staff to be open and honest as well, where it needs to be a culture in a school, where there is a level of trust, and where vulnerability is not a negative thing, it’s sort of seen as an opportunity for both. (IROI3/64)

Providing a safe environment without hierarchical rebuke appears to be one of the key criteria for creating a culture of evaluation in education. INI1 identifies this environment when referring to one of the significant strengths of initial teacher education in NI.

Now that’s difficult to do for a student because of the very reasons you indicated. The students fear is that if they reveal a weakness it will, you know, detrimentally affect their result in terms of what they get as a B.Ed. grade or a PGC perhaps, whereas what you’re trying to indicate to them is that they’re not demonstrating that they failed to do something in a lesson, but that they’ve demonstrated that they were, they had the self-awareness to recognize that something had not worked, the ability to analyse why it didn’t work, and the capability to plan the next step that would address the issue that they had uncovered in terms of the failure of the children to learn something that they intended them to learn, in terms of a learning outcome, and it doesn’t matter if the lesson is a hopeless disaster. It’s the capacity of the person to respond to that that accounts as effective and their ability to plan consequently. That’s what counts as effective. (INI1/216)

From the above statement, the lack of evaluator training among older members of staff during their initial teacher education could also be a reason why IEs are not as popular in schools with this particular cohort in the ROI.

Furthermore, where IE appears to be popular among staff is due to the way it appears to be promoted by the management of the school. According to PROI16, staff felt that PROI16 actually believed in the benefits of IE.

I think they [MANAGEMENT] have to believe, and I think if they don't believe in it, it isn't going to work, you know. The only time you must remember people will believe in it is if they see it's going to benefit you. I mean, I've seen the benefits, you know. I saw the results...There's no point in putting it on if people say this is only another layer of bureaucracy, right? To be able to say, 'look, this is really going to help our school, at the end of the day it's going to make me a better leader, it's going to make our school a better place', you know, and if they believe that, then why wouldn't they take to it, you know. (PROI16/312–314)

Hallinger and Heck (1996) examined 40 empirical studies on leadership and organisational effectiveness between 1982 and 1995. Analysis revealed that studies in which indirect effect models (e.g. creating a culture of learning, creating a vision for the organisation, etc.) were used showed a greater impact of school leadership on school performance than studies that used direct effect models (student results, etc.). In fact, studies on leadership and student achievement report that the direct effect principals have on school achievement is actually near zero (see Hallinger & Heck 1996; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1999). Given the indirect influence that principals have over learning outcomes, PROI16's assertion that evaluation should be promoted from the top down and distributed within the organisation supports the transformational model of leadership. Transformational leadership is based on the premise that, 'they provide ideological explanations that link followers' identities to the collective identity of their organization, thereby increasing followers' intrinsic motivation (rather than just providing extrinsic motivation) to perform their job' (Jung et al. p.528). Indeed, Bass states,

Employees say that they themselves exert a lot of extra effort on behalf of managers who are transformational leaders. Organizations whose leaders are transactional are less effective than those whose leaders are transformational—particularly if much of the transactional leadership is passive management-by-exception (intervening only when standards are not being met). Employees say they exert little effort for such leaders. (Bass 1990, p.23)

In this regard, a more effective model of evaluation that would have a greater impact on school improvement does not appear to be one of command and control, but it is the cultivation and transformation of others that enables the realisation of an organisation's goals. By inverting the traditional hierarchical triangle of evaluation, evaluation is not considered to be the property or legitimate dictate of one individual but an organisational promoter from which individuals can collectively aspire to realise the

organisation's goals and objectives. The overarching benefits of realising a transformational model of leadership evaluation compared to a top-down model of hierarchical evaluation supports Sanborn's (2006) assertion that 'an army of deer led by a lion is to be more feared than an army of lions led by a deer... but, an army of lions led by a lion would be truly unstoppable' (Sanborn 2006 cited in Bossi 2009). It is no surprise, therefore, that the style of transformational leadership exhibited by PS7 may be the catalyst that initiates a distributed leadership culture in organisations where the distribution of evaluation activities within the school quite naturally forms an integral part of the process and, consequently, has a greater impact on school improvement.

Finally, while one can ascertain that the future role of the inspectorate in primary and post-primary schools in the ROI has been determined, 'our ultimate goal is for schools to conduct their own evaluations transparently and accurately and for inspectors to visit these schools to evaluate the school's own self-evaluation' (Hislop 2012b). While this might be the case, what principals considered a cause of stress in Section 4.6.2 also appears to be connected to the popularity of EE among staff. From an analysis of qualitative interviews, principals in both regions believe that a very good relationship exists between schools and the inspectorate. One factor that does appear to affect the popularity of EE among staff in both regions is not part of the present systems of evaluation; it is the preconceived notions of more rigid externally devised evaluation measures in the future.

Although almost all of the principals interviewed in both the ROI and NI believe that a good relationship exists between the inspectorate and schools, PNI4 states, 'Inspectors coming in are subject matter experts and there is a guy called the reporting Inspector who will lead the team and examine all aspects of what we do as principals and the management team of the school. I have no problems with them coming in ' (37). However, PNI4 was also weary of ulterior, more coercive EE models becoming the norm in the future, thus reducing schools' willingness to engage fully with EEs and reducing the popularity of EE among schools.

What I think the danger of it becoming is if they identified what they perceive to being a school that is going down the drain, then the powers which they've got are diabolical. It's a fear of just going down the OFSTED line of name and shame, sack the principal, sack the governors, sack the teachers... (PNI4/45)

Therefore, trust appears to be a significant factor in improving the popularity of evaluation among staff. In the ROI, it is stated that ‘these inspectorates regularly schedule schools for inspection visits using relatively the same interval and arrangement for every school’ (Ehren et al. 2011, p.6). However, the uniformity of transparency and trust in the ROI is questioned in McNamara and O’Hara (2012a) who state that ‘research indicates that the inspectorate has developed and is using tools and standards to make judgements on schools but without making these standards explicit’ (p.9). The question then is: how can schools and the inspectorate foster a reciprocal climate of transparency and trust when there appears to be confusion relating to certain elements of EE? Assuming the promotion of transparency and trust between schools and the inspectorate is not merely centred on assisting inspectors with their evaluations, the uncertainty of principals towards future evaluation policy and practice will inevitably pose an immense challenge for external evaluators. On the other hand however, it would also be reasonable to suggest that during the inspection; very few principals would actually draw attention to areas for managerial improvement that inspectors would not have discovered themselves. Hargreaves (1995) states that ‘the object of the audit is to uncover weaknesses so they can be rectified. No school actively draws its weaknesses to the attention of inspectors—‘just in case you hadn’t noticed’ (Hargreaves 1995, p.119).

4.5.5 Efficacy

4.5.5.1 Internal evaluations tell us nothing new

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals from different regions concerning the ability of IEs to produce new information (Table 4.6.17). Only a very small minority of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that IEs do not provide new information.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	140	195	14	11	3
	%	38.6%	53.7%	3.9%	3.0%	0.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	39	56	2	3	0
	%	39.0%	56.0%	2.0%	3.0%	0.0%

$U(1) = 17777.500$, $Z = -0.355$, $p = 0.722$

Table 4.5.17: Internal evaluations tell us nothing new (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.18).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	16	30	2	0	0
	%	33.3%	62.5%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	53	63	5	2	0
	%	43.1%	51.2%	4.1%	1.6%	0.0%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	71	103	7	9	3
	%	36.8%	53.4%	3.6%	4.7%	1.6%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	12	17	1	2	0
	%	37.5%	53.1%	3.1%	6.3%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	27	38	1	1	0
	%	40.3%	56.7%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%

$P = 0.593$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 2.795$

Table 4.5.18: Internal evaluations tell us nothing new (by school type)

4.5.5.2 External evaluations tell us nothing new

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals from each region concerning the amount of new information gathered from EEs (Table 4.5.19). Only a minority of principals in both regions either agree or agree strongly that EEs tell us nothing new.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	24	210	39	65	25
	%	6.6%	57.9%	10.7%	17.9%	6.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	7	51	17	24	0
	%	7.1%	51.5%	17.2%	24.2%	0.0%

$U(1) = 17632.500$, $Z = -0.317$, $p = 0.751$

Table 4.5.19: External evaluations tell us nothing new (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.20).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	3 6.3%	28 58.3%	6 12.5%	8 16.7%	3 6.3%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	12 9.8%	68 55.3%	16 13.0%	19 15.4%	8 6.5%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	9 4.7%	115 59.6%	17 8.8%	38 19.7%	14 7.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	2 6.3%	12 37.5%	8 25.0%	10 31.3%	0 0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	5 7.6%	38 57.6%	9 13.6%	14 21.2%	0 0.0%

$P = 0.438$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 3.773$

Table 4.5.20: External evaluations tell us nothing new (by school type)

4.5.5.3 Internal evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than external evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals from different regions concerning the teaching and learning improvements of IEs versus EEs. In fact, 67% of principals in the ROI and 79% of principals in NI either agree or agree strongly that IEs are a better approach than EEs for improved teaching and learning (Table 4.5.21).

		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count %	5 1.4%	45 12.5%	69 19.1%	174 48.2%	68 18.8%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	5 5.0%	16 16.0%	50 50.0%	29 29.0%

$U(1) = 14827.500$, $Z = -2.933$, $p = 0.003$

Table 4.5.21: Internal evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than external evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggested that there was a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.22).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	1	3	12	21	11
	%	2.1%	6.3%	25.0%	43.8%	22.9%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	1	16	26	55	25
	%	0.8%	13.0%	21.1%	44.7%	20.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	3	26	31	99	32
	%	1.6%	13.6%	16.2%	51.8%	16.8%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	3	6	17	6
	%	0.0%	9.4%	18.8%	53.1%	18.8%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	2	10	32	23
	%	0.0%	3.0%	14.9%	47.8%	34.3%

$P = 0.019$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 11.737$

Table 4.5.22: Internal evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than external evaluation (by school type)

4.6.5.4 External evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than internal evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a slightly significant difference in the attitudes of principals about EEs being a better approach than IEs for improvements in teaching and learning. The majority of principals in both regions disagreed or disagreed strongly that EEs surpass IEs in teaching and learning improvement (Table 4.5.23).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	51	194	85	24	8
	%	14.1%	53.6%	23.5%	6.6%	2.2%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	20	64	12	3	0
	%	20.2%	64.6%	12.1%	3.0%	0.0%

$U(1) = 14458.000$, $Z = -3.271$, $p = 0.001$

Table 4.5.23: External evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than internal evaluation (by region)

Analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is a slightly significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.24).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	8	27	11	1	1
	%	16.7%	56.3%	22.9%	2.1%	2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	18	66	34	4	1
	%	14.6%	53.7%	27.6%	3.3%	0.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	25	102	40	19	6
	%	13.0%	53.1%	20.8%	9.9%	3.1%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	7	19	4	2	0
	%	21.9%	59.4%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	13	44	8	1	0
	%	19.7%	66.7%	12.1%	1.5%	0.0%

$P = 0.014$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 12.524$

Table 4.5.24: External evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than internal evaluation (by school type)

4.5.5.5 More emphasis should be placed on internal evaluation than external evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of teachers from different regions concerning the emphasis placed on both IEs and EEs. More than 78% of principals in both regions agree or agree strongly that more emphasis should be placed on IEs (Table 4.5.25).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	4	23	52	202	81
	%	1.1%	6.4%	14.4%	55.8%	22.4%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	11	9	50	29
	%	0.0%	11.1%	9.1%	50.5%	29.3%

$U(1) = 16867.000$, $Z = -0.989$, $p = 0.323$

Table 4.5.25: More emphasis should be placed on internal evaluation than external evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.26).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	4	3	28	13
	%	0.0%	8.3%	6.3%	58.3%	27.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	7	28	58	28
	%	1.6%	5.7%	22.8%	47.2%	22.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	2	12	21	116	41
	%	1.0%	6.3%	10.9%	60.4%	21.4%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	6	1	16	9
	%	0.0%	18.8%	3.1%	50.0%	28.1%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	5	8	34	19
	%	0.0%	7.6%	12.1%	51.5%	28.8%

$P = 0.469$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 3.561$

Table 4.5.26: More emphasis should be placed on internal evaluation than external evaluation (by school type)

4.5.5.6 More emphasis should be placed on external evaluation than internal evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals in different regions concerning the emphasis placed on EEs over IEs. More than 70% of principals in both regions disagree or disagree strongly that EEs should have more emphasis than IEs (Table 4.5.27).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	60	211	64	23	4
	%	16.6%	58.3%	17.7%	6.4%	1.1%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	23	56	14	4	1
	%	23.5%	57.1%	14.3%	4.1%	1.0%

$U(1) = 15946.000$, $Z = -1.723$, $p = 0.085$

Table 4.5.27: More emphasis should be placed on external evaluation than internal evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed that there is no significant difference based on school type towards this statement (Table 4.5.28).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	7 14.6%	31 64.6%	7 14.6%	2 4.2%	1 2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	23 18.7%	69 56.1%	24 19.5%	6 4.9%	1 0.8%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	31 16.1%	111 57.8%	33 17.2%	15 7.8%	2 1.0%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	9 28.1%	16 50.0%	4 12.5%	3 9.4%	0 0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	13 20.0%	40 61.5%	10 15.4%	1 1.5%	1 1.5%

$P = 0.591$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 2.807$

Table 4.5.28: More emphasis should be placed on external evaluation than internal evaluation (by school type)

4.5.5.7 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.5.17 to 4.5.20 illustrate the strongly held view among principals in both regions that IEs and EEs allow schools to obtain new information about the quality of the services offered by a school. The positive attitude towards EEs is mentioned by a number of principals who were interviewed. One principal from the ROI states that ‘with EE, you have an outsider’s view of what’s going on, and presumably bringing with them expertise and positive aspects of other schools and suggestions to affirm good practice, and point out where systems could be improved’ (PROI11/2).

IROI2 believes that EEs allow inspectors to show schools new elements of best practice from other schools, stating that ‘the inspectorate, of course, has the advantage to go around to a large number of schools, presumably disseminating good practice as they go’ (IROI2/59-61). Principals from NI hold similar views as principals from ROI, and according to PNI3, ‘EE forces you to evaluate yourself and cast a cold eye over those policies in light of the fact that somebody from outside is going to come in to evaluate them’ (2). In addition, in the case of NI, PNI5 believes that EE affirms and encourages staff to better understand their school. ‘Well, it lets me know what is happening internally is fairly spot on, you know, in terms of our own understanding of the organisation’ (PNI5/2). PNI6 states, ‘that means whenever I’m speaking to staff or trying to encourage the whole notion of self-evaluation that we can say, “well here is what you’ve done. Here’s what others think you have done,” and that is a very positive experience’ (PNI6/4).

Furthermore, (Tables 4.5.25 to 4.5.28), there appears to be a unified view among principals in both regions that more emphasis should be placed on IEs than EEs. One principal states that 'IE perpetuates school improvement. You can streamline a common voice, and you can agree performance indicators and so on, and then measure against staff how much benefit your pupils are getting from it. So, the internal bit is far more beneficial than the external one' (PNI1/4). Although the above statements could be interpreted as illustrative examples of IE benefits, from further analysis of qualitative interviews, it appears that the reason given by many principals for more emphasis to be placed on IEs than EEs is the continuity of IEs. In this regard, PROI8 is of the view that more emphasis should be placed on IEs because IE allows for continuous improvement, as opposed to the infrequency of EEs.

I think if you want a continuous critical look at your work, internal is the only way to go because we don't have the resources for external at this level. Even Ofsted, with all of their resources, I think initially it was going to take something like 10 years to do every school in Britain, and then after that they would only be able to visit schools once every five years. Now, five years in the life of the school is a huge amount. You can destroy a school or turn around a school in five years. (PROI8/58)

The belief that more emphasis should be placed on IEs than EEs is also supported by PNI2 who believes that if IEs are linked to action, schools can very quickly see school improvement. According to PNI2, 'the big advantage of it is, if it's linked to action, you can actually change small incremental steps very quickly' (PNI2/46).

What is also of interest to this study and the various stages of evaluation that each region is at is that a greater number of principals in NI than in the ROI do not agree that EE is a better approach to improving teaching and learning than IE (Tables 4.5.23 to 4.5.24). While it might be assumed that principals in the ROI feel more positive about EEs than principals in NI, it could also be assumed that in the significant absence of internal accountability in the ROI and with the perceived benefits of informal unannounced inspections, the only alternative means of teacher accountability, is through EE.

4.5.6 Frequency

4.5.6.1 The principal and vice principal conduct self-evaluation on a regular basis in this school

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals from different regions concerning the belief that principals and vice principals conduct evaluations on a regular basis (Table 4.5.29). In fact, 64% of principals in the ROI and 90% of principals in NI either agreed or agreed strongly that principals and vice principals conduct self-evaluations on a regular basis.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	4	96	30	207	24
	%	1.1%	26.6%	8.3%	57.3%	6.6%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	6	5	68	21
	%	0.0%	6.0%	5.0%	68.0%	21.0%

$U(1) = 12006.000$, $Z = -5.822$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.5.29: The principal and vice principal conduct self-evaluation on a regular basis in this school (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.30).

<i>School type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	14	7	25	2
	%	0.0%	29.2%	14.6%	52.1%	4.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	0	32	7	78	6
	%	0.0%	26.0%	5.7%	63.4%	4.9%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	4	50	16	105	16
	%	2.1%	26.2%	8.4%	55.0%	8.4%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	5	1	22	4
	%	0.0%	15.6%	3.1%	68.8%	12.5%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	1	4	45	17
	%	0.0%	1.5%	6.0%	67.2%	25.4%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 38.413$

Table 4.5.30: The principal and vice principal conduct self-evaluation on a regular basis in this school (by school type)

4.5.6.2 Teachers conduct self-evaluations on a regular basis in this school

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals from different regions concerning the frequency of teachers' conducting evaluations (Table 4.5.31). Only 34% of principals in the ROI, compared to 79% of principals in NI, agreed or agreed strongly that teachers conduct regular evaluations.

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	16	159	65	117	6
	%	4.4%	43.8%	17.9%	32.2%	1.7%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	10	11	67	11
	%	0.0%	10.1%	11.1%	67.7%	11.1%

$U(1) = 8740.000$, $Z = -8.339$, $p = 000$

Table 4.5.31: Teachers conduct self-evaluation on a regular basis in this school (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.32).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	2	22	9	13	2
	%	4.2%	45.8%	18.8%	27.1%	4.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	3	60	19	39	2
	%	2.4%	48.8%	15.4%	31.7%	1.6%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	11	78	37	65	2
	%	5.7%	40.4%	19.2%	33.7%	1.0%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	4	3	22	3
	%	0.0%	12.5%	9.4%	68.8%	9.4%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	5	8	45	8
	%	0.0%	7.6%	12.1%	68.2%	12.1%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 72.347$

Table 4.5.32: Teachers conduct self-evaluation on a regular basis in this school (by school type)

4.5.6.3 The inspectorate promotes self-evaluation

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitudes of principals from different regions concerning the inspectorate's promotion of self-evaluation. Of those surveyed, 55% of principals in the ROI and 92% of principals in NI either agree or agree strongly that the inspectorate promotes self-evaluation (Table 4.5.33).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	12	82	61	172	35
	<i>%</i>	3.3%	22.7%	16.9%	47.5%	9.7%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	4	3	41	51
	<i>%</i>	1.0%	4.0%	3.0%	41.0%	51.0%

$U(1) = 8158.000$, $Z = -8.935$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4.5.33 The inspectorate promotes self-evaluation (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is a significant difference based on school type (Table 4.5.34).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	9	9	25	5
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	18.8%	18.8%	52.1%	10.4%
<i>Vocational</i>	<i>Count</i>	3	25	21	63	11
	<i>%</i>	2.4%	20.3%	17.1%	51.2%	8.9%
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Count</i>	9	48	31	85	19
	<i>%</i>	4.7%	25.0%	16.1%	44.3%	9.9%
<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	3	1	17	10
	<i>%</i>	3.1%	9.4%	3.1%	53.1%	31.3%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	1	2	23	41
	<i>%</i>	0.0%	1.5%	3.0%	34.3%	61.2%

$P = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 88.166$

Table 4.5.34: The inspectorate promotes self-evaluation (by school type)

4.5.6.4 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.5.29 to 4.5.30 illustrate that the majority of principals in both the ROI and NI believe that they conduct IEs on a regular basis in their schools. One example of IEs being used in the ROI is for the purpose of programme evaluation.

Again, not to overkill, but we constantly need to look at what you're doing every year with different cohorts of students, and I know as coordinator of [Name of program], that was one of the things we used to find that we tweaked the program this year, and they look at it and say, 'well it's not working as well as it did last year'. (PROI4/26)

An example of IEs being used regularly in the case of NI is for the purpose of internal accountability and the continuous professional development of staff.

Once the results come out at the end of the summer, I trawl over them with a fine comb, and I'm not in the business of identifying any particularly weak teacher. I simply try to look at how the children have gotten on. So, instead of looking down at a list of figures, I read across and see if the difference is not significant. (PNI4/54)

Another example where IE is used in NI is for continuous professional development, where all schools are expected to conduct a performance review of their staff members each year; consequently, staff must also be in agreement with what CPD training is required to improve their performance. PNI6 states, 'I'm very interested in staff development, and I appointed a person to run all of the staff development, and we have in the North, PRSD⁸ (performance review and staff development scheme), which means that each year a critical friend will go into a classroom and watch you teach three or four periods' (PNI6/80). Following on from a peer review, the staff member then agrees what areas of CPD are required, and a CPD plan is instituted for each staff member.

So, it's getting somebody at that level, and then from that, we would encourage people, and they would say, 'I really need help with', and out of that PRSD report, we could look at staff development and see what it is we need to do next year for that particular person or a group of particular teachers, etc. (PNI6 /84)

Although principals are of the view that IEs are conducted regularly by principals in both the ROI and NI, principals in the ROI are also of the view that only a minority of teachers (Table 4.5.31) conduct IEs on a regular basis. However, IROI3 believes that IE is in the early stages of becoming more formally embedded into the Irish education system.

Even you know where you have people on their own in classrooms, even studying or in whatever way engaging with self-evaluation. It more or less is done in isolation. Maybe they tell their friends or whatever, but unless the principal picks up on it and is supportive and shares it with the school. (IROI3/570)

It is also important to note that schools in NI that require a follow-up inspection must also complete their own IE prior to the follow-up inspection. One principal in NI states

⁸ The scheme provides a continuous and systematic process to support principals and teachers with their professional development and career planning. It also provides a framework to help ensure that in-service training and other development provision match the complementary needs of both the individual and the school.

that 'the emphasis placed on self-evaluation by the ETI has made self-evaluation a priority in this school' (PNI4/16). It appears, therefore, that inspectors play a pivotal role in embedding a culture of evaluation in schools, and the majority of principals in the ROI and NI believe that the inspectorate promotes IE (Tables 4.5.33 to 4.5.34). In NI, principals who were interviewed complemented the role played by the ETI in promoting IEs in schools. One principal states, 'In general terms, I think the embedding of Self evaluation is an excellent thing, and I think the inspectorate have done a really good job in calling that to people's attention and also encouraging schools to build in self-reflection' (PNI2/26). Another principal states that 'the external validation really requires schools to become self-evaluating because the nature of the data that they'll look for when they come in and the observances requires you to be putting those in place and to be improving them all the time' (PNI6/60). In addition, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, it appears that IE has been promoted by the inspectorate for a considerable length of time in NI.

What I would have to say is, I was a vice principal in a secondary school in [LOCATION] 18 years ago, and the chief inspector came down to our school one day to talk to myself and the principal about his new idea of self-evaluation. That is at least 18 years ago. I remember being really struck by the whole idea. I've sort of pursued it ever since. (PNI3/30)

Furthermore, apart from the promotion of IE through the development of IE frameworks, tools and case studies of rudimentary IE practices, it also appears that, on a micro level, the inspectorate invests a considerable amount of resources in IE activity support in schools through the use of DIs.

The key thing for the district inspector in promoting self-evaluation in schools is, they have to be able to ride the twin horses of evaluation and advice. I mean, that's the Holy Grail, and to get away from the notion of which we don't have in the inspectorate, you know, that we just evaluate that we just inspect, it's far more complex than that. I call it, you give evaluative advice. It's the evaluation that's in the advice. (INI3/22)

However, in the ROI, where EE was formally introduced into the Irish education system in 2006, it would be reasonable to suggest that inspection priorities in this period were centred on setting up and promoting external school inspection. However, in this short period, now that inspection has become an integral and accepted part of school life, with

the introduction of the WSE-MLL and the DES guidelines on self-evaluation (2013), inspection priorities will be centred far more on promoting and ensuring that more self-evaluation and internal accountability takes place in schools. When asked if IE needs to be promoted more in schools, IROI1 states,

It has always been promoted through the school development planning process and also through leadership development for schools. Those two initiatives have been very strong on promoting school self-evaluation. However, it does need, I suppose, a more formal rollout, I suppose is the word I'm using, so that schools know, yes, this expectation is there. Now that, coupled with the fact that external Evaluation would be commenting on what schools are doing in relation to Internal Evaluation, will provide both the support and the pressure that is needed. (IROI1/150)

Although it is evident that the introduction of self-evaluation into mainstream education in the ROI is at a different stage of development than other regions, such as NI, which has an established inspection system, this situation could also be of immense benefit to not only educational policy and practice in the ROI, but it could also benefit the system of education in the ROI in general. The ROI could learn from the experience of other regions, such as NI, when trying to ascertain the best method for creating a culture of evaluation in education that actually brings about school improvement.

I think we would have probably benefited by coming late in the Republic of Ireland, particularly at the central level to this, and we looked at existing models in other countries, and we did research them. We did research Canada and other places to see what extent those models would work. (IROI2/239)

4.6 Outcomes

4.6.1 Introduction

This section presents findings related to the perceived impact of evaluation on management, teaching and learning. The first subsection describes participant reactions to EE as a means of improving management, teaching and learning after an inspection has taken place; the next subsection describes participants' reactions to IE as a means of improving management, teaching and learning. Within each section, questionnaire responses are initially described. However, in order to explore the aggregated questionnaire responses further, the results from an analysis of qualitative interviews are discussed.

4.6.2 External Evaluation

4.6.2.1 External Evaluation results in better management

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference by region in principals' attitudes towards this statement. Adding significant confidence to the value placed on inspection by school principals, only 20% of principals in the ROI and 18% of principals in NI believe that inspection does not result in better management (Table 4.6.1).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	16	57	78	187	25
	%	4.4%	15.7%	21.5%	51.5%	6.9%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	1	17	23	53	5
	%	1.0%	17.2%	23.2%	53.5%	5.1%

$$U(1) = 17885.500, Z = -0.077, p = 0.939$$

Table 4.6.1: External evaluation results in better management (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is no significant difference by school type (Table 4.6.2).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	2	6	8	30	2
	%	4.2%	12.5%	16.7%	62.5%	4.2%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	23	22	68	8
	%	1.6%	18.7%	17.9%	55.3%	6.5%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	12	28	48	90	15
	%	6.2%	14.5%	24.9%	46.6%	7.8%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	9	5	18	0
	%	0.0%	28.1%	15.6%	56.3%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	1	8	18	34	5
	%	1.5%	12.1%	27.3%	51.5%	7.6%

$$P = 0.630, df = 4, \chi^2 = 2.584$$

Table 4.6.2: External evaluation results in better management (by school type)

4.6.2.2 External evaluation results in better teaching and learning

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test revealed that there is no significant difference by region in principals' attitudes towards this statement. Adding significant confidence to the value placed on inspection by school principals, only 18% of principals in the ROI and 17% of principals in NI believe that inspection does not result in better teaching and learning (Table 4.6.1).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	9	58	64	210	22
	%	2.5%	16.0%	17.6%	57.9%	6.1%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	1	17	25	52	4
	%	1.0%	17.2%	25.3%	52.5%	4.0%

$U(1) = 16805.500$, $Z = -1.100$, $p = 0.271$

Table 4.6.3: External evaluation results in better teaching and learning (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also reveals that there is no significant difference by school type (Table 4.6.4).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	1	9	5	32	1
	%	2.1%	18.8%	10.4%	66.7%	2.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	2	18	24	72	7
	%	1.6%	14.6%	19.5%	58.5%	5.7%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	6	31	35	107	14
	%	3.1%	16.1%	18.1%	55.4%	7.3%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	8	6	18	0
	%	0.0%	25.0%	18.8%	56.3%	0.0%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	1	9	19	33	4
	%	1.5%	13.6%	28.8%	50.0%	6.1%

$P = 0.769$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 1.820$

Table 4.6.4: External evaluation results in better teaching and learning (by school type)

4.6.2.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.6.1 to 4.6.4 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of principals in the ROI and NI towards IE and EE outcomes. The majority of principals in both regions believe that EE results in better management, teaching and learning. Although similar studies in the ROI suggest that 'principals also indicate a positive perception of changes in the achievement orientation of the school' (MacNamara and O'Hara 2012, p.6), what is significantly different for both regions, in comparison to

similar studies, is the fact that only a small minority, 18% or less, of the principals in both the ROI and NI disagree with the statement 'external evaluation results in better teaching and learning' (Table 4.6. 3). This figure is in stark contrast to similar studies on school inspection where it was found that in the case of the House of Commons report on Ofsted inspections, '84% of over 1,500 respondents to a National Association of Head Teachers poll were clear that inspection did not accelerate improvement and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' survey provided a still-high 69%' (House of Commons 2011, p.12). There is also debate as to the direct impact inspection has on school improvement. According to the former chief inspector of HMI David Bell,

To say inspection causes improvement is fundamentally unprovable. I think there are examples of where you have greater evidence of improvement being brought about by inspection, but again, it's still not quite the same as saying it causes it. For example, [Ofsted's] monitoring of schools with special measures is not causing improvement, but most head teachers say...that the process of professional debate and discussion with HMI [Her Majesty's Inspectors] brings some bite to the improvement process. (House of Commons 2011, p.13)

Indeed, given factors outside the realm of inspection such as a lack of school choice for reasons such as poverty and demographics in many areas of both the ROI, NI and elsewhere, the effects that austerity measures have on students of colour, students of low income neighbourhoods, and students for whom English is not their first language, etc.; the assertion that inspection can have an impact on school improvement in equal measures is questioned by INI2 who believes that there are many other variables related to school improvement outside of inspection that must be taken into account before affirming that inspection leads to improvement.

You will have girls, single-sex girls' schools, who are...now remember everything is grouped according to free school meals, which is not the most accurate, but it's the only way we have, so comparisons are made with other schools in that arena...So if you've a situation in a city where the all-girls schools are achieving 10, 15, 20% above others in their area, and the brothers of those girls are going to all-boys schools and they're totally under achieving...but they're getting inspected the same number of times as the girls. You know, so it's not just as simple as that. (INI2/136-146)

Nonetheless, while recognising the dynamics and importance of validity in an externalised world, almost all of the principals in the ROI and NI who were interviewed

felt that an improvement in management, teaching and learning was brought about through inspection. Principals believed that this was primarily due to an acceptance that educational standards should be maintained. They also believed it was due to the legitimate influence of inspectors; principals could promote change in their schools faster than if the inspection had not occurred. Furthermore, it appears in some instances that the evaluative knowledge gained by inspector observations of exemplars of best practices in other schools coupled with what some principals perceived as an impartial view of the school caused schools to reflect on different ways the school's improvement agenda could be realised and enhanced after the inspection. In this regard, a number of principals felt the need to improve standards due to the extrinsic legitimate expectations of inspectors.

Well, it actually drew a line in the sand. I suppose it was a point where you had to get yourself in shape and you have tried to improve and that. Since you also try to implement all of the things, what it really did was it put down a marker for standards that you would have to get. It also made you focus on it really. It was a wake-up call, more than anything else. (PROI13/2)

PROI13's belief that inspection ensures the need for schools to maintain and achieve acceptable standards is also affirmed by PROI6. PROI6 gave an example of when an inspection of his school caused a particular subject department to make a greater effort to recognise the expected standards for teaching and learning.

So, it went very badly and good. I was pleased that it went badly. It showed what we were not doing well, and it made the [Name of Department] sit up and try and improve. It would have been very beneficial because of that, right. I can see huge advantages in External Evaluation. That's just the way it is. (PROI6/2)

Principals in NI also affirm statements from ROI principals that inspection encourages standards in education to be maintained. According to PNI4,

I suppose it's to make sure that standards are being maintained and improvement is taking place, and that is within the education framework and the bigger picture of governance. The Department of education has to be able to justify it to the Exchequer that something is going on in those schools or else... (2)

PNI4's perspective on schools' acceptance of inspectors to ensure that standards are being met is also affirmed by PNI6.

Well, I think there is a place for it because, I suppose, everybody needs a watchdog. The external inspection services offer that watchdog, if you like...They have been well trained, and they are coming in giving this neutral outsider reflection. And because they visit some many schools, they are able to look at practice in a lot of institutions, and they are able to compare where institutions are at and to offer guidance as to ways forward or some signposts towards some areas that might need to be improved and needs to be developed further or continue to be improved (8–10).

Furthermore, principals in both regions believe that apart from maintaining standards, inspection has allowed for accelerated change in teaching practice.

There were a number of pointers that the inspectors left our school with that we can then use as a lever, so it's not just me saying to staff, 'I think we ought to go about doing this'. We can say 'outside experts recommended this, and I think they're right'. You can use it as an incentive, as a lever. You can use it as a rationale to say that there has been a bit of outside benchmarking. Now, let's make one of these things our priority and we will have a go at trying to make progress in that area (PNI2/8–10).

PNI2 believes that as a result of EE, school improvement priorities can be more readily implemented than if they had been recommended internally. This is affirmed by PROI16 who states that as a result of the WSE-MLL, inspection practice allowed PROI16 to change IE practice by permitting the analysis and discussion of the results more easily with staff than was possible prior to the WSE-MLL. In the absence of EE practice, there would have been greater resistance among staff to these types of IE activities.

I think the External Evaluation, like, you know, I'll give you an example, like, you know, what I mean, it can help principals in that, let's say for example, when I started to analyse results, right...it made it easier for me when I could sort of say, look, that the inspectors came in with the analysis of [NAME OF SUBJECTS] results, so now I'm going to do it for everybody, right. (PROI16/336–338)

Furthermore, while criticisms of inspection practice in earlier sections of this study relate to inspectors' inability to understand the actual dynamics of school life (Section 4.4.4.3), a number of principals found that what appeared to be of significant benefit to

some principals, in terms of improving teaching, learning, and management, was due to the fact that inspectors are able to form an impartial view of the quality of educational practice that might not otherwise have been realised if the evaluation was conducted internally.

Sometimes also it is a good thing that they can praise you, which is a good thing, but also to give you more of a sense of achievement. They will also point you to something that might be in need of attention that you actually haven't spotted. It is also something you can then address very quickly. (PNI7/2)

The belief that inspectors are able to form an impartial view of internal practice is also affirmed by PROI3 following an inspection in PROI3's school.

One of the observations that the inspector made was we were almost too structured. We were almost hamstringing ourselves, and taking on board a little bit too much by what the literature was saying, and maybe we should have been a little bit freer about it. (PROI3/6)

In addition, what appeared to be a very significant promotion of school improvement following an inspection was the result of the evaluative knowledge and advice given by inspectors based on their experience and the evaluative knowledge they acquired from other schools.

The outsider might see a broader picture by making comparisons with different schools. And then you might say this principal is coming in, and he's doing it completely different compared to half of the other principals... So, the question then, is he a genius or is he out of step? So, there is the advantage of, shall we say, having the broader picture from the outsider. (PROI1/14)

After an inspection in NI, for example, the DI advised PNI12 and another teacher to make contact with another school at which the DI had witnessed elements of good practice that could be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in PNI12's school.

You know, the inspector told me and the teacher we should go over to, it's [NAME OF PERSON] this guy's called. If I were to go to [NAME OF PERSON] in [NAME OF LOCATION], I know that I'm not going to be able to immediately apply what works for [NAME OF PATRONAGE TYPE] school in a working class area to [NAME OF OTHER PATRONAGE TYPE], you know, girls over in a working class area, but there has got to be some things. (PNI12/675–687)

In conclusion, similar studies that examined the effects of inspection on the quality of education in schools (de Wolf and Jansen 2007) have suggested that the intended effects of inspection visits are centred on 'guaranteeing education quality, guaranteeing level of compliance and improving education quality' (de Wolf and Jansen 2007 p.384). In this regard, it would be reasonable to suggest that based on an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data that the majority of principals in NI and the ROI are of the view that EE has significant positive effects on improving and maintaining the quality of teaching, learning and management. Furthermore, it also produces an acceptance of the need for standardisation through the legitimate power structures attuned to inspection. Additionally, the intended effects of inspection visits appear to be realised both in the ROI and NI. According to PNI6, 'I went to training for the Associate Assessor...and I remember the chief inspector at the time saying to me you have to have a hair shirt mentality' (PNI6/142).

4.6.3 Internal evaluation

4.6.3.1 Internal evaluation results in better management

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is no significant difference by region in principals' attitudes towards this statement (Table 4.6.5).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count %	2 0.6%	6 1.7%	18 5.0%	161 44.4%	176 48.5%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	46 46.5%	53 53.5%

$U(1) = 16463.000$, $Z = -1.440$, $p = 0.150$

Table 4.6.5: Internal evaluation results in better management (by region)

However, further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that there is a slightly significant difference based on school type (Table 4.6.6).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 31.3%	33 68.8%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	3 2.4%	4 3.3%	57 46.3%	59 48.0%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count %	2 1.0%	3 1.6%	14 7.3%	89 46.1%	85 44.0%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	18 56.3%	14 43.8%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	28 42.4%	38 57.6%

$P = 0.005$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 14.835$

Table 4.6.6: Internal evaluation results in better management (by school type)

4.6.3.2 Internal evaluation results in better teaching and learning

A Mann-Whitney ANOVA test reveals that there is a slightly significant difference by region in attitudes towards this statement (Table 4.6.7).

<i>Region</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Republic of Ireland</i>	Count	2	4	11	197	149
	%	0.6%	1.1%	3.0%	54.3%	41.0%
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Count	0	0	2	45	53
	%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	45.0%	53.0%

$U(1) = 15789.000$, $Z = -2.265$, $p = 0.024$

Table 4.6.7: Internal evaluation results in better teaching and learning (by region)

Further analysis of variance using the Kruskal-Wallis test also suggests that there was a slightly significant difference towards this statement based on school type (Table 4.6.8).

<i>School Type</i>		<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
<i>Community Comprehensive</i>	Count	0	0	0	23	25
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	47.9%	52.1%
<i>Vocational</i>	Count	0	2	3	77	41
	%	0.0%	1.6%	2.4%	62.6%	33.3%
<i>Secondary</i>	Count	2	2	8	97	84
	%	1.0%	1.0%	4.1%	50.3%	43.5%
<i>Grammar</i>	Count	0	0	1	17	14
	%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	53.1%	43.8%
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	Count	0	0	1	28	38
	%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	41.8%	56.7%

$P = 0.018$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 11.879$

Table 4.6.8: Internal evaluation results in better teaching and learning (by school type)

4.6.3.3 Discussion and issues emerging

Tables 4.6.5 to 4.6.8 show that there is no significant difference in ROI and NI principals' attitudes, and the majority of principals in both regions believe that IE results in better management, teaching and learning when IE is centred on improving the IE processes and when dialogue and distributed decision making forms a significant part of the process. PNI5 is of the view that as a result of IE, PNI5's school has improved its IE tools to ensure that staff members are more reflective in their practice.

So, we have actually revamped our Internal Evaluation form recently because we felt that it was one that was introduced seven or eight years ago, and we felt that it outlived its usefulness, and we needed to be dealing that bit deeper, possibly making more demands of staff and asking them to be more reflective. (PNI5/20)

Similar statements were also used to describe how IE has improved certain quality aspects of education in interview participants' schools. 'Teachers share their knowledge with each other' (PROI12/2). 'You can say we looked at the evidence, and we think we can do better. Here's an idea. And let's put it into practice and see how it goes' (PNI2/48). 'You make a decision. What are our priorities for next year. You know what I mean? And then you see a huge change at the end of that year, and you go to the next year' (PROI16/406-410). Based on these statements, it appears that dialogue evaluation is also at the forefront of IE policy and practice in both the ROI and NI. An article by MacBeath et al. (2009) supports the assertion that dialogue evaluation is central to learning, and, by virtue of their profession, good teachers are natural self-evaluators.

Their classrooms are saturated with evaluative questioning, reflecting, decision-making and endless simultaneous activity. They do it moment by moment in the classroom. They make intuitive judgements reactively and proactively. They take home with them big evaluation questions and wake up (sometimes during the night) to puzzle over what went well and what might go better. They engage in a lot of self-talk and self-critique. They conduct summative evaluation on the way home in the car and formative evaluation on the way into school. They talk to their partners, spouses, and children about successes and failures and share notes and critical anecdotes with their teacher friends. (MacBeath et al. 2009, p.6)

The assertion that teachers are continuously evaluating, aside from what MacBeath et al. (2009) refer to as 'yet another tedious extra' (p.6) in the form of the customary practice of form filling, is also affirmed by PROI15.

If someone is honest enough to say, 'that didn't go well. I need to fix that', and I think the majority of teachers do that, but if you tell teachers to sit down and fill out a form, I personally, if you ask me to come in and fill out an evaluation form as to how I'm doing as a principal, I'll tell you to go away and don't be annoying me...I do that every evening. Every evening I get into the car going home; the first thing I think of is right, how did the day go? (PROI15/381-383)

However, in an era of evaluation where 'I evaluate therefore I am' is seen by many as not completing the full cycle of evaluation. MacBeath et al. affirm that there has been a consistently increasing drive by external agencies to formalise all self-evaluating activities.

Formalising this process has, however, been taken to be the province of researchers, governments, inspectors, and a whole new empire of quality assurance experts and entrepreneurs. Yet, the ‘visitor-eye view’ as the Icelanders put it, never quite succeeds in penetrating the deep and complex under life of classrooms. (MacBeath et al. 2009, p.7)

On the other hand however, while it might be perfectly acceptable to suggest that dialogue evaluation has improved various aspects of education from an internal or external accountability perspective, unless a reliably sufficient quantity of qualitative and or quantitative data is available to substantiate assertions of improvement, it might also be acceptable to suggest that these assertions are nothing more than theoretical orates that could relate to any improvement function (e.g. distributed leadership, assessment for learning, transformation leadership, etc.). According to PNI2, ‘Sometimes you can get a head who talks a good game and talks about a good strategy. and the team gets beaten’ (PNI2/87). In this regard, one problem that appears to exist in the early stages of school development planning—while schools became capable of describing tools and initiatives in detail, there appears to be a gap in the evaluation spectrum. This occurs where reference is made to how the detailed plan and subsequent improvement actions effected school improvement. The supposition that in the early stages of school development planning there was a tendency to spend a considerable amount of time writing long reports as opposed to undertaking action oriented planning is affirmed by IROI2. ‘A lot of school planning is documenting what already exists and mapping that out rather than action-oriented action planning timelines’ (IROI2/11–13). Moreover, spending considerable amounts of time stating what is already known could, according to PROI20, can cause an aversion to future evaluation activities. ‘The process is important as so much comes up during that, but at the end of it, if you produce nothing, and you’re left with this notion, “What the feck was all that for at the time?”’, well then that’s a terrible, terrible thing’ (PROI20/333). Further to the point made by PROI20, INI2 is of the view that for IE and EE to effectively coexist, IE conducted in the school has to result in school improvement. INI2 states that ‘you see Internal Evaluation or self-evaluation, call it what you will, is only as good as the effectiveness of it. And if it hasn’t had an impact or if it hasn’t been effective, then that link between the internal and the external is dead in the water before it starts’ (INI2/8–10). Therefore, it would appear that there is a defensible need for what INI3 refers to as first-hand evidence if evaluation is used as either a liberating or accountability process.

You can have all of the processes that you want—we're going to do this we're going to do that—and that is all very interesting. I would then say, 'okay, this is what you wanted to improve. Has it improved, yes or no?' First-hand evidence demonstrates that yes or no, and you don't need counsellor perfection to demonstrate that, by the way. If you get an 80% improvement, quit while you're ahead here. That's how the success is judged, by the outcomes. I suppose as part of that, you do have to look at the processes; you know the efficiency of the processes and how well they are working as well. The key bit is the outcomes. I mean, we used to do quality assurance inspections, and they were very short reports. And we had a conclusion at the end. Do you know what the conclusion said? Do you know what it said the inspectorate will evaluate? It will evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of self-evaluation processes and procedures. (INI3/94)

INI2 believes that some schools find it difficult to describe first-hand evidence.

One of the hardest things in anything like this is to know exactly where you are. And, you know, to know do I need to improve that, and I'm not talking about data, and I'm not talking about results because they tell their story. But if you go into a primary school, or a post-primary school, and, okay, my subject is [NAME OF SUBJECT] and you talk about the whole literacy...Ahhh! It's not good. That's fine. What is not good? How do you know it's not good? Ahhh, I'm not sure but it's not good. So, there has to...maybe base-lining is the wrong word there, but do you know what I mean? It's that whole idea of calling exactly where you are, I'm talking from a school point of view, not us writing the report and telling you where we think you are but knowing exactly how to make the judgement in the first place, and surely to goodness...if there were processes there, if there was support there that would help people. You see, we put out the TTI, we put out the quality indicators, and all that there...and those are good, but you know quality is quality and it's like anything else, where do you sit on that continuum of quality? Is it good? Is it good enough for what I need? That's the hardest bit, I think, for school and anything that can be put in place to help schools make that initial call will only certainly improve their further attempt at effective self-evaluation. (454–476)

Further to the point made by INI2, INI3 believes that schools can be helped to understand first-hand evidence in order for the process of evaluation to be mutually beneficial to both the inspector and the school.

I think the main thing is that principals of the schools are more proactive in providing first-hand evidence to the inspectorate. Sometimes it might be helpful if they have an indication from the inspectorate in advance of what that first-hand evidence might be. I think that's the key bit. Produce first-hand evidence for the inspectorate readily. Then that makes the external evaluation better because it actually makes it their own evidence and they've been involved in the process. That's the main thing. (INI3/2)

It appears, therefore, that the supportive elements of EE are significant in realising the terms of its coexistence with IE. In the case of NI, one such example occurred when the DI accounted for the evaluative capacity of the school by assisting the school with the assembly of first-hand evidence for the dual purpose of school improvement and the accountability function of the inspectorate.

There are only four types of first-hand evidence in the real world: lesson observation, looking at books, children's written work or whatever, questionnaires to pupils. I know that's a perception, but it's still first-hand evidence and benchmark data. Obviously, the district inspector or the evaluator...this is about combining the advice and the evaluation. If I was having a conversation with the school when they were talking to me about that, I would say, 'make sure you pick first-hand evidence to suit what you're looking at'. You're not going to quality assure mental maths if you're looking at books. That has to be lesson observation. Sometimes it's not a bad idea for schools to think about these and being ready for self-evaluation and where your staff is ready for it as well. You might want to think, 'well my staff is ready to look at books. They might not necessarily be ready for lesson observation yet, so I'm not going pick mental maths, for example, as my focus'. And that's what an experienced district inspector brings to a school. (INI3/31)

In conclusion, Sheerens et al. (2003) state that 'school self-evaluation contains the possibility to bridge the distance between evaluation and school improvement, particularly when it is tackled as a joint learning experience from internal and external actors, like administrators, school leaders, teachers and external researchers' (Scheerens, Glas and Thomas 2003, ch.16.8, para.3); it would be reasonable to suggest that an alignment between IE and EE is occurring in both NI and the ROI, and this alignment appears to be serving both the school and its improvement agenda and the inspectorate and its accountability agenda. In light of this evidence it would seem that what is occurring is the applicable realisation of the coexistence between IE and EE in NI and the ROI. As stated by INI2, 'you see, you cannot inspect improvement. As a result of inspection, you cannot automatically expect improvement. As a result of self-evaluation, you cannot expect improvement. But as a result of Internal and carefully applied External Evaluation, then you can expect improvement' (INI2/184–188).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The initial title for this study was *Nijesh solk mwil start gyamyath* (save us from the time of trial). The saying originates from old Shelta, a language used among the travelling community in Britain and Ireland. Kirk and Ó Baoill (2002) state that the language is referred to by a number of names, such as Cant, Gammon or Tarri, although the etymology of its origins is contested. Indeed, within the lexicon of the travelling policy of educational evaluation, contestation relating to the purpose of and meaning of the terms ‘inspection’ and ‘evaluation’ are also open to debate; contrariwise, the former may be referred to as accountability or school effectiveness and the latter may be referred to as self-evaluation or school improvement. What is not open to debate however is the fact that the word ‘Shelta’ first appeared in written text in 1882. This same period also saw the establishment of a national inspectorate of education on the island of Ireland where ‘in May 1832, four men were appointed as inspectors’ (O’Connor 2001, p.2).

The role of the inspectorate, whose *‘raison d’etre* is to provide for government and people, or whomsoever, a balanced and fair assessment of how education is being provided’ (Coolahan 2009 p.314), was later summarized in a select Lords Committee of Inquiry on Education in 1837.

They were charged with investigating new applications for aid; they were to visit schools being built; and they were to visit schools actually in operation and to examine the work of the teachers and monitors therein (O h’Eideain, 1967: 128). The third duty became by far the most important, in practice it began to occupy most of the inspectors’ time and indeed has continued to do so up to the present time (O’Connor 2001, p.2).

Indeed, the core function of inspectors in both the ROI and NI has not changed since the Stanley Letter (1831). Furthermore, in the case of the inspectorate of NI, ‘the present Inspectorate is in direct unbroken descent from the Inspectorate established in 1832 by The Commissioners of National Education in Ireland’ (ETI 2012). What has changed since this period however is the view that education is now accepted as one of the key determinants for increased social and economic development, and within the global education space, effective educational evaluation policy and practice is also seen as being one of the foremost catalysts to ensuring that students have both the human and social capital required for active citizenship. By way of contrast, it is the author’s belief

that—not only in the field of education but also in other essential services such as public health and wellbeing—erroneous evaluation policy and practice at the school and regional level could also be viewed as one of the key factors resulting in successive governments and educationalists reverberating the plain language statement, ‘Where did it all go wrong?’ The importance placed on the significant role of educational evaluation in realising the stated goals and objectives of government and school, as advocated throughout this study, cannot be underestimated.

In this century, however, educational evaluation is no longer merely considered an external monitoring process or top-down externally devised legitimate dictate of examining, sanctioning or rewarding. In the case of inspections carried out in nineteenth century England, it was said that, ‘Superintendence ought to be felt; ... it should be a constant, forceful, living power’ (Graham 1885 in Thody 2000, p.53). Rather, educational evaluation is widely viewed as an allogamy of external evaluation carried out by the inspectorate in parallel with internal evaluation carried out by a school, the dual purpose of which is to serve both the accountability agenda on the one hand and the school improvement agenda on the other.

Commentators suggest that self-evaluation, embedded into the educational frameworks of most countries, is centred on a much wider decentralisation agenda in Europe and elsewhere. Whether perceived or true, there is also a widely held belief, in line with the key theme advocated throughout this study, that when inspection and self-evaluation are treated as interconnected units and used in partnership, both systems of evaluation have the potential to counteract the flaws that are inherent in each system. However, as Newton (2006) states,

Any quality assurance model, method or system, will always be affected by situational factors and context. This leads to the view that the success of a system may be less dependent on the rigour of application, and more on its contingent use by actors and protagonists, and on how the system is viewed and interpreted by them. (Newton 1999 cited in Newton, 2006)

Furthermore, it could also be argued that in order to gain an understanding of how best to form an amalgam between IE and EE, it is imperative that the perceptions of an array of stakeholders who are central to the process are taken into account. Otherwise, research of this type could be construed as selective and, to coin a phrase, an

unintentional form of *manufacturing consent*. To counteract this assertion, the approach taken in this study centred on a range of antecedent and perceived subsequent variables influencing and shaping how evaluation is interpreted from both the perspective of principals and inspectors who are deemed central to the process. However, it is acknowledged as a limitation of the study that other stakeholders who were not included in the study, such as parents and teachers, also form a significant part of the relationship between internal and external evaluation.

The aim of this thesis was to provide a critical analysis of school evaluation as it exists in practice. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study, coupled with a description of how behaviourist interpretations of evaluation are now being replaced with more constructivist approaches to evaluation that are however strongly influenced by historical interpretations of quality in education. Chapter 2 described the rise of the quality improvement agenda and, using Harvey and Green's (1993) and Harvey and Knights' (1996) classification of quality in education, also provided a description of how deterministic assumptions of quality have managed to influence the development of evaluation frameworks that currently exist. Leading on from this, the theoretical foundations for the study was described by using an extended version of Nevo's dialogue model for evaluation. Finally, a description of the systems of evaluation that exist in the NI and the ROI were described. Chapter 3 provided a description of the multi-phased mixed methods approach that was used in the study. Finally, using a modified version of Bushnell's (2000) training model, Chapter 4 extended the authors understanding of the relationship between IE and EE to four overlapping systematic layers of evaluation that have an effect on the co-existence between IE and EE. Leading on from this, each layer was subsequently classified into additional sub-layers in order to further elucidate participants' perceptions of the factors that affect the terms of co-existence between IE and EE.

Further to the evaluation layers mentioned, the research also investigated how other relevant, but often overlooked, antecedent variables have an effect on the commitment of inspectors and principals to fully embrace both forms of evaluation. These variables were inclusive of, but not exclusive to, the indirect effects of evaluation, such as changes in stress levels during the evaluation cycle and the efficacy and popularity of evaluation among users. The main conclusion argued by this study is the belief that there is a greater likelihood of understanding critical variables that affect the mutual

terms of co-existence between IE and EE and how both systems of evaluation have an impact on the quality of education provided when the systematic layers of IE and EE are analysed concurrently using both a theoretical framework and the practical experience of users. Indeed, the professional contribution of inspectors, management, teachers and the wider school community need to be recognised in an open culture of collaboration, trust and respect, empowering all members to make meaningful contributions to the school community as a whole and to recognise the deep meaning of teaching and learning.

In conclusion, after a four-year study consisting of an all island survey of every school principal in the ROI and NI that included interviews with a sample of principals and school inspectors in both regions, it would be reasonable to suggest that, despite the systems of evaluation in NI and the ROI having many similarities, both regions are undeniably at different stages of realising the dual culture of evaluation in education.

On the one hand, in the case of the ROI, it would reasonable to suggest that inspection of post-primary schools has been received as being a significant catalyst for school improvement (pp.228-234). In this regard, the DESROI could be commended for the manner in which inspection was introduced, particularly since, prior to its introduction in 2006, school inspection was an unfamiliar concept to the majority of post-primary school principals and teachers in this region. Moreover, one could also say that schools in the ROI must also be commended for the widespread acceptance of inspection rather than what could have been abjection and rejection. In the case of NI, it would also be reasonable to suggest that the system of school evaluation that has been developed, implemented, improved and used should also be used as a model of best practice for the creation of a culture of evaluation by other countries/regions; it appears that the pillars of partnership, transparency and trust are the very driving force for its implementation and success. Indeed, schools and the inspectorate of NI should also be commended for the creation of a culture of evaluation in education where, although tensions inevitably arise, having engaged with the process, the education community of NI now appears to be in the process of asking the question, ‘How do we as practitioner researchers improve the quality of education not only in our schools but also in our communities?’

As previously stated, there were many differences and similarities relating to the systems of evaluation that exist in both regions. However, one common trait existed among all of the various actors who participated in this study. That common trait, with all the benefits and indeed connotations and flaws of evaluation, provides great solace and optimism for the future of education in both the ROI and NI; it may be surmised by an inspector from NI when referring to the importance of context and culture in school evaluation policy and practice.

You know I remember being in [NAME OF COUNTRY] once... and inspecting a class. The teacher taught and some of them listened and some of them didn't and I said well, "What about those ones sitting at the back?" and he said "That's not my problem, that's the parents' problem"... We don't do that. You know, we work from the premise you know the pupil and Ireland's not that urbanised. (INI2/538-542)

Although the concept of evaluation as a vehicle for improving the quality of education provided by schools has been embedded to varying degrees into the education systems of both the ROI and NI, this research has also found various differences in both attitude and practice towards certain aspects of evaluation. On the other hand, this research has also found that there were also, quite frequently, significant similarities in attitude among principals and inspectors. These were most noticeable between inspectors with regard to the present and future direction of evaluation policy and practice in both regions.

In relation to the quantitative data extrapolated from the questionnaires, coupled with the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, the following section details the main issues and consequent recommendations drawn from the data presented in this study.

5.2 Recommendations emerging (input)

From an analysis of quantitative data, a majority of principals in the ROI do not believe that the existing resources provided are useful for IE, whereas in NI, this value is considerably less (Tables 4.2.1 to 4.2.2). However, a majority of principals in both regions believe that more resources are required (Tables 4.2.3 to 4.2.4). Furthermore, the majority of principals in both regions believe that schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of IE (Tables 4.2.5 to 4.2.4).

Further analysis of qualitative data revealed other limitations; consequently, it is recommended that, akin to NI, rudimentary IE training and research instruments should be provided to all ROI schools. In NI, the majority of principals who were interviewed were of the view that school personnel understand the fundamentals of IE and that the resources required were not those of a procedural nature. Rather, there was a need for resources on how best to share evaluative knowledge among and within schools and communities as a means of further embedding a culture of evaluation in schools (p.122-124). Indeed, with the establishment of Area Learning Communities in NI, coupled with the inspectorate evaluative knowledge gained from visiting schools, inspectors in the form of DIs could be ideally placed to lead this initiative by extending the number of shared case studies on elements of best practice beyond those presently in existence. However, as previously stated by INI1, it is challenging for schools to move from behaviourist competition to a more constructivist approach to school improvement in the form of co-operative competition between schools. In this regard, it is recommended that incentivised support is provided for schools to engage with the process.

Although CVA in the form of Free School Meals has become embedded into the evaluation frameworks of NI and by all extents from an analysis of qualitative interviews, there is a concerted drive for the use of CVA in the ROI (p.5, p.32 and pp.128-130). However, while recognising the benefits of data driven evaluations; at a global level, there appears to be an almost obsequious belief in the usefulness of such processes despite the component of error attached to such data-driven exercises. At the same time, those in power ignore or are unaware of the overwhelming evidence in regards to the most significant barriers to student achievement—the magnitude of importance is not so much the quality of teaching, it is far more quantifiably reliable variables such as a student's socioeconomic status, parental engagement or belonging to a minority ethnic grouping. An article referring to the misuse of accountability systems, written by Ravitch (2010), resonates well with this perspective and in many ways, Ravitch seems to highlight all that is flawed with monocratic nineteenth century evaluation systems that focused heavily on results from standardised terminal examinations as a proxy for quality in education.

It would be good if our nation's education leaders recognized that teachers are not solely responsible for student test scores. Other influences matter, including the students' effort, the family's encouragement, the effects of popular culture, and the influence of poverty...Since we can't fire poverty, we can't fire students, and we can't fire families, all that is left is to fire are teachers. (Ravitch 2010)

Furthermore, Obama, in his national address to school children at the beginning of the academic term (2009), stated,

At the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, the best schools in the world—and none of it will make a difference, none of it will matter unless all of you fulfil your responsibilities, unless you show up to those schools, unless you pay attention to those teachers, unless you listen to your parents and grandparents and other adults and put in the hard work it takes to succeed. That's what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education. (Obama 2009)

In this regard, it is recommended that the IE and EE evaluation frameworks that exist are revised to include more of an emphasis on the quality of school mechanisms and supports to facilitate and promote parental engagement in student learning, not only in designated disadvantaged schools but rather, in all school types, none of which exist to any significant extent in many systems. Indeed, as Harris and Goodall (2008) state,

parental engagement in children's learning in the home makes the greatest difference to student achievement. Most schools are involving parents in school-based activities in a variety of ways but the evidence shows that this has little, if any, impact on subsequent learning and achievement of young people. (p.277)

Furthermore, it would be reasonable to suggest that external test-based scores are the most significant desiderata from which schools are publicly judged. However, it is an undeniable fact that even when CVA results are adjusted for socioeconomic conditions—in almost every region in the world—the majority of schools that perform better in externally devised examinations, such as A level's and the Leaving Certificate, are those schools from more affluent areas. By way of explanation, the school league tables in the ROI's *Sunday Times* (March 2012) reveals that, in most cases, the highest progression of students to third-level study from all 730 secondary schools in the ROI are either from fee-paying or Irish-speaking schools. In the case of NI, an article in the *Belfast Telegraph* reveals similar results: of the 170 post-primary schools, only 'several grammar schools are being outperformed by non-grammars' (Ferguson 2012) in A-level results. However, and in many ways affirming that inspection is not only a data driven exercise, the article goes on to state,

School reports can also give a better indication of a school's achievements on the whole. Some of the schools that are lower down our rankings have much better performance when other criteria is used and many have received glowing inspection reports for their overall quality of education which looks at pastoral care, quality of teaching, quality of leadership, parental responses, special educational needs provision etc. (ibid, 2012)

Indeed, while it is the author's belief that schools that perform well in external examinations should be commended and if there is a need for these schools to celebrate their achievements by making their results publicly available, so too should schools that exhibit exceptional teaching, leadership, parental engagement, etc. in all socioeconomic settings. In this regard, with no significant cost to the exchequer and adding beneficial and true meaning to the term CVA, it is recommended that schools who show exceptional aspects of educational provision be given Department of Education specialist status that is maintained and reviewed over a period of time. This would have the effect of, 'United we stand, divided we fall' ensuring that a school from any socioeconomic condition who shows an exceptional aspect of educational provision receive the affirmation they deserve. It would also affirm that quality can be achieved in all areas of life. As per the recommendation of sharing evaluative knowledge, these schools could also be used as 'educational guides' by other schools who are in the process of trying to improve a particular aspect of educational provision.

In relation to the resources required for EE, from analysis of quantitative data, the majority of principals in both regions are of the view that inspection documents make the inspection process clear (Tables 4.2.7 to 4.2.8) and only a minority of principals in both regions are of the belief that more resources are required to prepare for EE (Tables 4.2.9 to 4.2.10). Furthermore, the majority of principals in both regions are of the view that pre-inspection literature provided by the inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to EE (Tables 4.2.11 to 4.2.12).

From an analysis of qualitative interviews, principals in both regions were of the view that inspection documents act as valuable instruments for schools to ascertain what is required for EE (pp.132-137). However, in the case of the ROI, where reference was made to WSE-MLL, confusion centred on the level of quantitative analysis that was required of the school (p.136).

From an analysis of quantitative data and adding significant confidence to the value placed on the professional capacity of inspectors in both the ROI and NI, only a minority of principals in both regions are of the view that inspectors do not have the capacity to conduct IEs (Tables 4.2.13 to 4.2.14).

From further analysis of qualitative interviews, however, it appears that, where the professional capacity of inspectors is questioned, it centres on the view among principals that inspectors did not have principalship experience prior to becoming inspectors (pp.138-139). Conversely, one could also state that many principals do not have principalship experience prior to becoming principals. On the other hand, a number of principals were also of the view that although inspectors had not been principals prior to joining the inspectorate, this does not actually change the quality of the evaluation. However, given the stated benefits of introducing AAs to the inspection process (pp.140-141), coupled with the success to which it has been greeted in NI, it is recommended that AAs also become part of the inspection process in the ROI and the DESROI refrain from recruiting the last remaining experienced principals in the ROI.

In relation to the capacity of school personnel to carry out IEs, from an analysis of quantitative data, a minority of principals in the ROI and a significant majority of principals in NI are of the view that staff at their school has the capacity to carry out IEs (Tables 4.2.15 to 4.2.16). However, the majority of principals in both regions are of the view that management and teachers need more training on how to conduct IEs (4.2.17 to 4.2.20).

Although principals in both regions are of the view that more training is required to carry out IEs, the training required is different. In the case of the ROI, the perceived training and consequent recommendation centres on the need for principals and teachers to receive training on the rudiments of evaluation. Moreover, a number of principals in the ROI who were interviewed were also of the view that principals needed peer review training to evaluate the professional capacity of teachers (p.146). Moreover, and as part of the author's recommendations, inspectors in the ROI were very much of the view that teachers require more training on how to work collaboratively with partners and that a culture of trust needed to be encouraged (pp.147-158, p.211). These requisites should be seen as part of the development in a teacher's or principal's practice—not as a weakness but rather as an opportunity for school improvement. In the case of NI, principals were

of the view that they had been provided with the necessary training on how to conduct IEs, having learned the rudiments of IE and having been provided with the necessary assistive tools and frameworks for IE, such as PRSDs and *Together Towards Improvement*. However, principals were of the view—which is also part of the author’s recommendations—that more peer-to-peer training among and between schools is required (p.148) in order to fully expedite the advanced stage of evaluation that is evident in many schools in NI.

Finally, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, there were uncertainties relating to other members of the community becoming part of the evaluation (pp.149-151). Although all principals and inspectors were of the belief that data relating to the quality of services provided by schools should be gathered from parents and students in the form of interviews and questionnaires, issues surrounding the capacity and voluntary nature of BOMs were of concern among interview participants. As stated by IRO12 when referring to BOMs in the ROI,

The local county councillor could be the chair. The parish priest could be the chair. A trusted past pupil, a retired principal, and some of those might have some of the skills that might be at the stages of careers that might be tired of it. It’s hard sometimes to find out where the dynamism will come from for action planning and review within boards. (IRO12/125)

After an analysis of qualitative interviews, it is recommended that the present training afforded to BOMs be extensively revised. Indeed, it makes little sense that various organisations provide isolated minimalist training to newly appointed board members given the fact that the majority of legislatively required duties of the respective boards are the same. In this regard, it is the author’s view that all of these respective groups have a collective duty to empower board members, such as parents, to become equal partners by providing training on all aspects of the role and function of BOMs rather than what is presently provided. Furthermore, it is also recommended that BOM members complete the necessary training prior to taking up their positions. One solution, given the voluntary nature of BOM members, would be to provide online training on the role and function of respective BOM members. This effort could be jointly funded by the respective bodies and over time, could also reduce the considerable costs involved in providing on-site training. It is also recommended that a review of how schools are governed is conducted, given the fact that there are in excess of 4,000 separate BOMs in the ROI.

5.3 Recommendations emerging (process)

From an analysis of quantitative data, the majority of principals in both regions are of the view that EE should be based on a combination of a school's IE and development plan (Tables 4.3.5 to 4.3.8), which is also in line with the views of the inspectorates of both countries. Principals in the ROI are also more in favour than principals in NI of being provided with a generic set of tools, methods and procedures for carrying out IE.

Although it could be reasonably inferred that principals in the ROI are in favour of a more isomorphic form of IE than principals in NI, it might also highlight the degree to which schools are able to carry out their own evaluations, as only 26.7% of schools in the ROI as opposed to 81.8% of schools in NI have a set of procedures for carrying out IE (p.152). However, proceeding the qualitative and quantitative part of the research, all primary and post-primary schools in the ROI have now been provided with procedures and guidelines for SE of teaching and learning (DESROI 2012). Indeed, as stated by the DESROI, 'Over time the guidelines will be further developed to support schools as they evaluate other key dimensions of school provision' (DESROI 2012b, p.8), with these key dimensions being that of leadership and management and support.

However, while it is recognised within *Towards 2016 Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006–2015* (Government of Ireland 2005) that schools are required to evaluate teaching and learning as a dimension of overall performance⁹ and 'over a four-year period from 2012, all post-primary schools should engage in school self-evaluation and produce three-year improvement plans for numeracy, literacy and one aspect of teaching and learning across all subjects and programmes' (DESROI 2012e, p.2). On the other hand however, although the dimensions for SE of leadership and management, pre *Towards 2016* will become embedded into future social partnership agreements if still in existence, it seems unwise to wait this long to provide schools with guidelines on these other two dimensions, especially given the view that 'the type of leadership exercised by the principal and the school's leadership team must be linked both to the school's profile of learning results and improvement capacity at

⁹ It is agreed that schools will consider the role and contribution of teachers to overall school performance in the context of the school development plan. Each school will assess performance by using the themes for self-evaluation set out in the above documents for the aspect teaching and learning as a dimension of overall school performance (Government of Ireland 2005, p.125).

any point in time' (Hallinger and Heck 2010, p.106). In this regard, it is recommended, akin to documents such as *Together Towards Improvement* (DENI 2010), that schools are provided with guidelines for SE of leadership and management before 2016 comes to pass. Indeed, although laudable, it also makes little sense for school leaders to venture towards new territories in the form of 'leadership for learning' without having any clear parameters on how their present practice in the form of leadership management and administration can be evaluated.

In addition, in line with the need to evaluate and improve the quality of education in schools, it is commendable that, within the WSE-MLL process, inspectors are gathering statistical data on the quality of education from parents and students through the use of parental and student questionnaires. The WSE-MLL guidelines state that 'the Inspectorate greatly values the views of teachers, parents and students as key stakeholders in the school community' (DESROI 2011, p.10). However, the preceding sentence states that 'as part of the WSE-MLL, questionnaires are administered to a representative sample of parents and students in order to get their views on the operation of the school' (DESROI 2011, p.10). In this regard, and in order to validate the inspection process further, it is recommended, akin to the inspection process in NI, that this process of data gathering is extended to what INI2 refers to as the hearts and minds of education in the form of school personnel who are deemed central to the process.

5.4 Recommendations emerging (output)

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that the recommendations outlined by the inspectorate in the EE report are fair and reasonable based on the present availability of school resources (Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.2). Furthermore, principals are of the view that external recommendations have resulted in a faster pace of educational change than would have occurred if recommendations had been made internally. However, in the case of the ROI, principal criticisms of inspectorate recommendations relate primarily to the fact that inspectorate recommendations could actually relate to a number of schools where it appears that recommendations were primarily centred on system rather than school compliance.

Of considerable note, however, was the fact that the inspectorate has not been in contact with the majority of schools in the ROI to see what stage the school was at in relation to

realising the recommendations from previous reports; the opposite is the case in NI. This is no surprise, given the limited number of inspectors employed in both NI and the ROI, the fact that inspectors are frequently assigned to other duties outside of school inspection and the fact that inspectors visit schools at relatively the same intervals except in extreme cases of unsatisfactory educational quality. However, assuming that schools will automatically initiate and have the capacity to realise external recommendations is unwise. In this regard, it is recommended that the inspectorates of NI and the ROI review their schedule of inspection visits whereby inspection visits should be proportionate and based on the change capacity of the school and the required improvement action needed. Indeed, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, a significant majority of principals and inspectors, when asked about their visions for the future of evaluation in education, suggested that their vision for the future of evaluation policy and practice related to the deployment of resources to schools that need help and support the most. An inspector participant, when asked about their vision for the future of evaluation policy and practice in the ROI, stated that ‘So from a policy point of view I would like to see internal evaluation being the main focus. External evaluation looking at national, informing policy and enabling resources to be properly distributed so that we would have perhaps a more equitable system intervention’ (IRO1/238). Indeed, further to IRO1’s view on enabling resources to be properly distributed, this study also recommends, akin to the role of the DI in NI, the repositioning of the majority of inspectors into disadvantaged communities in order to advise and support at an adjacent level, effective mechanisms for school improvement in communities that require the most support.

Further, to the recommendation on the need for proportionate-based inspection and support, it is recommended that the quality indicators in *Together Towards Improvement* be reviewed. This would also form the basis for proportionate-based inspection and support on a particular aspect of educational provision and would also bring clarity to IE planning and improvement priorities in schools. Although the quality threshold levels within *Together Towards Improvement* are based on a six-point quality-banding scale (outstanding, very good, good, satisfactory, inadequate, and unsatisfactory), it is recommended that the term ‘satisfactory’ be removed from inspectorate and IE criteria, as there is uncertainty regarding the long-term effect the word ‘satisfactory’ would have within the priority frameworks of any school

improvement agenda. As stated by PNI6, 'What does it mean? It means it will just about do. That is not good enough for kids'(PNI6/31).

It is also recommended that criteria within the quality continuum of evaluation, such as very good/good, and inadequate/unsatisfactory, be reduced in order to delineate anomalies relating to these threshold levels of quality, as is the case with other regional evaluation frameworks found in the ROI and New Zealand.

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that EE reports should be published on the Internet (Tables 4.4.5 to 4.4.6). However, the majority of principals in both regions are also of the view that IE reports should not be published on the Internet (Tables 4.4.7 to 4.4.8). This low figure appears to emanate from the recurring view among principals that EE should be used for accountability and IE should be primarily used for school improvement.

Donaldson et al. (2012) state that 'increasingly, as can be seen from the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) website, inspectorates across Europe are embracing transparency as integral to effective external evaluation. Such transparency is seen as fairer to those inspected as well as promoting the integrity, rigour and impact of external evaluation' (p.105). However, in the case of this study and contrary to the preceding statement relating to the importance of transparency in accelerating the impact of external evaluation, principals and inspectors were of the view that schools are more willing to engage with and furnish evidence to the inspectorate when EE reports are not published on the Internet (p.182). Consequently, participants were also of the view, without refuting the importance of public accountability, that the rigour of EE and consequent advice given by inspectors are more beneficial to the schools' improvement agenda when inspection reports are not published on the Internet. In this regard, and as part of the recommendations, while recognising the importance of public accountability, it appears that an acknowledgement and greater understanding of the reciprocal reality and consequent limitations of transparency need to be far more explicitly understood between inspectors and schools than they are at present. Otherwise, the relationship between IE and EE could become nothing more than veiled internal judgements of quality in order to satisfy external demands. As Perryman states,

The performative culture is so deeply ingrained in schools and education systems that I can foresee a game of permanent artifice, where schools squeeze their individual circumstances into a self-evaluation document designed solely to impress inspectors, and hold themselves in a state of perpetual readiness to live up to their claims, the model prisoner. In this context, 'bleak indeed is the desire for perfection' (Marshall 1999, 310)'. (2009, p.629)

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that inspectors should visit schools more often on an informal basis (Tables 4.4.11 to 4.4.12) and less often on a formal basis (Tables 4.4.9 to 4.4.10). Furthermore, a considerably higher number of principals in the ROI would like inspectors to visit schools more often on a formal basis compared to principals in NI.

While it might be assumed that principals in the ROI place a higher value on EE than principals in NI, from an analysis of qualitative interviews, it appears that ROI principals interviewed are of the view that more inspections of teacher performance were required because of the perceived view that principals in the ROI do not have the same level of legitimate power to deal with what is more commonly referred to as 'underperforming teachers' compared to other jurisdictions.

In addition to the perceived need by principals in the ROI for an increase in teacher accountability, although the majority of principals in both regions were of the view that more informal inspection visits were required, it appears from an analysis of qualitative interviews that principals in the ROI see one of the benefits of informal evaluations (in the form of unannounced inspections) is making teachers in the ROI more accountable. However, in NI, during the course of the qualitative phase of the research, issues surrounding teachers' professional competence rarely arose and the supports and collaboration required during informal visits seemed to centre on the need for the inspectorate and schools to work more collectively together to realise the recommendations of EE reports and also for the purpose of inspectors advising schools on their school improvement priorities.

Indeed, throughout the course of educational evaluation, policy and practice, far too often have educational initiatives been tried, tested and subsequently failed as a result of the misuse of legitimate, coercive and reward power structures. However, it is the author's view that in order to bring about long-term sustainable change for the benefit of all members of the school community that a far greater focus on evaluation should be centred on the informational, expert and referential aspect of educational evaluation

policy and practice. In this regard, it is recommended that the practice of informal inspection visits in the form of unannounced inspections in the ROI be more closely aligned to that of the purpose, function and practice of informal DI visits in NI. Furthermore, it is also recommended that informal visits in the ROI be negotiated with a purpose as opposed to, *admiratio*, in astonishment, inspectors arriving at the school gates. Indeed, as INI2 states in reference to the informal advisory role of DI visits in NI,

There's no point in going in with an external consideration when they're putting their focus on an internal consideration, so take it from where they are. So, that's where the whole idea of, you know, if I have a school in my district and they're working particularly well on the whole idea of language for learning, well why would I go in and look at numeracy? (64)

5.5 Recommendations emerging (commitment)

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that EE places a lot of stress on staff (Tables 4.5.1 to 4.5.2), whereas this value is considerably lower for IE (Tables 4.4.5 to 4.4.6).

From an analysis of qualitative interviews, however, it appears that one of the foremost factors relating to the stress caused by both IE and EE appears to centre on a challenge to the professional autonomy of teachers in the form of appraisal and peer observation (pp.199-200). There is also the view that peer observation is (to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, 'A rose is a rose is a rose') another form of accountability. Bell is of the view that 'peer observation of teaching offers many benefits such as improvements in teaching practice and the development of confidence to teach and learn more about teaching' (Bell 2005 cited in Bell and Mladenovic 2008, p.736). However, the authors go on to state that peer observation can also be seen as intrusive and challenging. Indeed, Cosh (1999), in line with the research findings from this study, also points out,

Both of these management techniques have strong educational justification behind them, and, used well, they can have a very positive effect on job satisfaction and staff development. On the other hand, many staff see them as threatening, potentially arbitrary, and judgemental. It is, therefore, extremely important for the assessor/observer and the assessee/observed to be aware of the rationale behind these procedures, and the spirit in which they should be carried out. (Cosh 1999, p.22)

From the evidence, it would be reasonable to suggest that schools in NI have engaged with the process of peer observation through PRSDs (p.225), and some schools in the ROI have engaged with observation through the observation of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). With regard to the ROI, DESROI states that ‘for many schools, however, such observation of teaching and learning for the purpose of school self-evaluation is a relatively new development’ (2012b, p.57). In this regard, it is recommended that peer-to-peer training be provided to all school personnel in the ROI. Furthermore, and in order to delineate perceived notions of the purpose of peer observations, it is also recommended that principals and managers of schools create a safe environment for peer observation of teaching practice with the purpose of the observation being that of teacher improvement as opposed to teacher accountability. Indeed, IROI2 is also of the view that management should place a greater emphasis on staff motivation and morale during evaluations.

One major success is trying to determine how it leads to school improvement and trying to quantify...student outcomes in examination terms or in levels of ability, ability of reading and writing. So really, does it affect student outcomes or does it lead to school improvement? Does it lead to one that I think is forgotten, you know, keeping motivation of staff and students high. I think in school environments, they don’t put enough emphasis on motivation, morale, that end of it. (IROI2/71–73)

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that both IE and EE take up a lot of time (Tables 4.5.9 to 4.5.12).

From further analysis of qualitative data, however, it appears that a considerable amount of time spent on evaluation and planning did not necessarily relate to the actual event of evaluation in the form of, for example, peer observation and data analysis, etc., but rather that of pre- and post-evaluation activities, such as form filling and gathering vast amounts of data. It appears that there was a view among schools that school development planning consists of describing enabling actions as opposed to measuring how effective the plan may be in bringing about school improvement (p.205). As stated by INI2, when referring to the early stages of school development planning in NI,

The Internal Evaluation became almost like a thesis or a doctorate, and it was hijacked by this whole idea of writing this wonderful report and then we foolishly...and this was a big mistake on our part—we started looking at their process of self-evaluation when all we needed to look at was how effective was it in promoting and bringing about improvement. (12)

In order for schools to analyse how effective enabling actions following a school evaluation actually are, it is recommended, in line with IN3's assertion, that schools be given the capacity and skill set required to produce what IN3 refers to as 'first-hand evidence'. This would also enable schools to take a far greater ownership of evaluation activities, and it would also allow the inspectorate more time to advise and support schools with regard to their school improvement planning strategies.

Furthermore, from an analysis of inspectorate interviews in the ROI, it is also recommended that the present schedule of inspections should be reviewed, as inspectors were of the view that the amount of time spent on repetitive, cyclical, school-based inspections, although of value, reduces the amount of time inspectors can spend on evaluating wider macro issues (p.206). Moreover, the present schedule of inspections also reduces the amount of time that inspectors can spend carrying out case studies similar to *An Evaluation of Planning Processes in DEIS Post-Primary Schools* (DESROI 2012c), which appears to have acted as a significant promoter for school-wide evaluation activities in schools of this type.

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that neither system of IE or EE is popular with staff, although IE appears to be more popular with staff than EE in both regions (Tables 4.5.13 to 4.5.16).

From an analysis of qualitative interviews, the perceived lack of popularity towards IE appears to centre on the time spent on pre- and post-evaluation activities. However, it also appears that the lack of popularity towards IE and EE is interrelated to the stress caused by evaluations. The principals and inspectors interviewed are of the view that a culture of inviting feedback does not exist in many schools. Indeed, according to PROI6, 'I do think that the biggest problem would be the culture and there isn't a culture of SE in. There is not a culture of self-evaluation in Irish schools yet. Not to say that that couldn't be fostered' (PROI6/16).

From an analysis of qualitative interviews, the perceived lack of popularity towards IE appears to centre on the time spent on pre- and post-evaluation activities. However, it also appears that the lack of popularity towards IE and EE relates to the stress caused by evaluations. The principals and inspectors interviewed are of the view that a culture of inviting feedback does not exist in many schools. Where a culture of IE has been

successfully introduced, it appears to have been led from the top down, i.e. principals initiated the process.

Although in the case of the ROI, *Towards 2016*, IE will primarily centre on an evaluation of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, in order to delineate the view among some teachers that IE is for the purpose of internal accountability and also to highlight that leadership is one of the central pillars of an effective education, it is recommended that principals in the ROI initiate the process of internally evaluating leadership and management activities in their schools in a safe environment that is conducive to leadership improvement as opposed to leadership accountability. Indeed, Bredeson states,

Scholars of organisational culture and leadership tell us that if you want to know what's important in a school, watch what the principal does... They establish learning as the core of their practice and they set the tone, direction, and expectations for learning in the school by what they pay attention to, what they do, and what they reward (2000, p.392).

5.6 Recommendations emerging (outcomes)

The majority of principals in both regions are of the view that EE results in better management, teaching and learning (Tables 4.6.1 to 4.6.4).

However, given factors outside the realm of inspection, the assertion that inspection can be directly correlated to school improvement is questionable. Nonetheless, almost all of the principals interviewed in both regions are of the view that inspection has had an impact on the quality of teaching, learning and management in their schools, in particular where adherence to management and teaching standards is required. In addition, as a result of inspection, a number of principals were also of the view that there was an accelerated rate of change in certain elements of practice, such as principals using external examination results to form the basis for IE activities.

Furthermore, the majority of principals also believe that IE results in better management, teaching and learning (Tables 4.6.5 to 4.6.8) where dialogue evaluation is seen as central to the process.

However, in order to increase the effect of IE, a number of principals and inspectors are of the view that there should be less time spent on secondary evaluation activities, such as writing up lengthy reports, and more time spent on primary evaluation activities such as peer review. Nonetheless, and as part of the study's recommendations, in order to fully utilise the process of IE and EE as promoters for change, inspectors were of the view that a better system, in terms of schools supplying inspectors with first-hand evidence, needs to be formed to increase the advisory role of inspectors. Indeed, the professional contribution of inspectors, management, teachers and the wider school community needs to be recognised in an open culture of trust and respect at both a regional and national level, empowering all members of the school community, inspectors or otherwise, to make meaningful contributions to the school community as a whole.

In conclusion, it is fitting to leave the last word to Nevo who states,

Those of us who are proponents of external evaluation should find ways to empower schools and teachers to participate as equal partners in the evaluation process and make use of it; and those of us who believe in internal evaluation as a means for school autonomy and teacher professionalisation must admit the legitimacy of accountability and the right of the public to know. They, in their turn, should seek external evaluation as a partner for dialog rather than an object for rejection. (Nevo 2010, p.784)

5.7 Recommendations for further research

Although there has been a considerable amount of research carried out on the perceptions of principals and teachers towards evaluation, only a limited amount of research has been carried out in order to ascertain the perceptions among inspectors towards IE/EE as one cohesive unit for school improvement. In this regard, more research is required to investigate the perceptions of inspectors towards the present and future direction of evaluation in schools.

From an analysis of studies on evaluation policy and practice, including the present study, studies of this type almost always seem to focus on the perspectives of those on the influential apex of evaluation. These studies seek to ascertain how to improve teaching and learning without taking into account the perspectives of those who are directly involved in the process, such as teachers and students. In this regard, as a means

of further improving the effect that evaluation has on teaching and learning, research relating to the opinions and experience of evaluation from the point of view of teachers and other school personnel would be welcome.

In this study, it was found that various factors such as time, lack of training and research instruments have had a debilitating effect with regard to the quantity and quality of internal evaluations that are carried out in schools in the ROI. In this regard, a feasibility study on the practicalities of setting up an IE unit akin to that of the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring in Durham University would be welcomed.

It is also recommended, that studies relating to the capacity and present function of BOMs be carried out in order to ascertain the challenges and effect that BOMs have on school evaluation, policy and practice.

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ALLOGAMIES AND REALITIES
DECONSTRUCTING EVALUATION IN
EDUCATION

(The Case of Ireland)

A thesis presented to Dublin City University
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Martin Brown

Supervisor

Dr. Joe O'Hara

July 2013

(Appendices)

Volume 2 of 2

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APPENDIX 1

INDIVIDUAL PHASES IN THE MULTI-PHASE
DESIGN

Figure 1: Individual phases in the multi-phase design: Adapted from Youngs, H., and Piggot-Irvine, E. (2012). Source: The Application of a Multiphase Triangulation Approach to Mixed Methods. The Research of an Aspiring School Principal Development Program. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(3), 184-198.

PHASE I (EXPLORATORY PHASE 1)	Phase II (EXPLORATORY PHASE 2)	Phase III (EXPLANATORY PHASE 3)	Phase IV (CONVERGENT PHASE)
<div> Level 1 Process Review of literature Product Development of questionnaire and conceptual framework for analysis </div>	<div> Level 1 Process Review of literature Product On-going comparison and contrast </div> <div> Level 2 Process (QUAN) Product (1) Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. (2) Analysis of QUAN results. (3) Development of Interview schedule for phase III of the study. </div> <div> Level 3 Process (QUAL) Product (1) Attitudes of principals towards IE/EE. (2) Transcripts of interviews (n=21) (3) Analysis of QUAL results (4) Development of interview schedule for phase 3 of the study. </div>	<div> Level 1 Process Review of literature Product On-going comparison and contrast </div> <div> Level 4 Process (Qual) Product (1) Perceptions of principals towards IE/EE. (2) Transcript of interviews (n=15) (3) Analysis of QUAL results. </div> <div> Level 5 Process (Qual) Product (1) Perceptions of inspectors towards IE/EE. (2) Transcript of interviews (n=6). (3) Analysis of QUAL results. </div>	<div> Level 1 Process REVIEW OF LITERATURE </div> <div> Level 2 Process (QUAN) </div> <div> Level 3 Process (QUAL) </div> <div> Level 4 Process (Qual) </div> <div> Level 5 Process (Qual) Product (Quan +QUAL) Presentation and Analysis of results </div> <div> PRODUCT OVERALL INTERPRETATION </div>

APPENDIX 2
PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE



PART 1

INTERNAL EVALUATION

(Carried out through the process of Self Evaluation)

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree Strongly
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1. Self Evaluation results in better Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Self Evaluation involves all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The inspectorate promotes Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. More emphasis should be placed on Internal Evaluation than External Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Internal Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Self Evaluation increases staff morale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. To ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures to carry out Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, they should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Does your School have a Self Evaluation Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES		<input type="checkbox"/> NO		
24. Does your School have a set of procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		

PLEASE USE THE SPACE PROVIDED IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ANY FURTHER
COMMENTS ABOUT **INTERNAL EVALUATION** OR THE ANSWERS YOU HAVE GIVEN

Thanking you in advance: Martin Vincent Brown B.Sc, M.Sc, H.Ed (*Doctoral Student Dublin City University*)



PART 2

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

(Carried out by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education)

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree Strongly
-------------------	----------	-------------	-------	----------------

1.	External Evaluation results in better Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	External Evaluation tells us nothing new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to prepare for External Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	External School Evaluation increases staff morale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	External School Evaluation should be based on a school's Self Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	External School Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	External School Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	External School Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	Pre-inspection literature from the Department of Education clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	The Inspectorate of the Department of Education have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	If your school was subject to an External Evaluation:	YES	NO	NA		
	(a) were the recommendations outlined in the Whole School Evaluation report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
22.	(b) have the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at in relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the Whole School Evaluation report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

While I realise that your time is limited, If you are also willing to participate in an interview (at your convenience) please leave your name and contact details in the space provided.

NAME: _____
PHONE: _____

ADDRESS LINE 1: _____
ADDRESS LINE 2: _____

PLEASE USE THE SPACE PROVIDED IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ANY FURTHER
COMMENTS ABOUT **EXTERNAL EVALUATION** OR THE ANSWERS THAT YOU HAVE
GIVEN

Thanking you in advance: Martin Vincent Brown B.Sc, M.Sc, H.Ed (*Doctoral Student Dublin City University*)

APPENDIX 3
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE DATA

	Region			
	Republic of Ireland		Northern Ireland	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Self Evaluation results in better management	4.39	.709	4.54	.501
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	4.34	.647	4.51	.541
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	3.91	1.010	3.91	1.016
Self Evaluation involves all staff	4.14	.809	4.41	.698
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	1.74	.744	1.69	.662
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	2.91	1.048	3.39	1.004
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	2.49	.936	3.00	.932
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.24	.869	3.98	.804
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.07	.836	3.81	.849
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	2.83	.988	3.80	.769
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	3.42	.989	4.04	.710
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	3.38	1.041	4.37	.812
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	3.71	.959	4.03	.810
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	3.92	.846	3.98	.915
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.26	.681	3.67	.954
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	4.06	.658	3.78	.719
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	2.77	.932	2.89	.994
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	2.55	.978	3.47	.745
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	3.05	1.029	3.74	.787
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	2.64	1.069	2.85	1.029
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	3.77	.934	3.13	1.031
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	4.09	.752	3.35	1.071
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by Region)¹				

¹ Since statistical data presented in table 1 are based on likert scales, these descriptive statistics are only an indication of differences between regions. Mann-Whitney non-parametric ANOVA is adopted to examine whether there is any significant difference among the 5 different school types.

	School Type									
	Community Comprehensive		Vocational		Secondary		Grammar		Non Grammar	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Self Evaluation results in better management	4.69	.468	4.40	.674	4.31	.760	4.44	.504	4.58	.498
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	4.52	.505	4.28	.591	4.34	.705	4.41	.560	4.55	.530
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	3.83	1.098	4.02	.954	3.86	1.019	4.34	.701	3.70	1.087
Self Evaluation involves all staff	4.12	.789	4.12	.767	4.15	.841	4.22	.870	4.51	.587
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	1.71	.544	1.64	.642	1.81	.835	1.78	.792	1.64	.595
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	3.23	.905	2.94	1.118	2.81	1.021	3.38	.871	3.42	1.061
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	2.67	.907	2.46	.917	2.46	.954	2.81	.931	3.10	.923
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.40	.536	4.35	.799	4.13	.962	4.13	.707	3.91	.848
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.27	.536	4.18	.790	3.96	.906	3.69	.859	3.87	.851
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	2.81	1.024	2.81	.970	2.84	.995	3.75	.803	3.85	.728
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	3.31	.949	3.47	.935	3.41	1.032	3.78	.870	4.16	.593

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by School Type) part 1

	School Type									
	Community Comprehensive		Vocational		Secondary		Grammar		Non Grammar	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	3.54	.922	3.44	.993	3.30	1.093	4.00	1.016	4.55	.634
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	3.79	.944	3.71	.964	3.69	.960	3.81	.859	4.13	.776
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	4.04	.824	3.84	.900	3.95	.817	3.88	1.040	4.02	.850
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	4.38	.489	4.30	.612	4.21	.756	3.66	.902	3.67	.991
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	4.19	.673	4.09	.614	4.01	.677	3.62	.793	3.85	.680
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	2.62	.866	2.82	1.017	2.77	.891	3.37	.833	2.67	.991
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	2.65	.956	2.44	1.095	2.59	.898	3.59	.615	3.43	.783
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	2.96	.955	3.26	1.100	2.93	.982	3.87	.554	3.70	.853
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	2.77	1.096	2.54	1.088	2.66	1.049	2.75	1.047	2.91	1.026
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	3.92	.871	3.63	.976	3.83	.913	2.81	1.030	3.27	1.009
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	4.17	.724	4.07	.770	4.09	.748	2.94	1.105	3.55	1.007
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by School Type) part 2 ²										

² Since statistical data presented in tables 2-3 are based on likert scales, these descriptive statistics are only an indication of differences among school types. Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric ANOVA is adopted to examine if there is any significant difference among the 5 different school types.

	Region			
	Republic of Ireland		Northern Ireland	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
External Evaluation results in better management	3.41	.980	3.44	.872
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	3.49	.917	3.41	.857
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	4.10	.803	3.48	.919
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	2.61	1.070	2.59	.937
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	3.60	.872	3.55	.786
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	2.08	.837	1.97	.775
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	2.29	.870	1.98	.670
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	2.17	.818	2.02	.799
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	3.26	1.129	3.11	.968
External Evaluation increases staff morale	3.01	.972	2.57	.960
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	3.62	.843	3.97	.692
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	3.46	1.014	3.74	.932
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	3.84	.830	3.76	.591
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	3.02	1.082	2.66	.823
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	3.65	.859	3.77	.793
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	4.17	.753	4.15	.885
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	3.29	1.022	3.66	.930
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	3.37	.961	3.58	.809
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	2.82	1.014	3.42	.896

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by Region)

	School Type									
	Community Comprehensive		Vocational		Secondary		Grammar		Non Grammar	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
External Evaluation results in better management	3.50	.923	3.46	.926	3.35	1.026	3.28	.888	3.52	.864
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	3.48	.899	3.52	.872	3.48	.952	3.31	.859	3.45	.863
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	3.94	.783	4.23	.675	4.06	.870	3.81	.780	3.32	.947
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	2.58	1.048	2.54	1.073	2.65	1.075	2.81	.965	2.48	.916
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	3.98	.526	3.55	.861	3.53	.924	3.47	.718	3.58	.824
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	2.12	.959	2.02	.799	2.11	.831	1.72	.634	2.08	.810
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	2.17	.808	2.22	.763	2.37	.940	2.03	.782	1.95	.618
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	2.15	.799	2.13	.799	2.20	.839	2.03	.897	2.03	.749
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	3.04	1.051	3.31	1.195	3.28	1.101	3.16	1.081	3.08	.917
External Evaluation increases staff morale	3.27	.962	3.02	.926	2.93	.995	2.28	.813	2.71	1.004

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by School Type) part 1

	School Type									
	Community Comprehensive		Vocational		Secondary		Grammar		Non Grammar	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	3.75	.887	3.62	.763	3.60	.879	3.97	.695	3.97	.701
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	3.48	.989	3.54	.978	3.39	1.046	3.72	.924	3.77	.925
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	4.04	.743	3.80	.826	3.80	.857	3.78	.420	3.77	.627
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	3.71	1.010	2.93	1.049	2.90	1.060	2.59	.798	2.70	.841
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	3.85	.743	3.56	.916	3.66	.841	3.62	.751	3.83	.815
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	4.04	.849	4.16	.706	4.21	.756	4.44	.669	4.02	.953
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	3.15	1.091	3.24	1.019	3.35	1.005	3.78	.941	3.60	.932
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	3.56	.796	3.29	.964	3.36	.991	3.47	.803	3.64	.816
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	3.08	.942	2.76	.967	2.78	1.053	3.37	.833	3.46	.920

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by School Type) part 2

	Region						
	Republic of Ireland			Northern Ireland			Total
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N
Self Evaluation results in better management	363	227.35	82529.00	99	246.71	24424.00	462
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	363	225.50	81855.00	100	255.61	25561.00	463
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	362	231.40	83767.50	100	231.86	23185.50	462
Self Evaluation involves all staff	362	221.48	80177.00	100	267.76	26776.00	462
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	363	233.03	84588.50	100	228.28	22827.50	463
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	362	219.01	79281.50	100	276.72	27671.50	462
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	359	215.21	77260.00	100	283.10	28310.00	459
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	361	241.60	87219.00	100	192.72	19272.00	461
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	363	241.40	87628.00	100	197.88	19788.00	463
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	363	206.08	74806.00	99	324.72	32147.00	462
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	361	214.26	77347.00	100	291.44	29144.00	461
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	362	204.04	73861.00	100	330.92	33092.00	462

Table 7: Rank scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by region) part 1

	Region						
	Republic of Ireland			Northern Ireland			Total
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	361	222.07	80168.50	100	263.22	26322.50	461
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	362	228.09	82570.00	99	241.63	23921.00	461
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	362	249.03	90150.50	100	168.02	16802.50	462
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	361	240.73	86903.50	100	195.88	19587.50	461
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	363	228.38	82901.50	100	245.14	24514.50	463
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	363	206.19	74847.00	100	325.69	32569.00	463
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	362	212.64	76975.50	100	299.78	29977.50	462
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	363	226.02	82044.00	100	253.72	25372.00	463
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	360	247.45	89081.00	100	169.49	16949.00	460
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	363	249.30	90497.00	97	160.13	15533.00	460
Table 8: Ranks scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by region) part 2							

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
Self Evaluation results in better management	Community Comprehensive	48	279.88
	Vocational	123	227.87
	Secondary	193	214.58
	Grammar	32	225.38
	Non Grammar	66	255.52
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	Community Comprehensive	48	256.12
	Vocational	123	209.18
	Secondary	193	228.99
	Grammar	32	233.64
	Non Grammar	67	264.51
	Total	463	
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	Community Comprehensive	48	224.96
	Vocational	123	244.42
	Secondary	192	224.59
	Grammar	32	283.42
	Non Grammar	67	207.46
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation involves all staff	Community Comprehensive	48	218.16
	Vocational	122	216.70
	Secondary	193	225.07
	Grammar	32	241.78
	Non Grammar	67	281.63
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	Community Comprehensive	48	238.90
	Vocational	123	220.20
	Secondary	193	240.11
	Grammar	32	237.83
	Non Grammar	67	222.57
	Total	463	

Table 9: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by school type) part 1

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	Community Comprehensive	48	257.19
	Vocational	123	222.01
	Secondary	192	206.95
	Grammar	32	275.92
	Non Grammar	67	279.66
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	Community Comprehensive	48	242.02
	Vocational	123	210.75
	Secondary	189	210.95
	Grammar	32	261.62
	Non Grammar	67	295.37
	Total	459	
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	252.04
	Vocational	123	257.09
	Secondary	191	228.63
	Grammar	32	209.41
	Non Grammar	67	185.10
	Total	461	
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	261.65
	Vocational	123	256.50
	Secondary	193	226.56
	Grammar	32	177.61
	Non Grammar	67	207.43
	Total	463	
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	Community Comprehensive	48	203.21
	Vocational	123	203.47
	Secondary	193	207.91
	Grammar	32	319.17
	Non Grammar	66	330.80
	Total	462	

Table 10: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by school type)
part 2

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	Community Comprehensive	48	197.88
	Vocational	123	219.84
	Secondary	191	215.12
	Grammar	32	259.23
	Non Grammar	67	307.01
	Total	461	
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	219.57
	Vocational	123	209.91
	Secondary	192	196.73
	Grammar	32	284.16
	Non Grammar	67	354.16
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	231.58
	Vocational	123	221.56
	Secondary	191	220.18
	Grammar	32	232.81
	Non Grammar	67	277.91
	Total	461	
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	247.74
	Vocational	123	215.84
	Secondary	192	231.96
	Grammar	32	233.27
	Non Grammar	66	243.18
	Total	461	
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	262.69
	Vocational	122	252.19
	Secondary	193	243.32
	Grammar	32	162.19
	Non Grammar	67	170.54
	Total	462	
Table 11: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by school type) part 3			

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	Community Comprehensive	48	262.61
	Vocational	123	245.10
	Secondary	191	232.34
	Grammar	32	176.66
	Non Grammar	67	204.61
	Total	461	
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	Community Comprehensive	48	208.73
	Vocational	123	233.20
	Secondary	193	229.60
	Grammar	32	312.33
	Non Grammar	67	215.00
	Total	463	
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	217.97
	Vocational	123	193.92
	Secondary	193	210.68
	Grammar	32	343.66
	Non Grammar	67	320.05
	Total	463	
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	47	199.79
	Vocational	123	241.50
	Secondary	193	196.70
	Grammar	32	316.20
	Non Grammar	67	295.17
	Total	462	
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	Community Comprehensive	48	238.79
	Vocational	123	215.85
	Secondary	193	228.89
	Grammar	32	240.94
	Non Grammar	67	261.49
	Total	463	
In order to ensure that is of Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	264.11
	Vocational	121	229.85
	Secondary	192	254.46
	Grammar	32	135.86
	Non Grammar	67	184.13
	Total	460	
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	259.70
	Vocational	123	246.22
	Secondary	193	248.52
	Grammar	32	118.72
	Non Grammar	64	179.95
	Total	460	

Table 11: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards Internal Evaluation (by school type)
part 4

	Region						
	Republic of Ireland			Northern Ireland			Total
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N
External Evaluation results in better management	363	231.27	83951.50	99	232.34	23001.50	462
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	363	234.70	85197.50	99	219.75	21755.50	462
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	363	250.23	90834.00	99	162.82	16119.00	462
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	363	230.57	83698.50	99	234.89	23254.50	462
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	363	234.40	85086.00	99	220.88	21867.00	462
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	363	234.82	85241.00	99	219.31	21712.00	462
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	362	240.56	87083.00	99	196.04	19408.00	461
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	362	235.45	85233.00	98	212.21	20797.00	460
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	363	235.04	85320.50	99	218.51	21632.50	462
External Evaluation increases staff morale	360	242.18	87185.50	99	185.70	18384.50	459

Table 12: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by Region) part 1

	Region						
	Republic of Ireland			Northern Ireland			Total
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	N
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	363	220.76	80135.50	99	270.88	26817.50	462
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	363	224.20	81383.50	99	258.28	25569.50	462
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	363	236.72	85930.00	99	212.35	21023.00	462
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	363	240.33	87241.00	99	199.11	19712.00	462
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	362	228.45	82700.50	99	240.31	23790.50	461
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	363	230.17	83553.50	99	236.36	23399.50	462
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	363	220.82	80158.50	98	268.70	26332.50	461
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	363	226.33	82159.50	99	250.44	24793.50	462
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	363	214.52	77869.00	98	292.06	28622.00	461
If your school was subject to an External Evaluation: were the recommendations outlined in the inspection report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources?	350	248.08	86829.00	99	143.39	14196.00	449
have the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at In relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the inspection report?	350	256.23	89680.00	98	111.18	10896.00	448

Table 13: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by Region) part 2

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
External Evaluation results in better management	Community Comprehensive	48	244.81
	Vocational	123	237.61
	Secondary	193	224.29
	Grammar	32	213.30
	Non Grammar	66	240.36
	Total	462	
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	Community Comprehensive	48	235.69
	Vocational	123	236.89
	Secondary	193	233.43
	Grammar	32	208.22
	Non Grammar	66	224.05
	Total	462	
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	Community Comprehensive	48	220.98
	Vocational	123	266.09
	Secondary	193	247.23
	Grammar	32	200.20
	Non Grammar	66	143.89
	Total	462	
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	Community Comprehensive	48	229.19
	Vocational	123	222.79
	Secondary	193	235.53
	Grammar	32	264.69
	Non Grammar	66	221.55
	Total	462	
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	Community Comprehensive	48	286.54
	Vocational	123	227.17
	Secondary	193	226.31
	Grammar	32	204.72
	Non Grammar	66	227.71
	Total	462	
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	Community Comprehensive	48	238.55
	Vocational	123	227.29
	Secondary	193	239.55
	Grammar	32	183.02
	Non Grammar	66	234.17
	Total	462	

Table 14: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by school type)
part 1

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	224.10
	Vocational	123	235.37
	Secondary	192	247.79
	Grammar	32	201.67
	Non Grammar	66	193.24
	Total	461	
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	231.03
	Vocational	123	230.87
	Secondary	192	238.48
	Grammar	32	210.44
	Non Grammar	65	215.71
	Total	460	
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	209.96
	Vocational	123	240.72
	Secondary	193	238.14
	Grammar	32	223.56
	Non Grammar	66	214.42
	Total	462	
External Evaluation increases staff morale	Community Comprehensive	48	277.59
	Vocational	121	242.88
	Secondary	192	232.15
	Grammar	32	148.64
	Non Grammar	66	204.96
	Total	459	
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	246.64
	Vocational	123	214.45
	Secondary	193	218.62
	Grammar	32	272.39
	Non Grammar	66	270.12
	Total	462	
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	Community Comprehensive	48	226.96
	Vocational	123	232.20
	Secondary	193	217.54
	Grammar	32	255.56
	Non Grammar	66	262.66
	Total	462	

Table 15: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by school type)
part 2

	School Type	N	Mean Rank
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	Community Comprehensive	48	264.23
	Vocational	123	231.57
	Secondary	193	232.05
	Grammar	32	211.19
	Non Grammar	66	215.80
	Total	462	
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	Community Comprehensive	48	320.94
	Vocational	123	230.69
	Secondary	193	225.77
	Grammar	32	191.27
	Non Grammar	66	204.24
	Total	462	
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	Community Comprehensive	48	257.33
	Vocational	123	216.41
	Secondary	192	229.18
	Grammar	32	216.58
	Non Grammar	66	251.33
	Total	461	
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	Community Comprehensive	48	213.56
	Vocational	123	226.16
	Secondary	193	236.60
	Grammar	32	276.61
	Non Grammar	66	217.71
	Total	462	
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	Community Comprehensive	48	204.59
	Vocational	123	216.12
	Secondary	193	228.34
	Grammar	32	283.78
	Non Grammar	65	260.57
	Total	461	
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	Community Comprehensive	48	250.90
	Vocational	123	215.35
	Secondary	193	226.78
	Grammar	32	238.14
	Non Grammar	66	258.09
	Total	462	
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	Community Comprehensive	48	247.24
	Vocational	123	207.23
	Secondary	193	210.45
	Grammar	32	285.95
	Non Grammar	65	297.94
	Total	461	

Table 16: Mean Ranks scores of Attitudes towards External Evaluation (by school type)
part 3

	Mann - Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Self Evaluation results in better management	16463.000	82529.000	-1.440	.150
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	15789.000	81855.000	-2.265*	.024
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	18064.500	83767.500	-.032	.974
Self Evaluation involves all staff	14474.000	80177.000	-3.490*	.000
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	17777.500	22827.500	-.355	.722
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	13578.500	79281.500	-4.041*	.000
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	12640.000	77260.000	-4.856*	.000
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	14222.000	19272.000	-3.598*	.000
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	14738.000	19788.000	-3.243*	.001
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	8740.000	74806.000	-8.339*	.000
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	12006.000	77347.000	-5.822*	.000
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	8158.000	73861.000	-8.935*	.000
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	14827.500	80168.500	-2.933*	.003
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	16867.000	82570.000	-.989	.323
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	11752.500	16802.500	-6.079*	.000
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	14537.500	19587.500	-3.431*	.001
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	16835.500	82901.500	-1.171	.241
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	8781.000	74847.000	-8.276*	.000
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	11272.500	76975.500	-6.156*	.000
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	15978.000	82044.000	-1.914	.056
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	11899.000	16949.000	-5.797*	.000
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	10780.000	15533.000	-6.703*	.000

Table 17: Mann-Whitney Test of difference for Internal Evaluation (by region)³

³ Items with a p value less than 0.05 are significantly different. Significant items are marked with a *.Correlation among the variables are evaluated using the spearman rank correlation coefficient. Rank correlations are given in a separate table. Significant rank correlations are marked with a *.

	Chi - Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Self Evaluation results in better management	14.835	4	.005
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	11.879	4	.018
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	10.033	4	.040
Self Evaluation involves all staff	15.601	4	.004
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	2.795	4	.593
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	23.597	4	.000
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	28.743	4	.000
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	18.138	4	.001
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	18.194	4	.001
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	72.347	4	.000
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	38.413	4	.000
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	88.166	4	.000
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	11.737	4	.019
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	3.561	4	.469
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	37.980	4	.000
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	15.984	4	.003
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	15.759	4	.003
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	73.034	4	.000
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	50.601	4	.000
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	5.905	4	.206
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	42.048	4	.000
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	51.475	4	.000
Table 18: Kruskal Wallis Test of difference for Internal Evaluation (by school type) ⁴			

⁴ Items with a p value less than 0.05 are significantly different. Thus, the Kruskal Wallis test suggests that all items are significantly different among the five school types except the highlighted items.

	Mann - Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
External Evaluation results in better management	17885.500	83951.500	-.077	.939
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	16805.500	21755.500	-1.100	.271
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	11169.000	16119.000	-6.417*	.000
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	17632.500	83698.500	-.317	.751
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	16917.000	21867.000	-1.058	.290
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	16762.000	21712.000	-1.143	.253
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	14458.000	19408.000	-3.271*	.001
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	15946.000	20797.000	-1.723	.085
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	16682.500	21632.500	-1.139	.255
External Evaluation increases staff morale	13434.500	18384.500	-3.917*	.000
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	14069.500	80135.500	-3.814*	.000
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	15317.500	81383.500	-2.431*	.015
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	16073.000	21023.000	-1.913	.056
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	14762.000	19712.000	-2.876*	.004
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	16997.500	82700.500	-.920	.358
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	17487.500	83553.500	-.459	.646
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	14092.500	80158.500	-3.353*	.001
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	16093.500	82159.500	-1.754	.079
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	11803.000	77869.000	-5.361*	.000
If your school was subject to an External Evaluation: were the recommendations outlined in the inspection report reasonable based on the present availability of school resources?	9246.000	14196.000	-7.883*	.000
have the inspectorate been in contact with you to see what stage you are at In relation to implementing the recommendations outlined in the inspection report?	6045.000	10896.000	- 10.704	.000

Table 19: Mann-Whitney Test of difference for External Evaluation (by region)⁵

⁵ Items with a p value less than 0.05 are significantly different. Significant items are marked with a *.Correlation among the variables are evaluated using the spearman rank correlation coefficient. Rank correlations are given in a separate table. Significant rank correlations are marked with a *.

	Chi - Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
External Evaluation results in better management	2.584	4	.630
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	1.820	4	.769
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	51.142*	4	.000
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	3.773	4	.438
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	13.922*	4	.008
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	6.482	4	.166
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	12.524*	4	.014
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	2.807	4	.591
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	3.811	4	.432
External Evaluation increases staff morale	23.721*	4	.000
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	17.177*	4	.002
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	7.935	4	.094
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	6.417	4	.170
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	30.748*	4	.000
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	7.282	4	.122
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	7.189	4	.126
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	13.227*	4	.010
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	6.982	4	.137
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	34.164*	4	.000

Table 20: Kruskal Wallis Test of difference for External Evaluation (by school type)⁶

⁶ Items with a p value less than 0.05 are significantly different. Thus, the Kruskal Wallis test suggests that items highlighted with a * are significantly different among the five school types.

	Self Evaluation results in better management	Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	Self Evaluation involves all staff	Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation increases staff morale	Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation
Self Evaluation results in better management	1.000	.727(**)	.018	.321(**)	-.308(**)	.144(**)	.118(*)	.048	.084	.113(*)	-.169(**)	.205(**)	-.235(**)	.208(**)	.038	.210(**)	-.062	.079	.163(**)	.110(*)	.025	.041
Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	.727(**)	1.000	-.040	.329(**)	-.307(**)	.201(**)	.145(**)	.036	.079	.205(**)	.224(**)	.275(**)	.225(**)	.181(**)	.026	.164(**)	-.015	.163(**)	.157(**)	.172(**)	.061	.075
Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	.018	-.040	1.000	.099(*)	.039	-.220(**)	-.134(**)	-.105(*)	.007	.002	-.031	-.011	.052	.010	.062	-.145(**)	.263(**)	-.091	-.026	.006	.096(*)	.047
Self Evaluation involves all staff	.321(**)	.329(**)	.099(*)	1.000	-.212(**)	.172(**)	.156(**)	.041	.112(*)	.221(**)	.237(**)	.229(**)	.260(**)	.203(**)	.076	.224(**)	.041	.162(**)	.212(**)	.183(**)	.004	.044
Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	-.308(**)	-.307(**)	.039	-.212(**)	1.000	-.150(**)	-.004	-.162(**)	-.148(**)	-.014	-.086	-.124(**)	-.156(**)	-.159(**)	-.138(**)	-.079	.075	-.030	-.127(*)	-.041	-.035	-.065
The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	.144(**)	.201(**)	-.220(**)	.172(**)	-.150(**)	1.000	.404(**)	-.100(*)	-.057	.267(**)	.247(**)	.121(**)	.123(**)	.173(**)	-.040	.144(**)	-.126(**)	.251(**)	.147(**)	.081	-.085	-.012
Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	.118(*)	.145(**)	-.134(**)	.156(**)	-.004	.404(**)	1.000	-.227(**)	-.129(**)	.421(**)	.263(**)	.172(**)	-.007	.015	-.041	.043	-.125(**)	.284(**)	.232(**)	.087	-.159(**)	-.098(**)
Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	.046	.036	.105(*)	.041	-.162(**)	-.100(*)	-.227(**)	1.000	.637(**)	-.164(**)	-.060	-.133(**)	.075	.110(*)	.336(**)	.053	.131(**)	-.186(**)	-.231(**)	.034	.111(*)	.196(**)
Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	.084	.079	.007	.112(*)	-.148(**)	-.057	-.129(**)	.637(**)	1.000	-.060	-.065	-.114(*)	.091	.121(**)	.350(**)	.090	.158(**)	-.111(*)	-.252(**)	.071	.085	.195(**)
Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	.113(*)	.205(**)	.002	.221(**)	-.014	.267(**)	.421(**)	-.164(**)	-.060	1.000	.550(**)	.337(**)	.082	.061	-.061	.001	.048	.327(**)	.270(*)	.174(**)	-.148(**)	-.123(**)
The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	.169(**)	.224(**)	-.031	.237(**)	-.086	.247(**)	.263(**)	-.090	-.065	.550(**)	1.000	.341(**)	.108(*)	.085(*)	-.037	.011	-.022	.214(**)	.167(**)	.115(*)	-.091	-.011
The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	.205(**)	.275(**)	-.011	.229(**)	-.124(**)	.321(**)	.172(**)	-.133(*)	-.114(*)	.337(**)	.341(**)	1.000	.154(**)	.033	-.075	.019	.011	.290(**)	.135(**)	.042	-.090	-.040

Table 21: Non parametric Spearman's Correlation Coefficient -Internal Evaluation part 1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

	Self Evaluation results in better management	Self Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	Self Evaluation takes up a lot of time	Self Evaluation involves all staff	Self Evaluation tells us nothing new	The process of Self Evaluation is easy to understand	Self Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	Teachers need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Teachers carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Self Evaluation on a regular basis in this school	The Education and Training Inspectorate promote Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation increases staff morale	Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation
Self Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External School Evaluation	.235(**)	.225(**)	.052	.260(**)	-.156(**)	.123(**)	-.007	.075	.091	.082	.108(*)	.154(**)	1.000	.674(**)	.230(**)	.246(**)	.009	.065	.106(*)	.183(**)	.004	.080
More emphasis should be placed on internal Self Evaluation than external School Evaluation	.206(**)	.181(**)	.010	.203(**)	-.159(**)	.173(**)	.015	.110(*)	.121(**)	.051	.095(*)	.033	.674(**)	1.000	.283(**)	.294(**)	.000	.096(*)	.098(*)	.186(**)	.057	.100(*)
More resources are required from the Department of Education on how to carry out Self Evaluation	.038	.026	.082	.076	-.138(**)	-.040	-.041	.336(**)	.350(**)	-.061	-.037	-.075	.230(**)	.283(**)	1.000	.272(**)	.053	-.155(**)	-.187(**)	.005	.139(**)	.260(**)
Self Evaluation increases staff morale	.210(**)	.184(**)	-.145(**)	.224(**)	-.079	.144(**)	.043	.053	.090	.001	.011	.019	.246(**)	.294(**)	.272(**)	1.000	-.172(**)	-.064	.081	.161(**)	.087	.083
Self Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	-.062	-.015	.283(**)	.041	.075	-.126(**)	-.125(**)	.131(**)	.158(**)	.049	-.022	.011	.009	.000	.053	-.172(**)	1.000	.037	-.097(*)	.010	.033	.035
The existing resources provided by the Department of Education are useful for Self Evaluation	.079	.163(**)	-.091	.192(**)	-.030	.251(**)	.284(**)	-.188(**)	-.111(*)	.327(**)	.214(**)	.280(**)	.065	.096(*)	-.155(**)	-.064	.037	1.000	.195(**)	.147(**)	-.147(**)	-.133(**)
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out Self Evaluation	.193(**)	.157(**)	-.026	.212(**)	-.127(**)	.147(**)	.232(**)	-.231(**)	-.252(**)	.270(**)	.167(**)	.135(**)	.106(*)	.098(*)	-.187(**)	.081	-.097(*)	.195(**)	1.000	.109(*)	-.105(*)	-.161(**)
Self Evaluation reports should be published on the schools web site	.110(*)	.172(**)	.006	.183(**)	-.041	.081	.087	.034	.071	.174(**)	.115(*)	.042	.183(**)	.186(**)	.005	.161(**)	.010	.147(**)	.106(*)	1.000	.038	.006
In order to ensure that Self Evaluation is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures for carrying out Self Evaluation	.025	.061	.096(*)	.004	-.035	-.085	-.159(**)	.111(*)	.085	-.149(**)	-.091	-.090	.004	.057	.139(**)	.087	.033	-.147(**)	-.105(*)	.038	1.000	.549(**)
Rather than each school spending valuable time and resources developing their own Self Evaluation Procedures, each school should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of Self Evaluation	.041	.075	.047	.044	-.085	-.012	-.098(*)	.190(**)	.196(**)	-.123(**)	-.011	-.040	.080	.100(*)	.280(**)	.083	.035	-.133(**)	-.161(**)	.006	.549(**)	1.000

Table 22: Non parametric Spearman's Correlation Coefficient-internal Evaluation part 2

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

	External Evaluation results in better management	External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	External Evaluation tells us nothing new	The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	External Evaluation increases staff morale	External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections
External Evaluation results in better management	1.000	.714(**)	-.065	-.366(**)	.046	.090	.171(**)	.189(**)	.042	.248(**)	-.075	-.053	-.003	.075	.119(*)	-.069	.073	.077	.086
External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	.714(**)	1.000	-.036	-.350(**)	.063	.116(*)	.226(**)	.214(**)	.075	.218(**)	-.041	-.042	.066	.059	.075	-.065	.087	.034	-.002
External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	-.065	-.036	1.000	.087	-.101(*)	-.177(**)	-.037	-.083	.243(**)	-.091	-.013	.094(*)	.013	-.033	-.107(*)	.325(**)	-.043	-.135(**)	-.230(**)
External Evaluation tells us nothing new	-.366(**)	-.350(**)	.087	1.000	-.048	-.146(**)	-.120(*)	-.084	.065	-.256(**)	.126(**)	.101(*)	-.061	-.099(*)	-.084	.182(**)	-.073	-.079	-.093(*)
The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	.046	.063	-.101(*)	-.048	1.000	.127(**)	.098(*)	.041	-.282(**)	.162(**)	.031	-.021	.046	.130(**)	.357(**)	-.069	.037	.357(**)	.085
External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	.090	.116(*)	-.177(**)	-.146(**)	.127(**)	1.000	.322(**)	.370(**)	-.045	.338(**)	-.106(*)	-.033	.083	.147(**)	.108(*)	-.382(**)	.184(**)	.123(**)	.080
External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	.171(**)	.226(**)	-.037	-.120(*)	.098(*)	.322(**)	1.000	.605(**)	.063	.163(**)	-.285(**)	-.011	.015	.057	.020	-.170(**)	.084	.053	.068
More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	.189(**)	.214(**)	-.083	-.084	.041	.370(**)	.605(**)	1.000	.003	.158(**)	-.258(**)	-.048	-.021	.072	-.003	-.187(**)	.070	.034	.102(*)
More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	.042	.075	.243(**)	.065	-.282(**)	-.045	.063	.003	1.000	.008	.070	.120(*)	.088	.003	-.248(**)	.203(**)	.045	-.197(**)	-.030
External Evaluation increases staff morale	.248(**)	.218(**)	-.091	-.256(**)	.162(**)	.338(**)	.163(**)	.158(**)	.008	1.000	-.098(*)	-.024	.118(*)	.253(**)	.153(**)	-.117(*)	.208(**)	.167(**)	.118(*)

Table 23: Non parametric Spearman's Correlation Coefficient -External Evaluation part 1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

	External Evaluation results in better management	External Evaluation results in better teaching and learning	External Evaluation takes up a lot of time	External Evaluation leads us nothing new	The process of External Evaluation is easy to understand	External Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in this school	External Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than Self Evaluation	More emphasis should be placed on External Evaluation than Internal Self Evaluation	More resources are required from the Education and Training Inspectorate on how to prepare for External Evaluation	External Evaluation increases staff morale	External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Self Evaluation	-.075	-.041	-.013	.126(**)	.031	-.106(*)	-.285(**)	-.258(**)	.070	-.098(*)	1.000	.306(**)	.063	.005	-.031	-.008	.045	-.031	-.078
External Evaluation should be based on the school's Development plan	-.053	-.042	.094(*)	-.101(*)	-.021	-.033	-.011	-.048	.120(*)	-.024	.308(**)	1.000	.099(*)	.047	-.001	.075	.122(**)	-.002	.029
Inspectors should visit the school more often on an informal basis	-.003	.066	.013	-.061	.046	.083	.015	-.021	.068	.118(*)	.063	.069(*)	1.000	.216(**)	.101(*)	.032	.101(*)	.009	.034
Inspectors should visit the school more often on a formal basis	.075	.059	-.033	-.099(*)	.130(**)	.147(**)	.057	.072	.003	.253(**)	.005	.047	.216(**)	1.000	.119(*)	-.074	.042	.095(*)	-.009
Inspection documents for Schools makes clear the inspection process	.119(*)	.075	-.107(*)	-.084	.357(**)	.106(*)	.020	-.003	-.248(**)	.153(**)	-.031	-.001	.101(*)	.119(*)	1.000	-.013	.162(**)	.582(**)	.255(**)
External Evaluation places a lot of stress on staff	-.069	-.065	.325(**)	.182(**)	-.069	-.382(**)	-.170(**)	-.167(**)	.203(**)	-.117(*)	-.008	.075	.032	-.074	-.013	1.000	.052	-.054	.012
External Evaluation reports should be published on the internet	.073	.087	-.043	-.073	.037	.194(**)	.064	.070	.045	.208(**)	.045	.122(**)	.101(*)	.042	.162(**)	.052	1.000	.105(*)	.132(**)
Pre-inspection literature from the Education and Training Inspectorate clarifies all issues relating to External School Evaluation	-.077	.034	-.135(**)	-.078	.357(**)	.123(**)	.053	.034	-.197(**)	.167(**)	-.031	-.002	.009	.095(*)	.582(**)	-.054	.105(*)	1.000	.318(**)
The Education and Training Inspectorate have the necessary skills required to carry out School inspections	.086	-.002	-.230(**)	-.093(*)	.085	.080	.068	.102(*)	-.038	.118(*)	-.078	.028	.034	-.009	.255(**)	.012	.152(**)	.316(**)	1.000

Table 24: Non parametric Spearman's Correlation Coefficient -External Evaluation part 2

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Item sub scales	Cronbach's alpha	
	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Existing Resources (<i>External Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection documents make clear the inspection process. • Pre inspection literature clarifies all issues relating to External Evaluation. 	0.748	0.803
Required Resources (<i>Internal Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Resources are required for Internal Evaluation. • Rather than each school spending time and resources developing their own internal evaluation procedures, schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of internal evaluation. 	.376	.280
Building Capacity (<i>Internal Evaluators</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers need more training on how to conduct Internal Evaluations • Principals and vice principals need more training on how to conduct Internal Evaluations 	.828	.762
Efficacy (<i>External Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Evaluation tells us nothing new. • Internal Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External Evaluation. 	.764	.552
Efficacy (<i>Internal Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Evaluation tells us nothing new. • Internal Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External Evaluation. 	.423	.306
Frequency (<i>Internal Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers conduct SE on a regular basis. • The Principal and Vice Principal conduct IE on a regular basis. • The Inspectorate promotes IE. 	.663	.742
Outcomes (<i>External Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Evaluation Results in better teaching and learning. • External Evaluation Results in better Management. 	.874	.769
Outcomes (<i>Internal Evaluation</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Evaluation Results in better teaching and learning. • Self Evaluation results in better management. 	.869	.874

Table 25: Reliability Analysis Sub Scales

APPENDIX 4

Interview Schedule for Principals and Inspectors

Appendix 4.1

Interview Schedule for exploratory phase 2

1. What are the advantages of External Evaluation?
2. What are the disadvantages of External Evaluation?
3. What are the advantages of Internal Evaluation?
4. What are the disadvantages of Internal Evaluation?

Appendix 4.2

Interview Schedule for explanatory phase 3

Internal Evaluation

1. Should all schools have a documented internal evaluation policy and a set of procedures for carrying out internal evaluation?
2. What in your opinion are the essential skills/tools required (*not necessarily specific to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*) for effective internal evaluations to take place? (*Do you think school personnel have these necessary skills/tools?*)
3. Does internal evaluation need to be promoted more in schools?
4. How in your opinion can schools/management become more pro active in the promotion/implementation of internal evaluation?
5. Should schools be provided with a generic set of tools for implementing internal evaluation or should they develop their own tools, research instruments for carrying out internal evaluation?
6. To ensure that internal evaluation is of an acceptable standard, should schools use the same methods and procedures for carrying out internal evaluation?
7. Should it be a legislative requirement for schools to carry out their own internal evaluations?
8. How can the present system of internal evaluation be enhanced?

External Evaluation

9. How can schools be more assistive to the inspectorate when carrying out external evaluations?
10. Given the fact that the majority of Principals in the national survey are of the belief that: "the recommendations outlined by the inspectorate in the external evaluation report were reasonable based on the present availability of school resources"; should external evaluators visit schools more regularly (either

formally or informally) in order to support and ascertain what stage a school is at in relation to implementing these recommendations or should schools be more pro-active by providing the inspectorate with (or have available) an interim progress/internal evaluation report?

11. How can the present system of external evaluation be enhanced?

12. Should a schools internal evaluation and school development plan form a significant part of the external evaluations?

Internal/External Evaluation

13. In your opinion what are the essential requirements needed for internal and external evaluation to mutually and beneficially co-exist?

14. What is your vision for the future of evaluation in education?

APPENDIX 5
SCREEN SHOT OF ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDES OF POST PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL/EXTERNAL EVALUATION					EXIT
3.					
1. Internal Evaluation tells us nothing new					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
2. The Process of Internal Evaluation is easy to understand					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
3. Internal Evaluation is popular with the majority of staff in the school					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
4. Teachers need more training on how to carry out Internal Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
5. Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Internal Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
6. Teachers carry out Internal Evaluation on a regular basis in this school					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
7. Principals and Vice Principals need more training on how to carry out Internal Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
8. The Principal and Vice Principal carry out Internal Evaluation on a regular basis in this school					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
9. The inspectorate promotes Internal Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
10. Internal Evaluation is a better approach towards improving teaching and learning than External Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	
11. More emphasis should be placed on internal Evaluation than external Evaluation					
<input type="radio"/> Disagree Strongly	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Indifferent	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree Strongly	

(Figure 2: Screen shot of On-Line Questionnaire)

APPENDIX 6

Cover Letter and Informed Consent Forms

M. Brown
Gaulmoylestown Lake
Knockdrin
Mullingar
County Westmeath
Ireland

Phone: 044-9372024 / 046-9481654
e-mail: martin.brown7@mail.dcu.ie

The Principal
<<Address Line 1>>
<<Address Line 2>>
<<Address Line 3>>

5/9/2009

Dear Principal,

School evaluation, be it either external evaluation carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate or internal evaluation (carried out by a school through the process of Self Evaluation) has now become an integral component of School life with particular emphasis being put on the onus of management to put in place mechanisms and procedures that allow for this process to take place.

Whereas external and internal School Evaluation may be viewed as an appraisal of a schools current functioning (*strengths and weaknesses*) as a point of departure for a plan or vision for the future; there is considerable debate among Principals, teachers and school inspectors with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of both of these mechanisms of appraisal.

With this in mind, it is vitally important that attention is paid to the views of all stakeholders who form a core component of the internal/external evaluation process. In order to translate these opinions into policy and practice, a National Survey of "Post Primary School Principals attitudes towards internal/external Evaluation in Ireland" is now being carried out as part of a research study under the supervision of [Dr. Joe O'Hara at Dublin City University](#).

While I can only imagine at this stage of the year that you are probably inundated with work and more than likely saturated with questionnaires from other sources, if at all possible could you please take four or five minutes to fill out the attached questionnaire and return it in the supplied stamped addressed envelope.

Please note that:

- a. Information gathered from this study will be used solely for the intended research;
- b. Participant/school names and identities will be omitted from the report;
- c. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time;
- d. The final report will be made available for all participants involved in the study.

Yours Sincerely

Martin Brown



Dear Martin

25 May 2010

Thank you for the time and the care you have taken in responding to the questions posed by [REDACTED] on foot of your request to research the views of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) on school self-evaluation and external evaluation. These responses have been reassuring in a number of aspects. Your original report is of interest to us and, after careful consideration, I can see value of contributing to the next stage which you have proposed.

The ETI receives many requests for its members to participate in surveys of various types and I and my Colleagues normally take the view that they should not do so, in order to protect them from excessive demands on top of their busy work commitments. However, I would be content to arrange for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to be interviewed on these aspects of our work. [REDACTED] is well-placed to provide evidence and inputs for you which reflect the views of the ETI.

If you feel that this would be helpful for your research, please contact [REDACTED] directly, giving [REDACTED] information on the questions which you wish to pose. [REDACTED] will then liaise with you regarding the arrangements for your interviews.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

STANLEY J GOUDIE

Interview: Inspectorate

<[REDACTED]@education.gov.ie>

to me, [REDACTED]

☆

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⌵

Dear Martin,

[REDACTED] Inspector, has agreed to meet with you to discuss your research questions. It would be most helpful if you could forward the questions you wish to discuss or explore to [REDACTED] (email: [REDACTED]@education.gov.ie) and [REDACTED] will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the interview towards the middle of June or later.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Office of the Chief Inspector
Department of Education and Skills
Telephone [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@education.gov.ie

APPENDIX 7

SAMPLE CODING FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

Table 30: Sample Coding Framework (Input-Internal Resources)

Participant	Phrase/Word/Term	Location of Text	Theme	Sub Themes
PROI14	If the fundamental organisational supports and resources are not in place you are wasting money in that. It's a waste of time unless and until you have the basic structures and resources in there. Once you have those then you can evaluate positively, then you can come in and do an external inspection	132	Existing Resources	Efficacy
PROI1	You're back to reinventing the wheel each time aren't you? It's like all of these policies. We should all be given a template.	40	Future Resources	Self Organisation
PROI2	If you had the material it would be easier to work through it. If you have to devise the material and put everything together it won't happen	38	Future Resources	Self Organisation
PROI15	I would not have done that only for SDPI, I wouldn't have those templates there for the planning only for SDPI	436	Existing Resources	Self Organisation
PROI22	Case studies where you could be looking at x school and what they did to go about it, now it doesn't have to be you know in depth	389	Future Resources	Case Studies
IROI2	So, there is a balance that needs to be struck between them, but definitely, it is not an efficient way of going where every school has to learn from a visit of an inspection team one at a time, and the inspectorate has made some inroads there. They are producing documentations about it, <i>Looking at Geography</i> , or looking at this and looking at that. A composite and we have to do more of that. Because of the business of inspections, of getting more inspections done; sometimes the time isn't found.	157	Future Resources	Economic correction, Self Organisation, Case Studies
PNI3	Sometimes at the beginning when you first hear this idea of self-evaluation. You get frightened by it and what does that mean. I think that sometimes people use language that hides the task. I'm a firm believer that language should elucidate the actual processes rather than hide and make things over difficult.	38	Future Resources	terminology
PNI2	Without treading on anybody's toes, we are beginning to think yes, we've evaluated this, and there is something really good going on, and the kids really like this. How can we make the lessons learned from this more widely known and explicit for all staff of both schools'	79	Future Resources	Networking, Co-operative Competition
PNI9	... sharing of best practice and I suppose it's having seminars and forums that are meaningful and purposeful and that they're relevant to the needs of each school so that ... there's no point in having a fantastic function on, for example, data management and data handling if not every school needs that so it's having maybe 5 or 6 equally important strands of educational improvement running in parallel and people almost like a carousel of best practice. everyone can buy into or extract from as and when they need and again get at the cutting edge of innovation in	162	Future Resources	Networking

	terms of teaching and learning, making sure they're at the forefront of working with universities, working with Hargreaves and ...			
PNI8	I suppose what I touched on earlier just if there was a better system of tapping into some support as and when you required it rather than having to do it either the support offer comes when you're too far gone, you're past it and you've done it yourself or indeed just a bank of expertise out there you could tap into easily and readily.	258	Future Resources	Networking
PNI6	Now, the other thing in Northern Ireland is the new Area Learning Communities. That has huge dynamic potential. It will mean that instead of us focusing on our own institution, we'll start looking at the education of the child within the broader region..	138	Future Resources	Networking, Co-operative competition
INI1	You're really asking schools don't forget here to move from a culture of competition to a culture of cooperation. My own view of it is that you don't move from competition to cooperation. You have to evolve a new construct, which is competitive collaboration or collaborative competition. You use competition, but you want to be more cooperative and collaborative. At the same time, you don't want to replace competition with collaboration alone because competition is quite healthy in terms of standards. Parents still view schools in a competitive way; they look at one as better than the other.	45	Future Resources	Networking, Co-operative competition,
INI1	People talk, I think personally, rather glibly about moving from competition to cooperation. I actually do think it's a new construct. And where part of it is... and completely to answer your question...part of that is actually sharing practice effectively and it's not so much that you share a practice in a way you handle a pass the package round, but you help each other solve problems, which is really what organisation is about in terms of improvement.	49	Future Resources	Networking
PROI19	PV6 states, 'I mean time and then the set of tools, perhaps, that would provide the starting point, planning time. Really it needs to be incorporated formally into the school year. Not just, not in the context of an economic crisis like WSE-MLL, you know'	361	Future Resources	Time, economic correction
PROI14	The biggest resource is time. Teachers in education are for the most part highly intelligent and for the most part highly positive and even if you gave them the time they'd use it. The other resources will come on afterwards.'	P5S	Future Resources	Time
IROI2	Sometimes, the middle management people can have done a course or a management course, and sometimes their skills are not used. This thing and taking soundings across the schools, but it's the business culture in schools that's the greatest challenge. 'We're too busy to plan for the future' which sounds reasonable on a day-to-day basis but is not a defensible position in the modern era.	147	Future Resources	Distributed Leadership
PROI14	by negotiating a new contract but have it as part of their time'	53	Future Resources	Contract negotiation
PROI22	'an individual teacher maybe or the deputy principal as a person in charge of evaluation' (PV5/374)	374	Future Resources	Distributed Leadership

IROI2	I think it should be designated that one assistant principal, at the very minimum, should be a whole-school planning coordinator who will assist the principal, not taking from the principal's responsibility, but their job description would be simply to assist the principal in school planning and self-review, and that's it. That's their post of responsibility.	211	Future Resources	Distributed Leadership
IROI3	In order for the principal to be really leading the place educationally, he needs time, so you know he can't be involved in all of it anyway. Some of it has to be delegated, so I would think that it should be seen in the school as a really important role and that would be part of the motivation for it.	584	Future Resources	Distributed Leadership
PROI1	If you want to progress anything you have to progress it on a group basis, a mentoring basis; timetabling people for regular meetings, that's how you do your evaluations. You have to put time into it. I don't know how you do it but that's what you do if you know what I mean and once you get the timetabling. How you get the time for that, I don't know.	38	Future Resources	Networking, Time
PNI13	You see the thing is, it's like a tartan cloth. It has to be woven into what people do rather than being seen as this big kind of thing that sits at the end of things	862	Future Resources	Distributed Leadership
PNI13	I don't honestly think we need more tools. I suppose we need better management training at middle management level'.	868	Future Resources	Management training
PNI12	So, in working in line with self-evaluation and the school development plan, if everybody connects up here in the morning...it has a dashboard that comes at the bottom, so if you've got a class teacher...up on that dashboard will come where they fit in to the school development plan, and what their responsibility is...and the date for it to be completed. As you work up the management structure to HOD level, they will see themselves and all the members within the department. If you work up the faculty, they'll see all of the departments, all of the people, see the deadlines, who has completed, and when it's to be completed...I will have an overall view of everything.	1061-1069	Existing Resources	
INI1	I mean, the department publishes the annual statistics in banding. They use free school meals as the proxy for the socioeconomic circumstances in the school, and therefore, they band the results so that a school can look at its exam performance against the data for schools of a similar type in terms of a socioeconomic context, as indicated by the proxy of free school meals. Now, there's always scope for debate around that; lots of interesting arguments and schools use increasingly more as well predictive analysis they get from...for example, University of Durham produces various analyses, predictive analysis for A level, predictive analysis, GCSE, Yellis, Alis, and so on.	63	Existing Resources	Value Added Data
PROI22	I do think that those, I mentioned them already, those MLL questionnaires are useful generic tools'.	280	Existing Resources	Templates, Self Organisation
PROI5	I also think that it's important to use Internal Evaluation to see where we are progressing and that we are all progressing and having a goal. I know that sounds obvious, but you have to have	17	Future Resources	Templates

	a goal. Set five-year goals if you like. We will be addressing that now with the five-year plan and see how it has feared out after five years. We will be doing that next year. Now, we will need tools to evaluate, and we haven't actually got that yet, but we will need the tools.			
IROI3	We actually sit down and we are given the same results that the school have	530	Existing Resources	Comparative Data
IROI3	Schools should be looking towards not only analysing English, how many A's, who's doing higher level, who's doing ordinary level, but they should be able to take Mary's Leaving Cert and go okay and track the product the whole way through.	540	Future Resources	Value Added Data
IROI1	There are issues around schools' abilities to collect data, to analyse data, to use data to compare data and then the national availability of data for comparative purposes and that national data in a contextual framework. So, in other words, if you belong to a school in DEIS band one, you may not have the same expectations of standards for your school. You would aspire to having them, but you can't jump that quickly. So, you may need to be able to have a comparison with the general run of schools.	132	Future Resources	Value Added Data, Capacity,
IROI1	The other element that is vitally important is to know that there is the value added standard as well as the actual standard. So, if I am teaching in a [NAME OF NON-DISADVANCED AREA] and all of my students come in at X level, am I really adding value even if 90% of them go to third-level institutions? Is it my doing as a school, or is it that they would reach that anyway because of a whole lot of other factors? So, I think that value added is one thing that you have to take into account, and then the other thing is that the national norms, but the national norms on a contextual basis. So, there are all those skills and systems that need to be put in place. Okay, we do have the exam system at post-primary level; we have nothing at primary level...We have the National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy that happens about every four years...but they're not available in any sort of contextual bands either. So, we depend on small-scale projects in relation to what we do as inspectors ourselves to look at. Well, what is it that's happening in DEIS primary schools, for instance? So, we need a lot of systems in place, and we need up-skilling of staff in schools in order to ensure that this Internal Evaluation will work to everybody's benefit.	136	Future Resources	Value Added Data, capacity

