



**THE CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION
IN FURTHER EDUCATION:**

**LEADERSHIP IN THE EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE POST
LEAVING CERTIFICATE SECTOR OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE.**

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Ed.D Thesis presented to

**Dublin City University, School of Education Studies
as a requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education**

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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 Education is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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GLOSSARY

AnCo	An Chomhairle Oiliúna (Irish Training and Employment Authority)
BCFE	Ballyfermot College of Further Education
BCA	Ballyfermot Community Association
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council (United Kingdom)
CDCFE	Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
CDETB	City of Dublin Education and Training Board
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit (CDVEC)
CDVEC	City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
CERT	Hotel Catering and Tourism Training Agency
CFE	College of Further Education
DCU	Dublin City University
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DoE	Department of Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ETB	Education and Training Board
ESF	European Social Fund
FAS	An Foras Áiseanna Saothar (Training and Employment Authority)
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FdA	Foundation Arts Degree
FdSc	Foundation Science Degree
FHEQ	Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (United Kingdom)
FQ-EHEA	Framework for Qualifications European Higher Education Area
HCP	Humanities Curriculum Project
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HELS	Higher Education Links Scheme
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
HND	Higher National Diplomas Further Education Qualification of the UK
ICFE	Inchicore College of Further Education

ISCIP	Integrated Science Curriculum Innovation Project
LCFE	Liberties College of Further Education
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OEP	Outdoor educational Project
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
QQAI	Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RCFE	Rathmines College of Further Education
RTE	Radó Telefís Éireann (National broadcaster)
RTL	Return to Learning
SCB	Senior College Ballyfermot
SOLAS	An Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
TQM	Total Quality Management
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VPTP	Vocational Preparation and Training Programme

ABSTRACT

The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: Leadership in the evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee. (Denis Murray, BA, MBS.)

This research investigates evolutionary change in Further Education (FE) within the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector with a particular emphasis on the development of Higher Education (HE) courses within the CDVEC. The objective of the study is to understand what role leadership played in this development and if an 'institutional habitus' evolved where greater social and cultural capital was created or enhanced for learners who otherwise may have discontinued their education at an early stage.

The methodology is qualitative using a case study consisting of semi structured, in-depth interviews, with a small number of relevant stakeholders, a convenience survey of students pursuing higher education in colleges of further education and a convenience survey of teachers within the further education sector. The research also includes official documents and archival records relating to the development, validation and accreditation of HE programmes in FE.

The findings are grouped under the three main questions of the thesis.

How and why was higher education developed in further education?

The findings suggest leadership came from within the PLC colleges and was a consequence of the creation of an 'institutional habitus' where conditions of existence contributed greatly to the development of higher education programmes in the sector. Higher education programmes were developed through a combination of enthusiastic teachers, who had been encultured in programme development, and a perceived need to create a better environment for students to continue in their education. While the CDVEC provided tacit support there was no input from the Department of Education who were either oblivious to its development or simply adopted a wait and see attitude to the development of a range of courses in higher education through to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework

Have these higher education programmes been successful in any way?

Higher education programme delivery in further education has been most successful with in excess of 7,000 students having attained higher education qualifications from one college alone over the past 22 years. Almost 1000 of these completed BA honour's degree level 8 programmes. While many of these graduates have gone on to work in industry as many as 25% continued to master's degree level and increasing numbers from this cohort have completed doctoral level studies. The key advantage to students pursuing these programmes is the manner in which they can access, transfer and progress within one college. Another advantage for students relates to the intimate nature of FECs. Smaller class sizes and greater one-on-one tuition and guidance enhance social capital for both the

learners and the college. Students also remarked about the types of programmes being delivered and how they were more suited to what the students wanted.

How might current DES policy impact on the development and delivery of higher education in further education?

The Department of Education is not in favour of HE within FE but have agreed to allow legacy programmes continue. A block has been put on the development of any further programmes of HE that are intended to be delivered within FECs. Students past and present, teachers, principals and industry have all benefited from these programmes. New industries have been created in the State where employment is growing; examples would include Animation, Game Design and Illustration. These courses, which were developed within the FE sector, have been delivered for more than 20 years and are now being copied and delivered by the ITs.

The success of these programmes is unquestionable as is the authenticity of those who developed them. All FECs believed development and delivery of HE courses should continue. There was genuine concern that the goals and objectives of FECs would change and that an amalgamation with FAS under SOLAS might seriously undermine the perceived mission, goals and objectives of the FE sector. Further, they believe the amalgamation of FECs and FÁS will be detrimental to the educational nature of FECs and were worried about the future of education and an over emphasis on training and preparing people for work.

It might be time the Department took an interest in what has been going on within the FEC sector and acknowledge the fact that alternative paths to higher education have contributed substantially to the socio-economic development of our country.

Chapter One:

General Introduction and Research Questions

1.0 Introduction

The following introductory chapter provides a general outline of the study and the specific research questions. It begins by providing a purpose statement and the key questions central to the research. The chapter also includes a section on my own involvement and the background and context which helped shape the enquiry.

1.1 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to investigate evolutionary change in Further Education (FE) within the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector with a particular emphasis on the development of Higher Education (HE) courses within the former City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) now the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). My objective is to understand what role leadership played in this development and identify opportunities of best practice in structures of leadership. Also, how these opportunities may have created 'capital' as determined by Bourdieu (1984) and how that might integrate with the Government's decision to create a new authority 'with responsibility for the coordination and funding of Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland', An Seirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna, (SOLAS). (DES, 2011 P.1).

Following the commencement of the Education and Training Boards Act (2012), the CDVEC ceased operations on 1 July 2013 and is now known as the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). This act replaces the existing 33 VECs with 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). The Government brought forward separate legislation to provide for the establishment of the new Further Education and Training Authority, known as (SOLAS), which also saw the dissolution of An Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) and the transfer of their training centres to the newly established ETBs

The following research is qualitative and, as I want to explore, understand and adequately communicate the issues, I will use the first person throughout my

writing. This is in keeping with the epistemological approach of qualitative research as espoused by Webb (1992) and Creswell (1994) amongst others.

I want to understand how a variety of HE courses are now available in FE, up to and including level 8 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. I want to explore how contextual and historical situations brought about a perceived need for a change in the approach to paths in continuing education. I hope to gain an understanding of how these courses are perceived by both teachers who contributed to their development and students who undertook the courses of study. I also want to investigate whether these courses should continue and be retained within the newly developing sector of FET or if they belong purely within the HE sector.

The research will investigate whether Further Education Colleges (FECs) offering higher education provision was a positive development and what factors contributed to the evolution of this provision. It will investigate whether 'Change Leadership', where individuals and educational organisations played a pivotal role, had an impact on this development. These organisations will include the Colleges of Further Education, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), Universities, Colleges' of Further Education and the CDVEC,

Having identified the current position of higher education in further education and the leadership initiatives which contributed to its development I will endeavour to identify possible future directions for full recognition, appropriate structural and resource supports within further education and training.

1.2 Substantive Issue

The central issue or central question asks whether the development of educational programmes within the PLC sector, up to and including higher education at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), was part of an overall strategy with distinct leadership from the Department of Education and Skills or were more

localised factors involved. This research seeks to determine what role, if any, leadership played in the development of higher education programmes within the PLC sector. It will endeavour to identify where leadership came from and the driving forces which led to the development of higher education in further education including any 'power relations' that may have been at play at any stage of this evolution. The new statutory bodies, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), CDETB and SOLAS provide a new arena within which the issues of HE in FE, leadership and programme development have to reside. Policy in relation to the development of new programmes has been curtailed and no new programmes with duration of more than one year may be developed. Additionally the development and running of educational programmes beyond level 6 (Advanced Certificate) on the National Qualifications Framework (NQFI) has recently been discouraged in Colleges of Further Education. In one college a programme, which was developed by staff and subsequently validated at level 6 (Higher Certificate) through HETAC, was not given permission to run by the CDVEC. This creates an anomalous situation where a number of FECs are already providing programmes beyond this level up to and including level 8 (Honours Degree). These programmes were developed in a time of economic depression and high unemployment during the late 70s and early 80s. They continued to grow through the 90s and as there were no accreditation and certification bodies within the State, validations were sought from educational institutions in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Some of these programmes are running for over 20 years and have served students and the State well. Areas of education rarely considered were developed and programmes written that attracted thousands of students who otherwise may never have continued in their educational pursuits. These programmes included, amongst others, the performing arts, business, broadcasting, journalism, social care, dance, theatre, film and many more. New schools or departments evolved within these colleges such as the *Rock School* and the *Irish School of Animation* both of which are highly recognised within the State for their contribution to those industries.

The next section outlines my own involvement with the CDVEC as a teacher, programme developer and director of a HE course: BA (Hons) Media Production

Management. It provides a context for the study and the background to a culture of innovative development of new programmes of education.

1.3 Context and Personal Involvement

It is important to begin this section by outlining my own involvement within the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC). My personal observations and experience of working within the PLC sector and particularly in the development of Higher Education programmes within a College of Further Education and my further involvement in developing programmes at a national level for NCVA/FETAC have contributed to my perception of this particular sector in education. This involvement was critical to the genesis of the research thesis. Guba and Lincoln state that,

In situations where motives, attitudes, beliefs and values direct much, if not most of human activity, the most sophisticated instrument we possess is still the careful observer – the human being who can watch, see, listen, question, probe, and finally analyse and organize his direct experience. (1981, P 213)

My personal observations led me to question my own working environment and encouraged personal reflection. I felt I was very much part of a change process where something new was happening for the betterment of teaching and learning. Of course this was my personal perception and as such my reality where a considerable amount of my own ethnographic research was involved. However, in every case, there may be several perceptions. According to Stake (2005) ‘realities exist simultaneously and separately within every human activity.’ He goes on to explain;

What happens collectively is seldom the aggregation of personal experience, and what happens individually is much more than the disaggregation of collective relationships... We have our favorite approaches but we have a commitment to seek the merit of both the individual and the collective. (Stake, R. 2005, p1)

When I first joined the CDVEC, in 1991, as a part-time teacher, I had no idea of the adventure I was about to embark on. I had been employed to teach radio production to a class of Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) students who were on their way to completing a programme of general media studies which led to certification at national diploma level from an English institution, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). Part of my fascination at that time was that this was a

secondary school with a small cohort of students studying for their leaving certificate while the majority seemed to be partaking in other educational endeavours. I took up the position after a meeting with the Principal who was looking for a business input to the college's media programmes. At the time my own educational and practical background, with 15 years' experience in media production and running my own communications consultancy, was felt to be qualification enough. Soon after, I found myself in northern Spain working for the college on European projects to develop new methods of teaching and learning for media production students. Within two years I had become a full-time permanent and pensionable teacher with a growing responsibility for the development of programmes for validation and accreditation by BTEC in the United Kingdom. In 1993 I began negotiations with Professor Mick Fitzgerald and Dr David Grant of Thames Valley University in Ealing, London, for the development of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Production Management. It was validated in July 1995 and the first cohort of BA honours degree students began in September '95 and graduated in November of '96. This was the first time an honours degree programme has been validated, accredited and delivered within a secondary school system in the State.

There was a great enthusiasm amongst the staff of the Media Department and I was fortunate to be working with the then leader of that department and Principal of the college both of whom encouraged and supported me in my endeavours. However it is important to point out that it was not all plain sailing and there was a fair amount of resistance to the changes taking place. Many of my colleagues at the time wondered at the appropriateness of having higher education programmes within what was still considered a secondary school. Others believed that visits abroad and collaboration with European partners in the development of new teaching and learning techniques and methods, specifically of higher education programmes, was not the place of the teacher. I believe this resistance caused a certain amount of friction and damaged relationships which took many years to heal. However over the years little by little teachers themselves began to develop new programmes and seek validation and accreditation from bodies outside of the State. This was because there were no formal certification bodies in Ireland at that time.

I have worked in the FE/PLC sector since 1991, both in the CDVEC and NCVA/FETAC, and have experienced first-hand how the sector has evolved despite any serious support or recognition from the Department of Education and Skills. In fact the lack of any opposition, on the other hand might suggest, the Department weren't concerned or simply didn't know that these higher education programmes were being developed and run within the PLC sector. I have seen how HE programmes were developed in an attempt to meet the specific needs of students and achieved validation and accreditation from outside the State. I have first-hand experience of HE course development in FE and have contributed to the development of structures and strategies for successful implementation and delivery of these programmes. I believe DES policy and regulation continued to play catch up and over the past decade has introduced a raft of legislation to regularise the sector. I would further suggest there may be negative implications for any future development of HE in FE, even though such developments seem to have been successful in their contribution to the Irish education system and Irish society in general. As mentioned above thousands of students benefited by participating in these courses and many of them were given the opportunity to attain third level education. This was done in a different educational environment which it seems was well-suited to the students' needs. It is because of this success I believe FE colleges should continue to provide courses of HE and the sector should be developed with full recognition and appropriate structural and resource supports.

1.4 Importance of Research

If the development of higher education courses and programmes in further education over the past 20 years has contributed positively to Irish socio-economic conditions, by providing alternative pathways to learners who otherwise may have discontinued education prematurely, then it may be a mistake not to further enhance and support such developments. In light of the present economic difficulties and the collective understanding within our nation, to improve ourselves economically, socially and spiritually, it may be worth our while to investigate and understand what contribution these developments have made to Irish society. The FE sector is now a major part of Irish education with in excess of

30,000 full-time students, yet it remains incompletely understood even by those in leadership roles in administration. With major changes coming, the new ETBs and the establishment of SOLAS, it is vital that this area is adequately researched and its contribution valued and preserved in any new arrangements for FE.

1.5 Rationale and Broad Questions

The reason for this study grew out of a need to understand how and why colleges of further education developed within the CDVEC and more specifically how programmes of higher education were validated, accredited and delivered in these colleges. I wanted to explore my working environment in a PLC college of further education where a considerable amount of my work involved the development of new programmes of higher education. I had experienced a change process where the majority of my colleagues had to transform themselves from being secondary school teachers and go on to develop the skills and competencies required of PLC teaching and learning. It was only in 2012 that a specific qualification in teaching in FE became available and previous to this 'unqualified' people from 'industry' were employed to deliver many of the newer courses, such as TV and Radio Production, Music Management and Animation to mention just a few. As one Principal commented;

I had made my mind up...you couldn't staff a rock school or even some of the artistic areas without bringing in practitioners and I insisted...the people who came in from industry with practical experience were way ahead of the people who just had theory. (Principal 8: 2014)

It was a college in transition. While PLC colleges have been around for a long time (early 80s) the idea of developing and delivering programmes of higher education was new and the developments, which eventually turned out to be considered successful, didn't evolve without a certain amount of pain. This process had also occurred in a number of other colleges within the CDVEC where similarly teachers contributed over many years to the development of such programmes. Initially I wanted to investigate evolutionary change in attitudes and approaches to further education while identifying relevant driving and restrictive forces within the sector. It appeared to have been developed in a piecemeal or ad hoc fashion through the initiative of individual principals and teachers often in the face of official opposition. After preliminary research and the realisation of a need to narrow the investigation I changed the working title to take account of leadership

and programme development at higher education levels within PLC colleges. Recent developments with the formation of the Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI) and the amalgamation of FETAC, HETAC had brought a new urgency to this research. Also during the course of the research the former CDVEC ceased operations on the 31st of June 2013 and was replaced by the newly formed City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb) on 1st July 2013. The new working title emerged:

The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: Leadership in the evolution of Higher Education within the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC).

I want to understand how the current situation has come about where a variety of HE courses are now available in FE. I hope to gain an understanding of how these courses are perceived in terms of success by both teachers who contributed to their development and students who undertook the courses of study. I also want to investigate whether these courses should continue and be retained within the developing sector of FET or if they belong purely within the HE sector.

The research investigates whether HE in FE was a positive development and what factors contributed to its evolution. It examines whether individuals and educational organisations played a pivotal role and what if any impact leadership had on this development. It considers whether HE in FE has 'promoted diversity and wider participation' as considered by Stanton (p. 432. 2009). These organisations included the Colleges of Further Education, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), Universities, and the CDVEC.

Initial pilot research (Murray 2011) led me to develop a set of questions which were to be the basis of the investigation. This research sought to answer three broad questions.

1) How and why was higher education developed in further education?

This question would enquire as to who was responsible for the development and whether there were any key contributing factors which drove the development.

2) Have these higher education programmes been successful in any way?

The success would be considered by way of creating some advantage (capital) for learners and whether a new model offering such advantage was created by providing an alternative pathway.

3) How might current DES policy impact on the development and delivery of higher education in further education?

This question would enquire about the continuation of HE delivery within FE provision while taking account of new legislation within the sector.

The focus of the research was how higher education evolved within the PLC and further education sector. I wanted to know what processes and procedures were used in this development and whether they were led by anybody in particular. An historical context would be important which mapped the evolution of higher education courses and identified whether the innovation was centrally devised or came from a ground up initiative within the colleges themselves. It was also important to understand whether there was a need for higher education within further education and how this was perceived. Issues of demand from learners, gaps in provision and social and environmental influences were all factors for exploration.

The role of leadership in educational development and particularly the role of leadership in developing new programmes of study was also a main theme of this research. I wanted to explore what if any role leadership played in this development and whether that leadership could be identified either within the DES, the CDVEC or the colleges themselves. Preliminary research (Murray 2011a) suggested there was a culture of development and change within colleges of the CDVEC and that this had been led out by key figures during the 70s and culminated in the establishment of the Curriculum Development Unit of the CDVEC.

A further theme was to address whether or not higher education within further education provided some advantage to learners and created any 'capital' which may benefit these learners. The key questions centred on whether these programmes were successful and if an alternative pathway to access higher education through further education would be of benefit to those learners. Did these educational courses attract students who otherwise may not have progressed to higher education? Did the PLC environment offer an easier, safer and more understood context for these learners? Were the courses themselves more attractive to certain cohorts of learners? Hardiman (2012) would argue they did.

Questions like these were central to finding out whether there was any advantage to having HE in FE and whether this created greater forms of capital for this cohort of learners. The research also addresses the issue of success. I wanted to know whether these programmes of higher education had achieved the initial objectives and how they had been evaluated. Quality control systems, including internal verification and external authentication alongside initial validation and accreditation, were also a key theme of the research.

Finally, I wanted to understand whether colleges of further education should continue to deliver higher education programmes and if so how this might be done within a new environment of statutory bodies, such as the QQI, SOLAS, and the CDETB. Is there an argument that a new model of access transfer and progression has evolved within the PLC sector of FE? If so, has this model proved successful and if it has should it be further supported by the CDETB, SOLAS and the QQI?

Preliminary research contributed to the development of a schedule of questions for the in-depth interviews. These are grouped under the three key questions as follows:

How and why was higher education developed in further education?

- Q1. To what extent does higher education exist within further education colleges in the CDVEC?
- Q2. How and why did these higher education programmes develop?
- Q3. What role did leadership play in this development?
- Q4. What was the perceived need for these higher education programmes?

Have these higher education programmes been successful in any way?

- Q5. How successful have these higher education programmes been?
- Q6. Is there any advantage for students pursuing a path to higher education within further education?

How might current DES policy impact on the development and delivery of higher education in further education?

- Q7. Should colleges' of further education continue to deliver higher education programmes?
- Q8. How might colleges' of further education best accommodate higher education programmes within the remit of the proposed new bodies of SOLAS and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb)?

1.6 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature highlighting both substantive and theoretical issues in relation to higher education (HE) in further education (FE). It begins by providing definitions and understandings of the difference between FE and HE. It will then review previous research of the PLC and the further education sectors in Ireland. It will also look at the development of further education within the UK and the problems and experiences in that jurisdiction.

Chapter 3 will address theoretical concepts paying particular attention to the works of Pierre Bourdieu in an attempt to develop a critical lens through which to view and analyse the findings of this research.

Chapter 4 describes the research design. It begins by outlining my epistemological perspective and the rationale for choosing a qualitative interpretivist method. It will provide full details of an exploratory mixed methods case study, taking evidence from interviews, direct observation, in-dweller observation, and two surveys.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the teacher surveys and will provide tables, percentages and numbers of teachers' responses. Open-ended questions will be themed and sample comments presented to reflect the teachers feelings, thoughts and opinions.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the student survey and will provide tables, percentages and numbers of students' responses. Open-ended questions will be themed and sample comments presented to reflect students opinions and feelings on the issues.

Chapter 7 presents themed and coded responses to the in-depth interviews with principals, deputy principals, and teachers and significant others who are or have been involved with the development, delivery and assessment of higher education programmes within a further education college.

Chapter 8 discusses the findings in relation to both the substantive issues of leadership in the evolution of higher education within further education and the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production focusing on habitus, capital and field. It will provide the conclusions and recommendations relating to opportunities of best practice in structures of management/leadership and how these might now integrate with the new statutory body SOLAS who have responsibility for the coordination and funding of the FET sector in Ireland.

Chapter Two

Literature Review – Context and Policy

2.0 Introduction

In trying to understand how higher education has evolved within further education in Ireland and the factors or substantive issues which impacted on that development, this review will focus on issues of higher education delivery in further education, the role of leadership in education, and statutory policy issues.

The review is primarily concerned with previous research on the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector paying attention to the Irish studies and publications on the sector. It will begin with the substantive issues relating to the evolution of the further education sector, which includes the circumstances leading to the dissolution of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and FÁS. It will include government publications, research papers and recommendations in relation to further education in the State. It will also look at the development of higher education within further education in the United Kingdom (UK) where there is a much larger body of research evident. The literature review will also include research and study on aspects of ‘capital’ and a comparison between higher education (HE) in further education (FE) within the State and the role of a HE in FE in the UK. The review begins by looking at definitions of further and higher education.

2.1 Defining Further and Higher Education

The Qualifications Education and Training Act 1999 established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and accreditation bodies the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). The key relevant provisions of the Act were to establish an administrative structure for the development, recognition and award of education/training qualifications in the State. The NQAI is the agency responsible for developing a national framework of qualifications. The national framework of qualifications was launched in October 2003.

The NQAI (2003) defined further education and training awards as those at levels one through six on the National Framework of Qualifications and higher education as those at levels six through 10. There is an overlap at level 6 where the level is divided to separate further and higher education into advanced certificate and higher certificate respectively. This separation was established to accommodate the major awarding councils FETAC and HETAC. Further education did not formally exist in Ireland before 1995 although PLC courses and programmes, catering for adult and return to learning (RTL) students, had been in operation for many years with many in the CDVEC being at higher education level. In *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (2000)* adult education was defined as 'systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training' and was placed 'between second and third-level' and was to include PLC courses, second chance education and adult literacy. This probably formalised the concept of further education as a level of 2 ½ for the further education sector. The description from this paper already implies a second-class, second chance, other type of education which is neither one nor the other. It is 'in-between'. In fact it is notable, in the *1995 White Paper: Charting Our Education Future*, further education is constantly referred to as somewhere vocational students may go as another opportunity in their preparation for life and work.

Still it is not accurate to define further education as simply adult education or second chance education as it was in existence before either of the two white papers mentioned above were ever published and included a much broader range of educational courses. These included courses accredited by the National Council for Vocational Awards in Ireland and by several United Kingdom accreditation bodies such as City and Guilds, Pitman, Royal Society of Arts and the Business Education and Technical Council. Some certification and accreditation also came from further afield an example being the Higher Diploma in Animation accredited by Sheridan College in Toronto.

According to the Learning Consultancy Partnership (2013), in the United Kingdom, further education is usually used to describe post-16 secondary education and

includes a wide range of certification including A-levels, Higher National Diplomas, and Foundation Degrees and is offered by both further education colleges and universities. They also point out that it is not unusual for FE colleges to top up foundation degree to a bachelor's degree by adding a further year.

On the other hand higher education is described as post-18 and takes place both in universities and any other institution that provide degrees, professional qualifications or continuous professional development courses. This shows an overlap between the two sectors, in the UK, where HE is delivered in FE and FE is also being delivered in HE institutions. The current Irish administration is working desperately to ensure there is no wastage through such overlapping within the Irish educational system. However, whether or not separating FE from HE, in terms of the levels of courses they may deliver, is the appropriate and most efficient solution may well be questionable. According to Stone (2012) there is a false dichotomy 'between academic and vocational higher education' in the UK and suggests we should get rid of the distinction.

However, reinforcing the false hierarchy between what are traditionally academic and vocational courses of study seems unhelpful to students as well as to innovation and economic growth; perhaps we should be working harder to erase this arbitrary distinction. (Stone; 2012)

In November 2001 NQAI published "Towards a National Framework of Qualifications: A Discussion Document" / "I dtreo Chreatoibre Cáilíochtaí Náisiúnta: Cáipéis Díospóireachta" which formed the basis of a consultative process in relation to the development of the Irish qualifications framework. The Authority published over 80 written submissions. (2002). One of the key questions related to the delivery of further and higher education which was already becoming a contentious issue between the various stakeholders who delivered higher education. Some Further Education Colleges (FECs) within the State were already delivering higher education and there was a concern for the future of these programmes. The following question was posed;

How should the Authority define further education and training on the one hand and higher education and training on the other? Should levels of further education and training and higher education and training overlap? If so what are the characteristics which differentiate between the two at the shared levels? (NQAI.IE 2001)

The following is a sample of some of the replies made by stakeholders at the time. It is interesting to see there was a general consensus around the difficulty in differentiating between further and higher education and this may point to a flaw in the 1999 Act, where structures were set against a traditional and historical backdrop of discrimination between vocational and academic education. My own reply made the point that in some cases FE was HE as HE was FE and that the focus should be on learners' abilities rather than institutional separations.

The philosophical differences should revolve around levels rather than trying to differentiate on the characteristics of further and higher education. In many cases further education is higher education and higher education is further education. There should be overlap, and differentiation should focus on learners' abilities to describe, apply and critically analyse. In an era of lifelong and continuing education any other distinctions between HE and FE are unhelpful and unwelcome. (Murray, 2002)

Díarmuid O'Brien, Deputy Principal of BCFE, in his opening response stated there should be 'a blurring of the distinctions between further and higher education' and in answer to the authorities question on the distinction between HE and FE he had this to say.

It is essential for the priorities of seamless access, transfer and progression and the development of lifelong learning that a major degree of overlap exists between levels in further education and training and higher education and training. The concentration on the characteristics of each sector should help to blur the distinctions between the two sectors rather than emphasising the differences, in what is essentially an historical and artificial separation. The framework should not be restrictive on educational and training institutions and the level at which they may deliver programmes. This should be a matter of the quality of delivery. (O'Brien, 2002)

The official response from Ballyfermot College of Further Education argued that the historical separation between HE in FE was artificial and detrimental to lifelong learning and suggested that a model which provided an overlap between FE and HE would best serve for seamless access transfer and progression of learners.

The overlapping of the levels in Further and Higher Education should not imply that universities cannot interact with the Council for Further Education (FETAC) or that Colleges for Further Education cannot interact with the council for Higher Education (HETAC)... The framework if properly developed to deliver seamless access, transfer and progression should not be restrictive on institutions and should be developed in a non-threatening and inclusive manner. (BCFE, 2002)

The Marketing Institute of Ireland also agreed with the above comments and again focused on the learner.

If the process loses sight of 'the central role of the learner', it will have failed. In our view, the lifelong learner does not distinguish between 'further' and 'higher' education when choosing a course. If the learner is to be facilitated to progress 'from a further education and training award to a higher education and training award and indeed, perhaps, from a higher education and training award to a further education and training award', what is the logic of defining them separately? (IMI, 2002)

Brendan Clarke, who was head moderator at the BTEC Excel foundation during this period and was closely associated with the delivery and evaluation of the Higher National Diplomas in Ireland, suggested 'the focus was on the provider rather than the learner' and had this to say,

In many countries throughout the world, achievement is described as an outcome specific to the student, related to standards expressed by some local, national or international body. To attempt to create a definition of further education and higher education that is in addition to the levels and standards expressed elsewhere within the framework, suggests a focus on provider rather than learner. (Clarke, 2002)

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) stated it would be most difficult to differentiate between the two.

The establishment of a basis on which a distinction between further and higher education and training can be made will be particularly challenging. It will be difficult to establish a robust basis for this distinction on educational grounds. (HETAC 2002)

The Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) made this comment,

The NQA document contains no discussion or reference to the current and likely future context, evolution and development of the third level education sector in Ireland ... there is still considerable rigidity in the system, which has to be reviewed. The document contains no reference to the historical and de facto current situation of an award being based on an assessed body of inter-related inter-acting modules (i.e. a "programme" or "course"). (GMIT 2005)

The Waterford Institute of Technology who stated they were happy to engage in both higher and further education seem to suggest that higher education institutions were better placed to provide 'a complete learning environment'.

...An institution such as WIT is happy to be engaged in both types of activity, whilst emphasising a complete learning environment (such an emphasis being more commonly associated with a HE perspective). We perceive

ourselves as being both inclusive (including FE) and of high academic quality (emphasising elements associated with HE)... There can be an overlap in the provision of training in basic skills required for both vocational and academic training, e.g. a student who has completed an apprenticeship may apply for a place on a HETAC course, which could include some of the same course material. Where levels are shared is at the completion and award stage of FETAC courses and at the entry level for HETAC courses. (WIT 2002)

The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) had this to say,

While it is certainly possible for NQAI to define FE and HE, it has to be stated that to try to design and deliver programmes without overlap will be impossible. Indeed it could be stated that it would run counter to the spirit of inclusivity and partnership and be detrimental to the concept of lifelong learning. What can certainly be stated in the Irish context is that FE provides both academic and vocational education and training... In the event of overlap, it is again emphasised that a line should not be drawn this would simply remove this work from FE simply because of that overlap. Again, the suggestion is made that an appropriate credit system, as instanced earlier, could cater for this situation to the benefit of the learner. (NAPD; 2002)

The NAPD summarised their position by focusing on differentiation between the levels rather than who should actually deliver the programmes and that it should be possible for learners 'to achieve certification either as FE or HE level in the same institution.

These submissions suggest there is a consensus amongst the stakeholders which clearly states the separation of further education and higher education creates a false dichotomy. It is not clear how well these contributions were considered by the NQAI and under the circumstances I don't think it would be unjust to pose the question; did the NQAI sidestep or evade this consensus?

It would appear that educationalists are aware of the divisions and distinctions between vocational education and academic education and hence further education and higher education. It is also apparent that these distinctions are predicated on historical contexts where manual and intellectual endeavours were naturally separated. This argument will be further explored in an analysis of the research using Bourdieu's concepts of distinction and disposition.

2.2 Further Education in Ireland

Further Education in Ireland has developed in mostly an ad hoc fashion over the past thirty years. It began in second level vocational schools; mainly as a way to encourage students to remain in school with the development of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes (VPTPs). Dr Anton Trant (a new principal in Ballyfermot Vocational School) was a conscientious leader of change and along with others, during the early 70s, developed such programmes as the Integrated Science Curriculum Innovation Project (ISCIP), the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP) and the Outdoors Education Project (OEP), (Trant, A. 2007, p 158-65,). With the changing age demographic and second level student numbers dropping in certain areas, there was an urgency to create new courses both to keep the schools open and for local population needs. Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs) were initially developed in the late 70s. They evolved out of VPTPs within the Vocational Education schools. In 1985 with the introduction of the Post Leaving Certificate Programme (aided by the European Social Fund) provision was made for additional classes in secondary schools (McIver 2003, p vii). To this day they continue to be delivered within this secondary level sector with all that goes with that; management structure, resources, and culture.

The main document in Ireland, the McIver Report (2003) which was commissioned by the Department of Education and Skills, following the publication of the *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (2000)* and the fifth social partnership agreement *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (2000 – 2003)*, was subsequently shelved by the Department. This study on further education used a mixed methods approach encompassing questionnaires to colleges, 15 College visits, study visits to other Institutes of technology, FÁS, Teagasc and study visits to similar services in Northern Ireland Scotland Denmark and the Netherlands and a literature review. The review made 21 separate recommendations which ranged from specific identification for the sector through management staffing, provision, organisation structures, facilities and resources, ICTs, student support, funding, staff development, amongst others. An important note is made in the executive summary, which suggests the Department of Education and Skills should develop a policy on the role of different types of colleges which would allow further education colleges provide higher education in specific circumstances (2003, p. xi).

While this report provides a useful analysis of the structural procedures and operations within PLC's and make some excellent recommendations for the future of the further education sector, it was somewhat limited in that it only visited 15 colleges providing such courses.

Watson, McCoy, and Gorby, (2006) published a multivariate analysis of education and employment prospects of the PLC sector. This was a purely quantitative report which took the following into account;

To what extent have levels of participation in the PLC programme changed over time? What is the profile of PLC participants in terms of gender, age, educational attainment and regional location? What is the impact of PLC participation on progression to further study? How do PLC leavers fare when they enter the labour market? (2006, P 7)

One of the key findings of this study showed that levels of participation in PLC courses was growing rapidly since the introduction in the mid-80s and that from '1991 levels of participation have virtually doubled, 15,000 in 1991/92 to over 28,000 in 2003/04' (ibid, P9). The report also pointed to the fact that while these programmes were initially devised for school leavers there was an increasing uptake and participation by learners over the age of 21. This showed the changing profile the sector

...over time, the PLC programme has also developed as a route to further education. The vast majority of entrants to the PLC programme from second-level schools have achieved the Leaving Certificate (although many 'older' entrants to the programme have not successfully completed second-level, an issue this paper considers). Since 1996, under the Higher Education Links scheme, places on 'selected' courses in the Institutes of Technology are allocated on the basis of attainment achieved... (P. 1)

However they also point out the dearth of information or data for the number of students continuing to higher education in Ireland. This is a serious issue as there appears to be no official record of data on the numbers of students who participated in PLC colleges at levels above FETAC levels five and six. On having carried out a search for such data I found no records of students who completed BTEC Higher National Diplomas, or any other higher education award including BA honours degrees. This, despite the fact that almost 1000 students graduated from one FE College, within the CDVEC PLC sector, with Bachelor of Arts honours degree

at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework (BCFE 2014). In fact the DES website (2014) combines further education with second level statistics in 'Statistical Product - Second Level and Further Level Education Statistics' and shows no distinction for any students completing higher education within the sector. In other words, there are no official departmental records of students who have completed higher education courses and achieved awards up to and including honours degree level 8 within the further education sector.

Watson, McCoy, and Gorby (2006) raise concerns about the 'status of PLC courses' and highlights the fact that they continue to be controlled within the second level system and that the

...issue of parity of esteem with other forms of post-school and higher education also remains - while plc courses serve a large and diverse portion of education participants, there are questions over the extent to which the PLC sector receives adequate recognition for this. (IBID, P. 5)

There is also anecdotal evidence that the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) has not been nearly as successful as it was anticipated to be.

... there is evidence to suggest that many PLC colleges have developed links with UK higher education institutions and many of those who wish to progress to further study do so through these UK colleges. Ultimately, there is a clear lack of data on the extent and nature of progression opportunities for PLC 'graduates'. To what extent do PLC courses serve as an alternative route to higher and third level qualifications, or are PLC courses an alternative form of post-school education and training? These issues are central to the analyses presented in this report (IBID, P.3)

In September 2012 the Higher Education Authority (HEA) commissioned an 'international panel of arts-education and cultural experts' to investigate the provision of creative arts and media in the Dublin region. The objective of this review was to examine the possibilities of 'enhanced collaboration and synergies between further education and higher education providers of creative arts and media education in the Dublin region' (2013, P 2). The Review of the Provision of Creative Arts Programs in Dublin (to be referred to henceforth as The Review) was published in February 2013 and made a number of significant recommendations.

The Review argues that the higher education system needs to provide greater access routes for learners in the FE sector and that 'further education and training is not readily accepted as currency for the purposes of direct access to Irish higher education' (P3) and that a substantial number of these students must emigrate to the UK in order to achieve honours degree levels. The Review proposed there were blocks in the system and the pathways by which students in the creative arts and media area could progress to higher education and further suggested the formation of more robust partnerships between FE and HE in this sector. The Review also suggests the pathways, where they exist, are over formalised and that,

...they restrict a free-flow in disciplines such as film and animation. There is an urgent need to examine these articulation pathways to ensure that many creative individuals are not lost to the Irish system at an early stage in their careers. (P. 27).

The Review also suggests a perception that the FE sector has 'overstretched itself' and implies an unsustainable hierarchy where universities are placed at the top and other providers further down.

This view cannot be sustained within the creative arts in which individuals that undertake technical and practical training, and even those who are self-taught, can often gain greater professional status and more income than those with higher degrees. (P 28)

A strategy of accrediting further education is promoted, with a greater consolidation of administration and admission systems, as this would provide more flexible routes and greater variety for those completing in the FE sector. Currently there is a greater propensity and favourability for students completing the Leaving Certificate accessing higher education than those completing within the FE sector. It follows, that large numbers of further education students who wish to pursue higher education are not given the opportunity and that 'there are few Irish formal pathways for students undertaking further education courses to progress to higher education' (P 33). The FE sector has recognised this particular disadvantage and over the years have developed relationships with accreditation bodies outside of the State. Some FECs now have formal links with UK based universities and some of these are offering top up degrees. One College has managed to develop a partnership with Dublin City University for the accreditation

of a BA honours degree in media production management at level 8 on the NQF. However this is only one such relationship and the majority of further education students must avail of awards accredited from outside the State. The HEA review noted this.

Currently there is only limited connection between the further education sector and the higher education sectors. Much of the learning that is completed within further education is not accredited within the Irish system nor is immediately recognised for the purpose of direct articulated access to Irish HE. (P 35)

Perceptions of further education, in Ireland, are also of importance and, for various reasons, have been perceived to be of a somewhat lesser quality. These perceptions, as highlighted above, are long ingrained in the Irish psyche and include issues like qualifications, experience, resources and a general belief of being second-best. It could be argued these perceptions have fed into a type of cultural conditioning where thoughts, attitudes and behaviours are hardly if ever challenged. Also the possibility of class relations and/or power relations, regarding the positions of players in this domain, is prejudiced by what Bourdieu might call organisational habitus. The HEA review addresses this misperception and points to the fact that '70 to 80% of FE teachers in the arts areas have a Master's or higher degree, with 6% holding PhDs. (P 41). In addition, it is not always well known that many educators within the FE sector have both origins in and continue to operate within their area of practice. This could be considered another type of research as FE educators are constantly keeping abreast of developments within their field. While not academic research, it is nonetheless relevant research and of important benefit to the learners within the sector. This point brings us to another aspect of The Review which talks about the focus on institutions rather than the learner and the lack of connections between qualifications. This seems to reiterate, in some way, the inappropriate separation of further and higher education as outlined above and thus reinforces the hierarchal structure.

...there has been a historical focus on courses and institutions rather than the learner. This has led to a lack of clear connection between qualifications. Students and institutions often have to go abroad to receive validation of Irish further and practice-based qualifications. The outcomes of further education are not fully understood and there is an institutional bias towards higher education. (P 44)

The preceding section provided a review of some of the pertinent literature in relation to further education in Ireland paying particular attention to some of the recommendations as made by the HEA and how greater links and potential pathways between further and higher education should be created.

There is little evidence of any major study of higher education provision within the PLC sector of further education in Ireland while, in contrast, there is a broad level of research in the UK, where there have been many reports and Government interventions. In the next section I will provide a review of some research carried out within the United Kingdom on further education.

2.3 Higher Education in Further Education in the UK

While the FE sector is very different in the United Kingdom (UK), it is interesting to look at some of the developments in other jurisdictions and in the UK Colleges of Further and Higher Education are well established. According to Bathmaker (2008) there was a policy to help develop routes of access for as many learners as possible to tertiary levels.

Colleges and universities that provide both further and higher education are a key component of government policies to expand participation in English undergraduate education. (Bathmaker. et al, 2008)

Stanton (2009) suggests there is a need to define what higher education is and who determines its definitive features. He argues that different structures in funding, inspection and qualifications in FE 'give(s) less agency to staff and learners' and consequently raise questions about how this might impact on the differences in learners and courses and the overall implications 'for expansion, differentiation and participation in undergraduate education'. (P. 421). Staunton also highlights an 'implied value judgement' which arose out of the development of the newer universities who had to add humanities and the social sciences while the traditional institutions had no need or desire to add vocational courses. It is also pointed out that FE colleges are seen to cater for a lesser status of student and that there are significant implications for learning pathways.

Browne (2005) examined structural and pedagogic change in both FE and HE and showed how different strategies affected different outcomes in a CFE and a University. The University's focus of change was driven by the lecturing staff that had an interest in pedagogic development, while the focus in the FEC was driven through by Senior Management with consequent impact on the traditional methods of course delivery. Brown applies cultural theory in an effort to focus on styles of leadership and focused on the need to identify the components and impacts of change management. The findings showed key differences between the institutions with the University's structural change being ill-defined and generally negative and pedagogic change being a success;

A significant interpretation by Brown shows how both institutions had elements of resentment and ambiguity around the change with a breakdown in communication between the purpose and justification elements of this management change.

The research revealed no attempts to consider together the structural and pedagogic issues involved in educational change management (P.57)

These findings may be useful in considering whether the change in FECs in Ireland came about because of a visionary style of leadership which fostered a collective understanding of the need to provide HE in FE. They may also be useful in helping to explore whether commitment to change was endemic in the vocational sector as a result of historical actions of change and development through the work of the CDU. They could provide future strategic direction for SOLAS and the ETB's based on qualitative research around the issues of both pedagogical and structural changes in the FE sector.

The following section provides a background to this study. It addresses the issue of why this research is important and discusses the context of the study. It will outline the key driving forces that led to the development of HE programmes in colleges of the CDVEC and the motivating factors that drove leadership in these developments. It will begin by looking at the extent of higher education provision within the further education sector.

2.4 Higher Education in Further Education in Ireland

While higher education is delivered in a number of Further Education Colleges (FECs) within the CDVEC, Ballyfermot College has led this development and has, by far, the greatest number of HE programmes within the scheme. Other CDVEC colleges have a small number of courses at higher education level. The following table helps illustrate the situation.

College	First HND Year	First HND Title	Number of HNDs	Degree Level 8 Title and name
Ballyfermot CFE	1992/1993	Business	17	3 (Media Management) (Animation)
Inchicore CFE	1995/1996	Leisure	5	None
Coláiste Dhúlaigh CFE	1994/1995	Biology	13	2 (TV&FILM) (Animation)
Liberties CFE	1995/1996	Media	1	None
Rathmines CFE	1995/1996	Business	3	None

Table 1

CDVEC Colleges with Higher Education Provision

The majority of FECs within the CDVEC do not provide any HE courses and learners may continue to FETAC level 6 Advanced Certificate level. These colleges have developed links with third level institutions and students who wish to pursue higher education must do so outside of the CDVEC. Linked programmes have been in development for over 10 years but it is considered the numbers of students progressing on this pathway are less than optimal. According to Murphy (2009) FETAC progression through the Central Applications Office (CAO) to higher education was only 2.7% in 2005 and grew to 10.2% in 2008. In 2013 the approximate percentage of progressions was still very low at only 18% to 19%.

2.5 Ballyfermot College

Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) was initially set up, in 1979, by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) as Senior College Ballyfermot (SCB) and opened in September of that year. Its main purpose was to provide Leaving Certificate education for three local schools where numbers had been dwindling. The official opening of SCB was in April 1981 after a decision in 1976, by the then Minister for Education Mr Ray Burke, 'to entrust the CDVEC with building a community college for the Ballyfermot and catchment area' (Senior College Ballyfermot, 1981). The then chairman of the CDVEC Mr Patrick Donegan predicted that the college would become a model for others to follow. It was opened 50 years after the establishment of the Vocational Education Act of 1930 and he opined;

I am particularly pleased that we are opening the school 50 years after the establishment of the 1930 Act which brought a Vocational Education into being. I regard this opening as one of the most fitting tributes which any Committee could pay to that Act. I expect that this will be one of the finest schools in the country and a model for others to emulate in time to come. (Donegan, P. 1981)

The Chief Executive Officer of the CDVEC, Mr William Arundel paid tribute to the hard work of the various bodies that helped bring about the opening of the college. These included the Ballyfermot Community Association (BCA) the Department of Education, the CDVEC and two local schools, the Daughters of Charity and the Dominican Sisters. Mr Arundel remarked on how the curriculum would 'combine both academic standards and a high degree of relevance.' He continued,

Through it, students are prepared for life and for work and for entry to various third level institutions. With regard to Adult Education a programme is rapidly being developed to implement this important aspect of the brief of the Senior College. (Arundel, W. 1981)

On a reading of the above, it could be argued the college was being set on a path to develop and deliver programmes which enhanced local students' ability to access third level education and to provide adult and lifelong learning. It was a new model where a partnership had been formed between the local Ballyfermot community, the Department of Education and the CDVEC. This partnership was initially led by Principal Sister Margaret Mac Curtain. In her opening address she remarked on how 'conscious beginnings are always choices' and how the college came about as

a consequence of making difficult choices. She also highlighted a number of very interesting questions.

Senior College Ballyfermot grew out of the search for viable alternatives to difficult choices that had to be made about the organisation of second and third level education in Ballyfermot. Which took priority, secondary or tertiary education? Where did one end and the other begin? What was the best age for young people to begin the education that led to life choices? (Mac Curtain, 1981 p 5)

These questions would have rung true for many of the new teachers embarking on a future career in this exciting new educational partnership experiment. The questions were also of relevance to the BCA who had been concerned for many years for the future of young people leaving school before completion of the senior cycle. It was a particular problem for young girls and boys who may not have had a cultural leaning towards classical or a traditional education. The problem had already been identified and specific programmes of education were developed in the new vocational school in Ballyfermot by the then Principal. A colleague explained the situation in Ballyfermot at the time.

There was no academic ambition whatsoever and most people at 14 just wanted to get the job. The community association understood this and said there was something seriously wrong here. How could we improve it? (Name) was really at the heart of changing this. They were picking up I would say from (Name's) ideas. I'm not sure whether there was a hand in glove, a relationship between (Name) and the community association. (O'Dwyer. J, 2010)

A sub-committee for education was formed by the BCA in 1971 and Mr Tommy Phelan, a leading member was most concerned with the status quo in educational structures. He believed reform was important and that consultation with local communities should be central to any new education initiative. He saw the gap between the individual's right to education and the social reality within his community in Ballyfermot as 'too wide'. Having toiled for more than a decade to bring about such reform his opening remarks at the inauguration of the college reflected the completion of a successful mission.

For the first time since the foundation of the State a Management Board, comprising community representatives progressive educationalists and others involved bodies, planned a senior cycle college and the result is Ballyfermot Senior College. Previously, educational establishments were structured without consultation with the local community... The advent of the college, with its emphasis on life will expose the stereotyped

educational experiences of the past so that the gaps between rights and realities will be diminished if not erased. (Phelan, T. 1981 p 11)

Senior College Ballyfermot was off to a good start. It had the full backing of the community, the Department of Education, the CDVEC and local secondary schools. This in turn was combined with an enthusiastic and innovative teaching staff some of which had already experience in the development of new and exciting programmes of education under the guidance of Dr Anton Trant. A conscientious leader of change, Trant, along with others developed such programmes as the Integrated Science Curriculum Innovation Project (ISCIP), the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP) and the Outdoors Education Project (OEP), (Trant, A. 2007, p 158-65,)

2.5.1 Programme Development in Ballyfermot College

Levels of autonomy within the PLC sector were very well established in relation to new course development. This culture of practice developed from the early days of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) under the tutelage of Dr Anton Trant. Motivated individuals who were daily involved in the practice of teaching and learning believed it was important to develop and provide courses which supported a cohort of students who, in many cases, would not have survived in another educational setting. The CDU played a central role in coordinating developments and provided a forum for research and development. Teachers became enculturated in a means of research and development of new programmes for the betterment of the students and their colleges. In this respect it could be argued teachers were masters of their own destiny and played a leading part in fostering new opportunities in teaching and learning which were crucial to the development, growth and survival of the vocational sector.

Soon after its opening, Senior College Ballyfermot began to develop a range of pre-employment courses known as Vocational Preparation Training Programmes (VPTPs) for post Intermediate and Group Certificate students. These were initially designed to support early school leavers who needed preparation for work. With the changing age demographic and second level student numbers dropping in certain areas, there was an urgency to create new courses both to keep the schools open and for local population needs. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses were

initially developed in the late 70s. They evolved out of VPTPs within the Vocational Education schools. In 1985 with the introduction of the Post Leaving Certificate Programme (aided by the European Social Fund) provision was made for additional classes in secondary schools (McIver 2003, p *vii*).

The former Senior College Ballyfermot, now Ballyfermot College of Further Education, (BCFE) was at the forefront of this innovative development and began to create a range of courses in unconventional areas such as 'Animation', 'Music Management', 'Radio and Television', Film and 'Rock Management'. There was a perceived need to develop courses that might attract and retain students in college (Morrissey, 2013). This would have been considered quite radical within an otherwise relatively conservative Irish education sector; as these types of courses would hardly have been considered previously within a second level school. The 'Rock School' was born and after this many other 'Media and Performance' courses followed in the development phase 1989-1999 (O'Brien, D. 2010). Maureen Conway (Principal of BCFE) explains how the college began to evolve different education programmes after the college stopped teaching to Leaving Certificate students.

There weren't enough students to keep the place going, so they had to be creative and at the same time the funding came from the EU, for the VPTP programmes and Jerome (Then Principal) very cleverly jumped on that, and he's a very creative man anyway, and he came up with the idea of the development of programmes.....and then they just grew and grew and grew and people were willing to join and they could see the benefit of it. The market was there, the funding was there. (Murray, D. 2011a)

Ballyfermot College saw the opportunity to deliver new courses which were attractive to both students and industry in areas never covered in this country before. There was no official certification for many of these programmes and Ballyfermot sought accreditation from outside of the State. One of the earliest examples was with Sheridan College in Canada where links were made with Disney and Ballyfermot had the first ever fully validated and accredited programme in animation outside of Canada and the US. It can be argued that Ballyfermot College helped set up the animation industry in Ireland after consultation with the IDA, the Irish Enterprise Board and the newly arrived animation company Sullivan Bluth in 1985. According to Hardiman (2014) these courses were set up in the face of

considerable opposition from the CDVEC and in some cases were developed without informing the CDVEC of what was going on.

The college continued to seek validation, accreditation and certification abroad during this crucial stage of development between the mid-80s and the eventual set up of the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), in October 1991, now FETAC / Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). By this time FE had been going for quite a few years without national certification. It was almost ten years after the initial setup of the NCVA that the Qualifications Education and Training Act 1999 established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and accreditation bodies the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). The key relevant provisions of the Act were to establish an administrative structure for the development, recognition and award of education/training qualifications in the State. The NQAI is the agency responsible for developing a national framework of qualifications. The national framework of qualifications was launched in October 2003.

Ballyfermot College evolved into a college of both further and higher education with courses ranging from level 5 to honours degree level 8. After 1994 BCFE discontinued the Leaving Certificate to focus more specifically on these new PLC programmes which had become hugely popular. The college was leading in these new areas and from a very early stage, staff who had been involved with curriculum development learned about the processes of quality assurance, validation and accreditation. Pre-employment courses in Ballyfermot College had a range of certifying bodies which included Bolton Street for engineering and CERT for catering and tourism. Secretarial courses were certified by Pitman in the UK and some teacher diploma courses by the Joint Examining Board. However, the newer courses which were being pioneered at the college were virtually unknown and there was no precedent within the State for validation or accreditation. Hence there were no certifying bodies. Ballyfermot College first sought 'foreign' accreditation and validation, in the late 80's, with Sheridan College Toronto who certified the Higher Diploma in Animation programme. This process was the beginning of what was to become a regular affair in the college's quest for

certification of new programmes. This initial experience was to lay the foundation of new learning for teachers in the college who were writing new syllabi and showing the resources and quality required for authentic programmes. Accreditation bodies did not exist in Ireland for vocational schools and especially for the types of programmes being developed at that time. The only certification available was from the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the CDVEC which was set up as a partnership between Trinity College and CDVEC and led by Dr Anton Trant CEO. During this embryonic period Ballyfermot College made contact with a range of accreditation bodies outside of the State. Examples would include Pitman for secretarial, the Joint Examining Board for Teaching Diplomas in IT and Word Processing, City and Guilds for Radio and Television, the Royal Academy for Drama and Presentation and BTEC for Business, Social Care and Media. All of these bodies had their own validation and accreditation processes with specific pre-requisites in terms of resources and quality control. Alongside this the college was required to engage in a range of relatively new procedures which included module and assignment design, assessment, moderation, external examination and internal quality verification.

The early 90s saw the development of the first BTEC HNDs, in Business, Social Care and Media Production and an honours degree in Media Production and Management. In fact, experience and practice in these processes was so good that it was recognised as an asset to be called upon by the new NCVA. Several staff members were seconded by NCVA to develop the new national programmes at levels 4 and 5. Teachers in the college had become very well versed in the creation of new programmes of education and a certain synergy began to develop. Elements of business were brought into media and combined with research and marketing and law to form the basis of relevant courses. Mr Jerome Morrissey, then Principal, believed that Ballyfermot College could contribute to the new growth in art and cultural industries. There was also a significant interest in a growing cohort of potential students looking for something different and in keeping with a contemporary popular culture. The Radio and Television Act (1988) which hailed the end of the monopoly held by State run public service broadcaster Radió Telefís Éireann (RTE) brought a new need for training and education for the running and operation of the new commercial radio and television stations. It put an end to a

decade of pirate radio and set in motion the first legal alternative broadcasting organisations in the State. There was a palpable demand from both industry and learners for courses to educate and train the new staff who were to work there. However, in order to compete with others with a more traditional education to degree level, it was decided to look at the development of two year courses which would more adequately prepare the students for work in these new industries. The college already had a good relationship with BTEC Edexcel in the UK as they had validated a number of one year programmes at National Diploma level. In the early 90's three new two year programmes were devised in the college and proposed to BTEC for validation. These were in Social Care, Business Studies and Media Production. Again these courses proved highly successful and students went on to gain employment in their chosen fields. At a meeting of the Broadcasting and Journalism team on 15th December 1992 it was decided to develop the Higher National Diploma (HND) in Media Production. The following excerpt from the minute of that meeting gives a flavour of the development phase. Mrs Brenda Hartnett was the team leader.

Brenda informed the team that a head moderator, Alan Clarke, from the Sheffield College at Norton Centre was arriving in the college that day (Tuesday). His visit was to discuss the possibility of forming links between our college and his in Sheffield. Brenda said that this would be an important development for us especially for our BTEC ND Media and student exchange, and it would also help us in the development of a HND in Media for 1993. (Murray, D. 1993)

This was an exciting time for BCFE and teachers were enthused and highly motivated to have this level of involvement. Leadership was shown by the Principal and, probably more importantly, nurtured in the staff. Ideas, creativity and innovation were central to the culture of the college.

2.5.2 Degree Courses in Ballyfermot College

The concept of a degree programme in BCFE came about when I enquired about devising such a programme with the then Principal Jerome Morrissey. At the time (1993) the culture for new programme development was well established within the college and I had experience of developing and writing programmes for An Chomhairle Oiliúna (AnCO) and then An Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS). So the enquiry was quite a rational one. It transpired BCFE had recently established a

partnership with Thames Valley University (TVU) in London with a specific media research brief funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The brief was 'to enable trainees take a publishing concept [e.g. for a new trade magazine] from initial concept through to the market place'. (TVU1992. P2). The partnership provided an opportunity for discussion and I made a proposal to TVU for the development of a degree in Media Production and Management. The development process began in the summer of '93 and in July 1995 the BA (Hons) degree top up year was validated. The first cohort of students from the HND Media Production course who successfully applied began in September and completed in June 1996.

Although a first in Ireland and maybe somewhat brave, the model was not unique as several partnership arrangements already existed in the UK. Stennett and Ward, (1996) published a case study on 'the partnership between Bath College of Higher Education and Strode College of Further Education in Street, Somerset, and their joint development of a BSc honours degree in social sciences during 1992-93.' (Abraham, M., Bird, J. and Stennett, A. 1996, p.123) Three further partnerships arrangements are also analysed; namely the partnerships arrangements between the University of Bradford and Bradley and Ilkley Community College (ibid., P. 167), Lancashire Polytechnic later to become the University of Central Lancashire (ibid., P. 138) and 'Birmingham Polytechnic now the University of Central England 'were deeply committed to the 'post-16 Compact' experiment in the late 80s (ibid., P. 154)

In Ballyfermot College, the partnership arrangement with Thames Valley University in London proved most successful and several graduates of the BA (Hons) degree in Media Production and Management (at times as many as 25%) went on to Master's degree level and increasing numbers have completed doctoral degrees. One graduate of the programme who completed his PhD in Animation went on to develop a second Honours degree in Ballyfermot College: the BA (Hons) Visual Media in Animation/Game Design.

The following section helps to explain how that partnership managed the development of a top-up year leading to a BA honours degree in Media Production and Management. It reviews the credit frameworks both in England and Ireland.

2.6 United Kingdom Credit Framework

It is useful to review the Qualifications Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education in the United Kingdom to fully understand the progression pathways from further education to higher education. The concept of credits in education has been around for over 25 years and is mainly used as a method of comparison between different awards and various stages in the education cycle. According to the QAA credits serve a number of important functions as listed below. Credit frameworks can:

- acknowledge, codify and provide clarity about the relative demand and level of diverse HE and professional development qualifications
- provide a 'route map' showing progression routes to enable students to navigate personal learning pathways more easily
- facilitate the accreditation of small amounts of measurable learning which can build confidence and encourage further learning
- enable students to interrupt their studies and/or transfer more easily between and within institutions, while maintaining a verified record of achievements (credit transcript) to date
- provide a common language supporting curriculum development within and between HEIs
- support the achievement of consistent student workloads across programmes within different disciplines
- encourage and facilitate partnerships between institutions
- facilitate students' entry to an international education arena where national credit frameworks can be recognised as a passport to mobility (QAA 2008, p. 8)

According to the QAA, BTEC HNDs are at level 5 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) alongside Foundation Degrees (for example FdA and FdSc) and Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE). They have a minimum 120 ECTS within the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Credit values typically associated with the design of programmes leading to the main higher education qualifications in England can be viewed in Appendix (L)

The FHEQ is designed to meet the expectations of the Bologna Declaration, and align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA). The FQ-EHEA contains a set of overarching descriptors of the generic outcomes of qualifications that signify completion of each of the three main cycles of the framework. These descriptors are commonly known as the 'Dublin descriptors'. The national frameworks of participating countries in the Bologna Process are expected to align with the Dublin descriptors. The qualification descriptors of the FHEQ are consistent with the Dublin descriptors. (QAA, 2008, p.9)

In Ballyfermot College the original BA (Hons) Media Production and Management degree was validated by Thames Valley University in London. The following rationale was used for progression. Students accumulated 120 credits over the two years of the HND and a further 60 credits with the top-up degree year. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) puts BTEC Edexcel Higher National Diplomas at level 5 along with Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees. The next level is the Hons Bachelor's degree at 6. See figure 1.

Qualifications framework diagram

This diagram shows how UK qualifications are grouped together within The National Qualifications Framework, from levels 1-8. *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*, published by QAA, covers levels 4-8.

Qualifications in Scotland are covered by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (www.scqf.org.uk).

For more information on how the different UK frameworks compare, see *Qualifications can cross boundaries – a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland*, available on the QAA website.

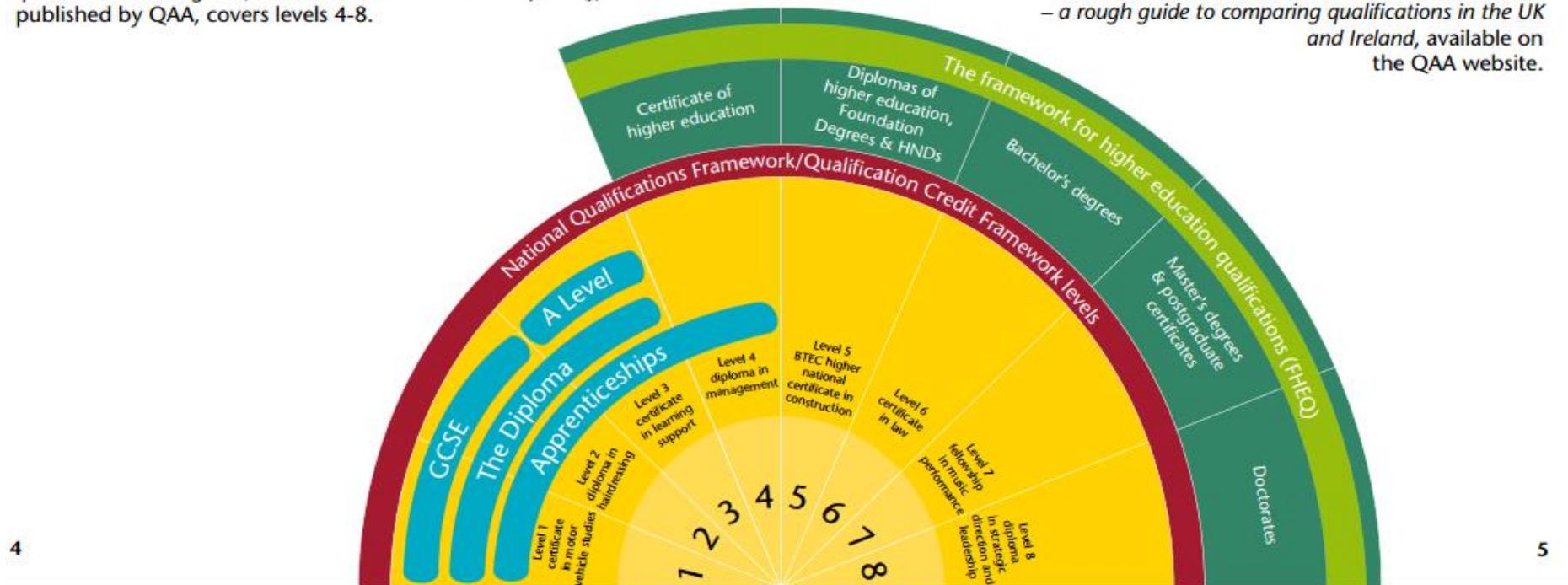


Figure 1

UK Qualifications Framework Diagram

2.7 Irish Credit Frameworks

The former National Qualification Authority of Ireland (NQAI) now part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has the key objective of ensuring a national system of transfer and progression within the Irish education system.

One of the main benefits to be derived from the adoption and implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training is that it will complement and support the National Framework of Qualifications. Specifically, it will meet the needs of learners in a lifelong learning context by facilitating credit accumulation and credit transfer across all sectors of Irish education. (NQAI, 2008, P.2)

According to this excerpt, the purpose of the QQI is to ensure the needs of lifelong learners and to accommodate credit accumulation and transfer. The model which Ballyfermot College uses has been in operation since 1995. It has been validated by two separate universities and mirrors a typical 3-year Honours Degree programme as shown in the following excerpt from the NFQI paper.

The National Framework of Qualifications provides a levels referent for awards in Ireland. The same levels can be used to clarify the meaning of credit packages attributed to multi-year programmes, i.e. as the basis of 'credit profiles' which can illustrate the (real or notional) 'attribution' of credit at stages within programmes. A particular issue has been identified in the interpretation of the credit associated with certain award-types such as the Honour's Bachelor's Degree at Level 8. The question arises: if the award is made at Level 8, and a typical programme leading to this award is 3 or 4 years in duration, does this imply that the learning involved is all at level 8? This is clearly not the case, and yet the typical weighting of such a programme as '180 credit' or '240 credit' appears to suggest it. (NQAI, 2004, P 4)

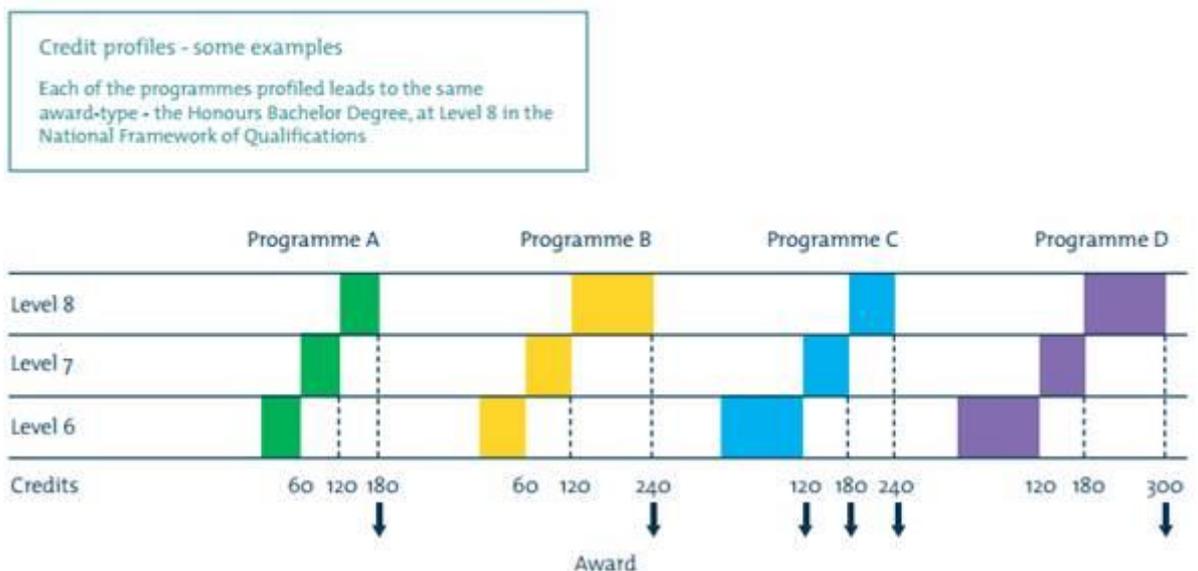
The profile of Programme A, as outlined in the model below, best reflects the practice in Ballyfermot College.

'Programme A' profiles the credit associated with a typical 3-year programme. The total credit package for the programme in ECTS terms is 180, and an award is made only when a learner has accumulated this amount of credits. Depending on the practice in the awarding body concerned, the credit may be allocated to a learner at intervals (e.g., for

completion of programme modules, or on the basis of yearly assessment) or it may all be allocated at the end of the 3-year programme (e.g., following a final examination). In any of these situations, it is still valid to ‘attribute’ the credits available, on a real or notional basis, to stages in the programme that correspond to Framework levels: thus, the programme illustrated leads to a Level 8 award, but the total credit package is notionally attributed as 60 for learning with Level 6 outcomes, 60 for learning with Level 7 outcomes and 60 for learning with Level 8 outcomes. (NQAI, 2008, PP 11-13)

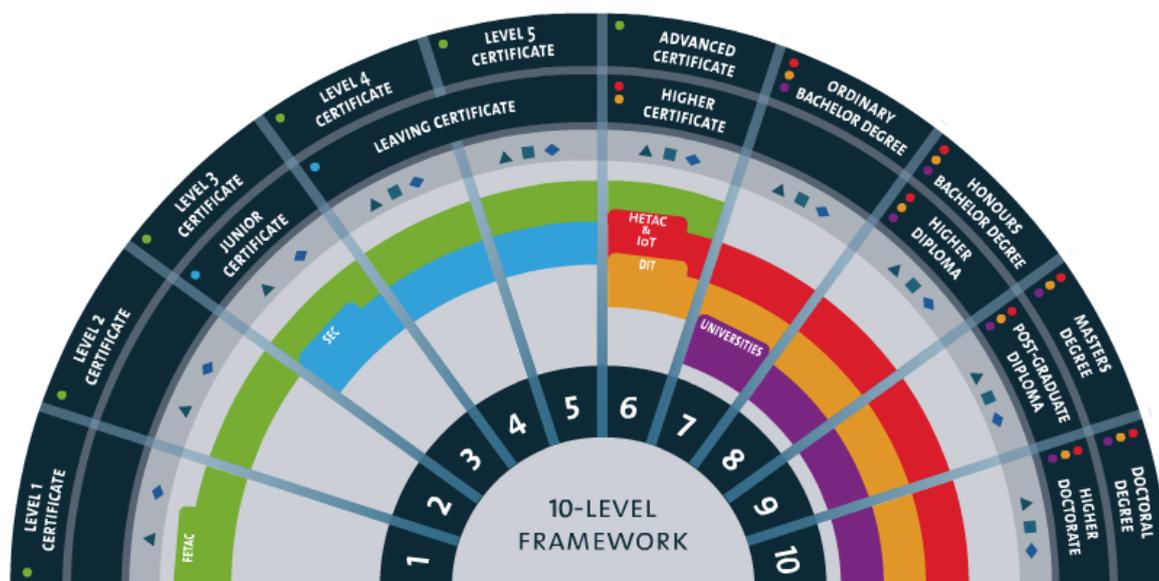
Credit profiles and credit attribution

This apparent paradox can be interpreted with the assistance of the diagrams set out below which illustrate the ‘real’ meaning (in terms of current practice) of the attribution of credit to various awards of the same type. The key concepts are those of credit profile and credit attribution.



(Source NQAI 2008)

Within the Irish context, the argument for Ballyfermot College is that the appropriate amount of ECTS is gained by the students across the three years. The HND at level 5 (FHEQ) accumulates 120 ECTS (60 ECTS in year 1 and 60 in year 2). The third final top-up degree year adds another 60 ECTS and brings the total to 180 ECTS which falls within the 180-240 ECTS required for the honours degree. The first year of the HND is at level 6; the second year is at level 7 and the final year at level 8.



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Figure 2
National Qualifications Framework Ireland

2.8 Adult and Lifelong Learning

The current expansion of Further Education and continuing growth in 'Lifelong Learning' provides a further backdrop and context for the study, particularly as there appears to be little if any strategy and/or best practice models established in the State. There appears to be a need for alternative pathways to HE and it may well be that a model has evolved that meets that need in the provision of HE in FE. Clancy (1996) discusses the importance of formal links between PLCs and HE.

The Steering Committee on the Future of Higher Education (1995) has stressed that the proposed interface between further and higher education will be an important aspect of the 'ladder' of opportunity for students, widening the access for those, who as school leavers, fail to meet the normal higher education admission requirements. (p.361)

During the early 90s there was a massive growth in Adult Learning in Ireland and 1996 was dedicated the year of Lifelong Learning. According to McNamara (1998) there was a growing awareness of the importance of lifelong education in Ireland which was following similar trends in educational developmental across the European Union. The key objective seems to have been to create greater access for those most educationally disadvantaged.

One issue which has emerged from the EU initiative is the importance of ensuring that the disadvantaged have access to lifelong learning... There is a need for outreach services into the adult learning community in general – a

proactive guidance initiative in order that those less comfortable with the educational experience might be prompted to return to the world of learning (McNamara 1998 P.6)

While McNamara (1998) estimated there were 130,000 adult learners in Ireland and 'there was no policy framework in place' neither was there any real understanding whether these learners were coming specifically from those who had been educationally disadvantaged or from other cohorts of learners. It may be argued some were returning to education in order to up- skill or re-train while others had decided on an alternative route to third level education. More than a decade earlier the VECs has begun to deliver courses as a bridging mechanism for those who had completed the leaving certificate and had yet to find work. These Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs), as they were to become known, were introduced in 1985 and were financially supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), (FÁS 2003, P. 27).

It is important to note that teaching staff within the VECs had many years' experience at writing and developing new programmes of study. The initial Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes (VPTP) came about as a consequence of an initiative between the CDVEC and Trinity College and the setting up of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in the mid-70s. Teachers had been trained and well experienced in the writing-up of specific learning objectives and outcomes and in new and exciting methods of teaching and learning. These courses became extremely popular and in many cases teachers and learners alike earned the rewards. For teachers there was a need for certification as the only document available was a CDVEC certificate stating you had completed the particular programme of study. A number of CDVEC colleges had begun the process of seeking certification for their courses in the UK and the Business and Technical and Education Council (BTEC) Edexcel, City and Guilds, the Royal Academy amongst others provided validation and accreditation up to and including honours degree level.

In the following chapter I will concentrate on some of the theoretical concepts I intend to use as a framework or lens with which to analyse the findings of my research.

Chapter Three:

Theoretical Framework

3.0 Introduction

Following on a review of the literature surrounding the substantive issues this chapter will review a number of philosophical theories around power, domination and cultural hegemony. My own theoretical concept began with an impetus for education improvement and the idea that individuals engaged in the practice of education were best placed to understand the requirements of that practice. In a talk given by Sir Ken Robinson to the RSA in July 2013 the argument was made that education should be 'changed from the ground up'. Robinson made the argument that the more government got involved the more teachers became alienated from their profession and that alienated teachers could not do their job. He drew an analogy between teaching and acting where in theatre there are a lot of embellishments but without the actor there is no theatre. Similarly in education, 'syllabuses, schedules, politics, ideologies, testing, quality, subject loyalties, unions, all obviate' the relationship between teaching and learning.

Further, it seemed the power relations between practice and governance were at odds and that an invisible understanding or reason provided a culture of distinction between one type of education and another. My own thinking and beliefs reinforced this concept, as even as a child I felt through my parents, a collective understanding which distinguished, what was then known as, technical education from a classical or academic education. Trant and Geaney (2000, p 256) argued that vocational education in Ireland was perceived to have much less prestige than academic education and set out in their study to test this hypothesis. They argue that the debate about vocational and academic education is an old one and quote Blunt's (1962) description of the discriminatory status between sculptors and painters in Renaissance Italy, where sculptors were seen to have less prestige because of the more manual nature of their art and craft. Their case study of vocational education in five European countries describes the context;

...in Ireland vocational schools in the past were largely associated with economic and social disadvantage as well as with preparation for manual employment... Vocational education in Finland, as in Ireland, has had its schools embedded in a system of social class division, where academic education traditionally enjoyed greater status. (P. 258)

An *a priori* understanding of class and culture will give direction to my theoretical perspective which includes the theories of Marx, Freire, Foucault and Bourdieu. The exploration of theoretical concepts concerning power, hegemony, culture, and oppression, will provide the theoretical lens through which an understanding and analysis of the substantive issues may be presented. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of habitus, capital and field with the central concept of 'distinction and taste' being a central marker of 'cultural capital' will provide the main framework for my analysis.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks may not be essential for all types of research however Borgatti (1996) argues theoretical frameworks are important and considers them essential for any research as they guide and give direction to that research by ensuring all appropriate aspects and issues are included. While they are more critical in deductive research, this is not to say they may be dismissed within inductive investigation and qualitative or interpretivist studies. According to Borgatti (1996) theoretical frameworks are equally if not more important within inductive investigations and that we operate out of conceptual frameworks which bias what we tend to or are mindful of.

There are two reasons why theoretical frameworks are important here. First, know how little you think you know about a topic, and how unbiased you think you are, it is impossible for a human being not to have preconceived notions, even if they are of a very general nature..... These fundamental beliefs about human nature affect how you look at things when doing personnel research. In this sense, you are always being guided by a theoretical framework, but you don't know it. (Borgatti, S., 1996)

This is a qualitative research project, which will use a case study methodology, within an interpretivist paradigm and therefore is not seeking to prove or disprove any particular theory. It, nonetheless, will be analysed by me and therefore my own *a priori* knowledge will have some part to play. In previous research Marxian theory was central to my analysis of research findings. I have been influenced by the approach of the Frankfurt School which sought to broaden Marxist philosophy

and hence allow a greater understanding of social change in capitalist societies. In my analysis and interpretation of the data of this research I have also been influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Ken Robinson and Paolo Freire. Issues will be viewed through a lens which takes account of power relations and dominance, hegemony and habitus. I will endeavour to apply Bourdieu's theory of 'power relations' where distinctions and differences in taste, consumption and behaviour are seen to reproduce and reinforce positions of a dominant class. More specifically, I will use Bourdieu's capitals namely *social, cultural and symbolic capital* to enquire whether any value was added for students pursuing HE in FE and how this might be used to make a case for such provision.

In helping to understand and analyse the data I use the theories of Bourdieu to investigate whether 'power relations' had any part to play in this evolution of HE within FE. Bourdieu's theory of *field, capital and habitus* will be employed in an effort to analyse and established meaning. Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) advocate the use of Bourdieu's theories for organisational analysis and state

The primary advantage of such an approach, we argue, is the central place accorded therein to the social conditions under which inter--and inter-organisational power relations are produced, reproduced ,and contested (2008, P 1)

Schwartz (2007) argues that while the impact of Bourdieu's theories on the social sciences has been substantial they have rarely been used for empirical research. Yet frequently these concepts have been theorised outside the research context and abstract from the relational framework in which Bourdieu developed them. They offer the best insights when used relationally and applied in actual empirical research.

Bourdieu (1984, P 170) argues that the 'conditions of existence produce different habitus' and that these are applied to practice. He states that 'the habitus is internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning giving perceptions.' Oppositions within the structure form the structuring principles of practice and perception.

... The practices engendered by the different habitus appear a systematic configurations of properties expressing the differences objectively inscribed in conditions of existence in the form of systems of differential deviations which, when perceived by agents endowed with the scheme of perception and appreciation necessary in order to identify, interpret and evaluate their pertinent features, function as lifestyles. (Bourdieu 1994, P 170)

Bourdieu's diagram shows how habitus is not only a structuring system for perceptions and practices but also a structured structure which organises our perception of the social world. I intend to apply Bourdieu's 'habitus and the space of lifestyles' in my analysis of the data which relates to the development of higher education within the further education sector.

Conditions of existence: habitus and life-style.

Adapted from Bourdieu (1984)

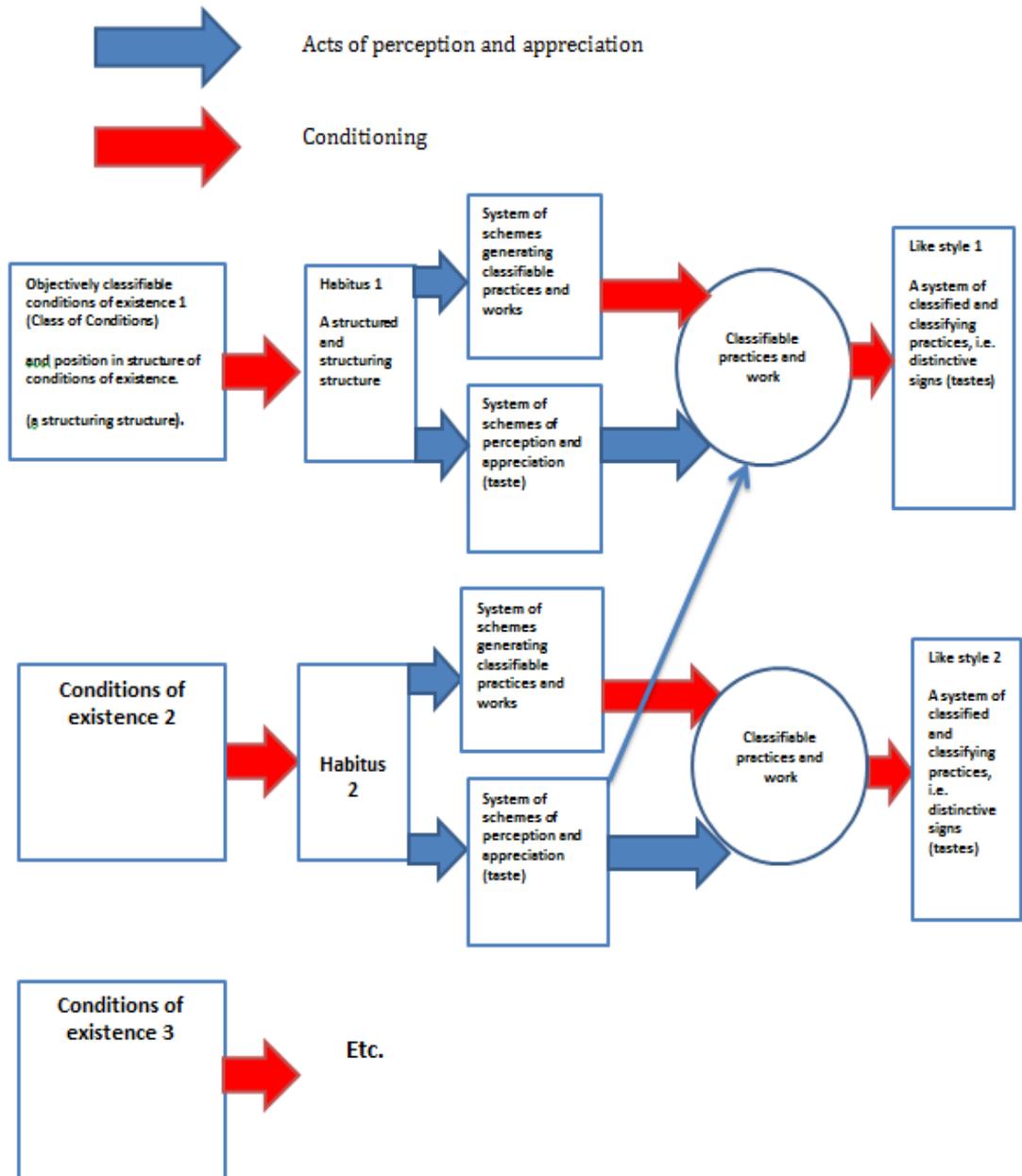


Figure 3

Conditions of Existence: Habitus and Lifestyle.

3.2 Theoretical Issues

The following review investigates theoretical perspectives of power relations and social capital. It is my intention to use the theoretical concepts of field, capital and habitus as part of my analysis. I will begin by giving an overview of some of the thoughts and theories of Pierre Bourdieu with an overview of habitus and field theory and then conclude with some of the thinking in relation to types of capital which include cultural and social forms. The approaches of Coleman and Putnam to social capital will also be explored in relation to that of Bourdieu.

3.3 Pierre Bourdieu

According to Bourdieu (1984) power is defined by the differences and distinctions between cultural consumption of the classes. He believed the power relations which separates the classes was embodied in the cultural 'tastes' permeated within those classes. Bourdieu, who was initially influenced by structuralism went beyond the concept of capital being purely economic and presented the concepts of social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital.

Bourdieu (1984) built on the structuralism work of Max Weber and saw domination in social order through symbolic systems. He saw the structural relationships are central to the production of cultural habitus 'which engender differences not only in the competencies required but also in the manner of applying them'. For Bourdieu habitus 'operated below the level of consciousness and language' and therefore were outside the control ('the will') of the individual. He believed that cultural needs came about through education and were closely linked to educational attainment and that in turn this education predisposed individuals to certain perceptions in regard to cultural consumption.

Consumption is, in this case, a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (voir) is a function of the knowledge (savoir), concepts, that is, the words, there available to name visible things, and which are, as it were, programmes for perception. (Ibid. P. 2)

It may be useful here to give a brief overview of the cornerstones of Bourdieu's theory; namely, Field, Habitus, Capital and Doxa.

3.4 Bourdieu's Field Theory

Bourdieu is one of the greatest proponents of 'Field theory' and argued that what we believe to be real comes from our personal relationships and the differences we observe in the process of differentiation into semi-autonomous actions called fields.

...what exists in the social world relations – not interactions between agents or intersubjective ties between individuals, but the objective relations which exist independently of individual consciousness and will (Bourdieu, 2007, P 97)

He further argues that power relations between individuals within each field and between the fields themselves structure our behaviour. Therefore in order to understanding how we might behave it is useful to understand the power relations with which we are engaged.

A field is a field of forces within which agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these positions-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field. (Bourdieu 1995, P39)

The analogy of a sports playing field helps explain the theory where the players in the game or 'agents' as they are referred to by Bourdieu occupy specific positions which, in themselves carry specific actions that determine the outcome of the game. The players or agents also each possess a particular disposition, which are in a constant struggle within what Bourdieu calls the Habitus. Positions are determined by the interaction between rules within the field, the agents own capital which includes social economic and cultural, and the agents habitus.

3.5 Bourdieu's Doxa

Doxa can be explained as the set of rules agreed by agents in the field of play. Returning to the football analogy a player agrees the offside rule; that if the ball is passed forward to one of your own team and s/he is ahead of the last person on the opposing team the whistle is blown for a foul. Bourdieu explains Doxa as an acceptance of the rules, where the players share the rules of the game even though there is a struggle between the opposing powers, dominant and subservient, a kind of 'social consciousness'.

One of the most important effects of the correspondence between real divisions and practical principles of division, between social structures and mental structures, is undoubtedly the fact that primary experience of the social world is that of doxa, and adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident (Bourdieu, 1984, P 471)

Bourdieu believed that each area of life has its own specific set of relationships were those involved interact in a multidimensional context which includes aspects of domination, orthodoxy and other social relations which form the social order and hence the disposition of the players within that field. He believed the best weapons in 'strategies of distinction' were symbolic goods especially those with 'attributes of excellence' and that these were the key indicators of class (Bourdieu, P 66). It was these differences in 'cultural capital' that distinguished the classes and the learned behaviour or 'manners' which gave access to the dominant classes, 'especially the manner of relationship to legitimate culture, are the stake in a permanent struggle.' (1979, 1984, P 69). Bourdieu argued that individuals inherited cultural attitudes,

...it can be shown that the schemes and commonplaces which provide images of the different forms of domination, the opposition between the sexes and age groups as well as the opposition between the generations, are similarly manipulated. The young can accept the definition that their elders offer them; take advantage of the temporary license they are allowed in many societies... (Ibid. P. 477)

Bourdieu was interested in how differences, particularly differences of culture, were used to reinforce dominant class social production and how this would 'legitimise' forms of power and control as used by dominant classes. He argued that symbolic goods were the ideal weapons for strategies of distinction (P 66) and that cultural capital depended on social and economic capital where early childhood learning was central. It was during this 'early imperceptible learning that deep-rooted and long-standing dispositions were formed' (ibid). These dispositions reflected the individual's position in any particular field where fields could be described as social space, structured systems, rules, and schemes of domination. Bourdieu identified education as one of the main fields in modern society with its own structures and social laws. For Bourdieu the objective field,

where individuals' dispositions or their position within the field, was what he termed habitus.

3.6 Bourdieu's Habitus

The concept of disposition is central to Bourdieu's idea of habitus which is defined by a combination of acquired perceptions, thoughts and actions which are lasting for the individual. Habitus structures our practice and the perception of those practices. It also embodies our personal preferences dispositions and our history in the context of the social sphere within which we operate. So education, social class, family influences and previous behaviour all influence how we behave as agents within the field. Habitus also includes our own condition as in our health our feelings and state of being. In their application of Bourdieu's theory to organisational analysis Emirbayer and Johnson have this to say about habitus,

...by habitus, Bourdieu means the relevance of durable principals of judgement and practice generated by an actor's early life experiences and modified apprentices to a greater or lesser degree later in life... The habitus is a mechanism linking individual action and the macro structural settings within which future action is taken. (Emirbayer, M, & Johnson, V. 2008, P 4)

It was Bourdieu's intention that habitus would provide a unified relational sociology which overcame the well-known dualism of freedom/determinism, micro/macro levels, and subjectivism/objectivism.

3.7 Types of Capital

For Bourdieu, capital was not simply economic (as expressed by Marx) but rather the concept was broadened to incorporate social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. Individuals occupy a position within the multidimensional social space and their disposition is determined by the combinations of capital accrued by the individual agent. In this way an individual agent develops their own individual habitus. Individuals inherited cultural attitudes through definitions offered by their elders.

Total early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life and extended by scholastic learning which presupposes and completes it... (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, P 66)

Bourdieu argues that manners learned in early life provide access to the dominant classes.

Knowing that 'manner' is a symbolic manifestation whose meaning and value depend as much on the perceivers as on the producer, one can see how it is that the manner of using symbolic goods, especially those regarded as the attributes of excellence, constitute one of the key markers of 'class' and also the ideal weapon in strategies of distinction... (Ibid. P 66)

He argues that the acquisition of taste from the earliest days helps to form this symbolic capital and includes food clothing art entertainment and other forms of cultural capital. It is these distinctions in taste that determine the classes to which agents belong. According to Gauntlett (2011) Bourdieu used cultural capital as a means of explaining the reproduction of dominant classes within society. He describes how the book *Distinction* (1984),

...explores the ways in which the trappings of middle-class taste and cultivation are used by people as cultural signifiers, as they seek to identify themselves with those 'above' them on the social ladder, and to demonstrate their difference from those 'below'. (P2)

He further explains that Bourdieu uses social capital to explain the inequalities in life 'it's not what you know, it's who you know' and points to a world where only those who are chosen enter the 'elitist' world. This particular review of social capital has been criticised as being negative and is in contrast to Coleman's interpretation of social capital

According to Bourdieu (1986) capital 'is what makes the games of society' and in its objectified form, capital is accumulated over time.

...the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the minute structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices. (P. 2)

Bourdieu argues that economic theory has reduced the world to a capitalist way of thinking where interest in exchange lies mainly in the pursuit of profit and economic self-interest. All exchange is seen through the eyes of the merchant and any other form is of no interest.

The class of practices whose explicit purpose is to maximize monetary profit can be defined as such without producing the purposeless finality of cultural or artistic practices and their products. (P. 2)

Bourdieu argues strongly against this very narrow economic definition of capital and proposes that where there is 'interest' there must also be 'disinterest' and that it is these different types of non-monetary capital or power that change from one form to another. He identifies three types of capital, namely economic, cultural, and social. For the purpose of this study I will focus on cultural and social capital as these are the most likely forms to be used in my later analysis.

3.8 Cultural Capital

Bourdieu argues that cultural capital exists in three different states. The first of these is what he calls the 'embodied' state which has to do with the individual dispositions of mind and body. The second is the 'objectified' state which is mainly to do with material or cultural goods and the ownership of same. The third he calls the 'institutionalised' state which is another form of objectification but is conferred by the institution, for example educational qualifications.

By conferring institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any one given agent, the academic qualification also makes it possible to compare qualification holders and even to exchange them (by substituting one for another in succession). (Ibid, P9)

Bathmaker et al (2013) make the point that students' social positioning is shaped through their access and mobilisation of various forms of capital. The focus of their longitudinal study shows how students from different classes respond to an ever-changing environment in higher education. Their findings suggest that both working and middle class students realise that a degree is not enough and that it is important to mobilise different forms of capital in 'playing the game', if one is to succeed. They highlight how middle-class students 'have privileged access to valued capitals'

...with shifts in access to education, when the playing field appears to have been levelled for some people (i.e. even when working class young people make it into the HE). The advantage is maintained through a shift in the rules of the game. (P. 741)

Their argument is that working class students are not prepared for the game as they are not as predisposed, as middle-class students are, to the accumulation of additional capital. Middle-class students have learned and cultivated a particular disposition that the authors describe as,

... of mind, taste and body that are read as 'instinctive' thus becomes so habitual that they appear instinctive, what are in practice internalized through what Lareau (2011) called 'concerted cultivation. (P. 741)

3.9 Social Capital

The three main theorists on social capital are Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. According to Field (2003 p. 1-2) relationships and networks are central to social capital. He states 'relationships matter' and 'social networks are a valuable asset'. Social capital can be thought of with regard to the benefits individuals accrue through cooperation, communication and the general connectedness that comes about through networks. Tzanakis (2013) argues that a lack of agreement on the conceptualisation of social capital gives rise to ambiguity in its application to research. He provides the following definition.

'The concept of social capital draws attention to the effects and consequences of human sociability and connectedness and their relations to the individual and social structure.' (2013 P.2)

Tzanakis argues that the concept of social capital is perceived differently by the three main proponents of the concept, namely Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. For Bourdieu the importance of group membership is central to social capital and is what gives the agent credentials which may be symbolically traded.

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition... (Bourdieu, 1986 P 10)

The possession of social capital for Bourdieu and the volume thereof depends on the number of connections that can be mobilised at any one time by the agent. The more one is connected the more benefit and profit is accumulated by the agent which may in turn be symbolically traded as a form of prestige. However, Bourdieu's theory of social capital, particularly its suggestion of reinforcing the 'power elite', has been criticised as being too reductionist (Alexander, 1996; Jenkins, 1992).

Lee 2010 discusses important conceptual issues regarding social capital research in education and identifies three key areas for elaboration. They are

...redefining potential resources as accessible but un-utilized sources of social capital; differentiating social capital itself from the process of social capital formation; and investigating both network orientation of resource-seekers and willingness of resource-givers. (P. 779)

In this article Lee argues that social capital is complex and has been used in a varied and sometimes 'all-embracing' way and that some social research sees all social capital being associated with positive relationships and 'thereby analytically overused'. The article seeks to clarify social capital and provide analytical validity to the concept. Lee argues that resources are available through social relationships and those who have access to these relationships therefore have greater resources to hand. In other words, social capital should be more fully understood as a resource. He makes the argument that this ability to extract resources from social capital fits the conceptual notion of Bourdieu's habitus.

Thus, the ability to obtain these resources through particular social memberships is not social capital itself, but it is conscious, unconscious, or subconscious behaviors, influenced by certain cognitive, psychological, sociocultural, or biological factors that play a key role in forming social capital or transforming potential resources into acquired resources. (P.787)

Lee makes the argument that individuals are likely to mobilise resources based on their experiences which may be either negative or positive, depending on the particular social engagement and

...may also have low motivation or negative dispositions towards utilizing resources because of a lack of optimism resulting from failure or frustrated experiences. (P.787)

This perspective on social capital seems to parallel that of Coleman where it is not a tangible entity but rather a function of human behaviour. James Coleman (1994) saw social capital and human capital being closely linked and defined it as a human function.

It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. (Coleman 1994 p 302)

Social capital for Coleman existed in the relationships between individuals and the attributes of mutual trust, expectation and reciprocity which in turn allow actors to improve themselves. According to Gauntlett 2011,

Coleman's approach leads to a broader view of social capital, where it is not seen only as stock held by powerful elites, but notes its value for all kinds of communities, including the powerless and marginalised. (P3)

While Coleman's definition of social capital has similarities with that of Bourdieu it's focus on the functionalist aspects and the betterment of individuals neglects conflictual attributes of inequality 'as a result or a cause of the differential power arising from differences in social capital' (Tzanakis, 2013, P4)

Robert Putnam is probably best known for his 1995 article 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital' and his 2000 publication 'Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival American Community'. For Putnam social capital revolves around the connections between individuals; social networks and social relations where 'norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness' are central to social capital. According to Smith (2009 p. 6) Putnam's social capital is important because it provided 'human well-being' by way of a) collective problem-solving, b) smooth transactions through trusting interactions and c) broadening individual perceptiveness. In this way social capital is defined as an aggregate where individuals contribute to the public good. The argument that Putnam makes is that positive outcomes are a direct result of high levels of social capital within communities.

3.10 Conclusion

McClenaghan (2000) points to the increasing significance of using social capital as a means of analysis in education attainment. The literature provides a key structure for my analysis in this study. Following Glover 2010, Lee 2010 and Bathmaker et al 2013, I intend to use Bourdieu's theories of habitus, field and capital as a means of analysis. I want to explore the concept of habitus and whether 'conditions of existence' within the Post Leaving Certificate sector had any part to play in the development of higher education in further education. In particular I want to understand whether different forms of capital have contributed to the structure of higher education provision within further

education. I am also interested in Bourdieu's conflictual theories in relation to capital and whether in fact it operated as either a positive driving force or on the other hand a negative restrictive force.

However, this research is exploratory and does not begin with any pre-set theory that must be proven or disproven. It is investigative in nature and seeks to find meaning in relation to how and why higher education programmes were designed and delivered within the Post Leaving Certificate sector of further education. My own involvement with regard to these developments cultivated an interest as I experienced first-hand a constant struggle within the organisation where I was employed. There were stages of highly driven and motivated programme development being pursued by certain individuals, while on the other hand there was resistance from other members both within and without the organisation. I was particularly interested in how these struggles played out and in identifying key players and events that led to this revolution or change within the PLC sector. I wondered whether similar actions and counter actions were experienced in other colleges within the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee and how they may have been driven or restricted within those institutions. These struggles reflected the concept of 'Habitus' as described by Bourdieu (1984) and form a central tenet of my analysis. Over time I came to see a process of evolution and change where individuals seemed to take charge and led out a constant change process which was both driven by the development of innovative and creative ideas and the perceived need for an alternative pathway to continuing education for learners who otherwise may have had no interest.

3.10.1 Distinction in Education

In addition to the specific research questions (highlighted above) it may be useful to restate the key issues. I wanted to investigate the difference or distinctions between further and higher education as it is understood by those involved in the delivery of higher education within further education institutions. I wanted to understand how the development of these programmes came about and whether there was a culture of innovation and development within the sector and whether socio-economic needs played any part. I also wanted to understand whether or not an alternative pathway had evolved which provided some advantage to otherwise

disinterested learners. The role of leadership and the identification of key leaders was also a central theme to my research and I wanted to know how such individuals managed the development of higher education within further education colleges. I also wanted to understand whether there were any power struggles and what role if any they may have played during this process of evolution. In other words, did 'conditions of existence' and the accrual of different types of capital contribute in any way to the creation of an 'institutional habitus' that incorporated the notion of higher education within further education?

Finally, I wanted to understand how more recent developments emanating from legislation and particularly the formation of SOLAS, QQI and the ETBs would impact on the development of these programmes and whether a new struggle was about to begin where the players involved and the positions they held was about to change again.

In the following chapter I will outline the research design taking account of the substantive issues relating to the evolution of higher education within further education and how aspects of leadership, motivation and direction may have shaped that development. The theoretical framework for analysis will seek to use Bourdieu's theories of field, capital, habitus and doxa in an attempt to understand whether aspects of power relations had a part to play in both the development and consequent implementation of such higher education programmes.

Chapter Four

Research Design

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of the literature taking account of 'paradigm wars' and making the case for a qualitative and interpretive research approach. Issues of mixed methods and case study research are analysed and discussed. Finally, the methodology is described in detail from initial problem identification and search through pilot interviews, ethical and approval issues to eventual case study design. It begins by outlining the limitations and delimitations of the case study.

4.1 Method: Limitations and Delimitations

The methodology is qualitative using a case study consisting of semi structured, in-depth interviews, with a small number of relevant stakeholders, a convenience survey of students pursuing higher education in colleges of further education and a convenience survey of teachers within the further education sector. I will also include official documents and archival records relating to the development, validation and accreditation of HE programmes in FE. The research will confine itself to a small number of cases in FE colleges within the CDVEC. The study is will use the concept of the *quintain* as devised by Stake (2006). He explains the *quintain* as follows:

In multicase study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the study are somehow categorically bound together. They may be members of a group or examples of phenomenon... A *quintain* is an object or phenomenon condition to be studied – a target, but not a bull's-eye.... The *quintain* is the arena or holding company or umbrella for the cases we will study. (Stake, 2006 P6)

It is not intended that the findings of this study should be generalisable but rather that they provide an insightful understanding of how HE evolved within the FE sector. It is an interpretivist study with an evolving research design where data collected will direct further investigative methods in an effort to more accurately describe and explain the particular case. Hudson and Ozanne, (1988) argue that a continually evolving research design is typical of an interpretivist approach.

Figure 4 is an adoption of a *Case Graphic Illustration* from Stake (2006). It sets the boundaries of the study while identifying the key issues and sources of data collection.

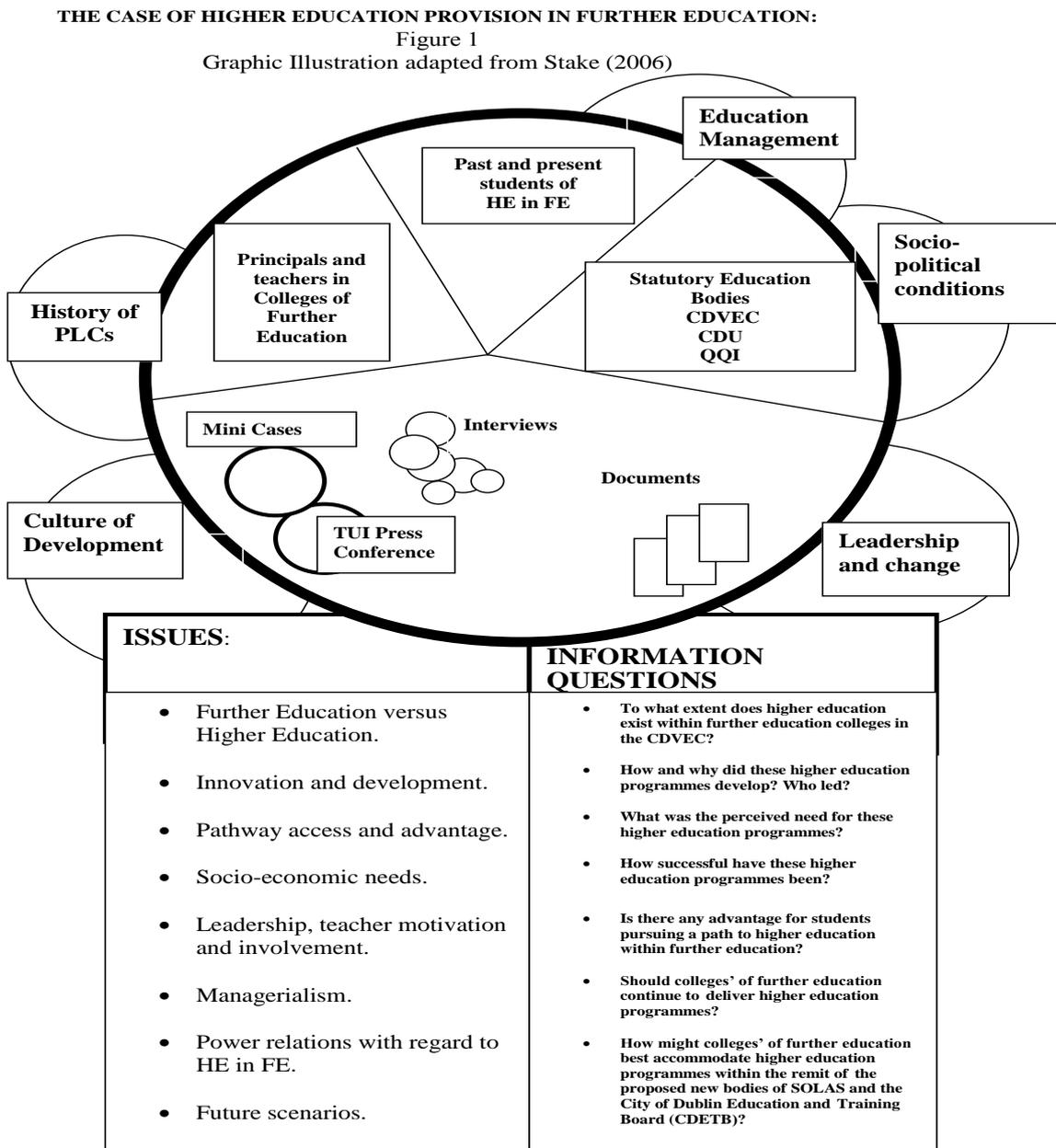


Figure 4
Graphic Illustration of Case as Adapted from Stake 1986

The purpose of this research is to investigate evolutionary change in Further Education (FE) within the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector with a particular emphasis on the development of Higher Education (HE) courses within the CDVEC. My objective is to understand what role leadership played in this development and identify opportunities of best practice in structures of management/leadership and how these might integrate with the Government decision to create a new authority 'with responsibility for the coordination and funding of Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland'. (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p. 1) The following table shows the proposed and actual timeframe for the research.

Task	Start Date	Expected Finish	Actual Dates
Preliminary Research 'Into the Field'	January 2011	July 2011	January/July 2011
Pilot Case Study/Interviews	January 2012	July 2012	January/July 2012
Ethical Approval(s)	January 2012	June 2012	January/June 2012
Literature Review (Draft)	June 2012	December 2012	June/December 2012
Methodology (Draft)	June 2012	Dec. 2012	June/December 2012
In-depth interviews	December 2012	June 2013	December 2012/July 2014
Teacher Pilot survey	January 2013	January 2013	January 2013
Teacher Survey	January 2013	February 2013	January/March 2013
Student Pilot Survey	January 2013	January 2013	January 2013
Student Survey	January 2013	February 2013	January/March 2013
Data Analysis	December 2012	September 2014	Dec. 2012/Sept. 2014
Final Write Up	September 2013	June 2014	Sep. 2013/Dec. 2014

Table 2
Timeline for Research Completion

4.2 Methodological Issues

The nature of this study does not lend itself to a positivist cause effect approach but rather the interpretivist or qualitative paradigm. This investigation requires an interpretivist approach as the study is evolving as more information is gathered. Hudson and Ozanne, (1988) differentiate between the two philosophical approaches stating that 'The positivists' approach to research includes the

adherence to scientific protocol.... The interpretivists' approach to research, on the other hand, is typified by a continually evolving research design.'

Within Positivist Social Science (PPS) the objective is to be predictive and in some way control the environment with the researcher being an independent observer. Interpretive Social Science (ISS) takes a phenomenological and subjectivist approach with the researcher developing an understanding or reasoning of the inherent meanings within the data collected. Arguments around epistemology, ontology and axiology are central to a full understanding and hence selection of the most accurate and relevant research method. Hudson and Ozanne, (1988) argue that

..... philosophical assumptions are statements accepted without direct empirical support and are based on different views of reality, social beings, and knowledge. (p. 508)

They go on to explain how the methodology chosen must be appropriate for the specific philosophical approach taken and that various positions reflect different philosophical assumptions and goals. This study follows an evolving design as is explained in the following quote;

The use of an evolving design is consistent with the interpretivists' belief that, due to the human's ability to adapt, the best approach to understanding is through the use of the human instrument. It is also consistent with their belief that one cannot have a priori knowledge of the many socially-constructed realities. (Ibid p. 513)

Sandelowski et.al (2009) explains how both qualitative and quantitative research each provides different understandings of the data collected.

Foundational to whether data can be characterized as qualitative or quantitative are different understandings of data. The most prevalent conception of data is as what is given, or as what exists out there awaiting collection and analysis.....Commonplace references to raw data, data collection, and data-based research reflect this view of data as the uninterpreted (i.e., uncooked) entities that precede and are the objects of analysis, and without which there would be nothing to analyze. Countering the data-as-given view is the understanding of data as the product of a move on the part of researchers to make something over into data. (p. 209)

Spiggle (1994) refers to a "crisis of representation" which has developed because of the arguments around dominant paradigms of research in the social sciences

Debate centres on the questions of how can we know and represent what we know about reality. As a result of these debates, scholarly communities fragment as experimental, reflective perspectives flourish. (p. 491)

This research was an exploratory mixed methods case study which took evidence from semi-structured in-depth interviews, direct observation, in-dweller observation, documentation and archival records. Two purposive sample surveys were also conducted. One was with students of higher education within further education and the second with teachers within the further education sector.

4.3 Ethics and Approval

Before embarking on the research I was conscious of ethical considerations and the need to get full approval for the research. I wrote to the CEO of the CDET B Ms Jacinta Stewart and sought permission for the research (appendix E). I also wrote to the board of management and all potential participants setting out what the research was about and what involvement was required. This was provided by way of a plain language statement (appendix B). All participants were asked to complete an informed consent form (appendix A) before any interviews took place. A full notification form was also forwarded to the Research Ethics Committee within Dublin City University and they forwarded a letter of consent (appendix J). After interviews had taken place and were transcribed copies were forwarded to each participant to ensure accuracy and to allow for any adjustments or corrections.

4.4 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviewees were initially contacted by phone in order to ascertain their willingness to participate. After this initial contact I followed up with formal invitations to participate in the research. A full plain language statement, indicative content of interviews and an informed consent forms were included in the formal invitation to participate in the research. See appendices A and B.

A total of 15 in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi structured schedule of questions and probes. Participants included 7 principals, 2 deputy principals, 4 teachers, a former CEO of FETAC, the current and former CEOs of the curriculum development unit (CDU), an education officer from the CDVEC and one former

principal. An interview with the Minister for Education, Mr Ruairí Quinn was planned but later abandoned because the Minister was 'too busy'. However the Department did accept a shortlist of questions to which they duly responded.

Interviews were prearranged and held at each individual's place of work. They were recorded using a portable Olympus digital recorder and later transcribed for analysis. Transcripts were then imported into the **MAXQDA 11** software programme for later theming and coding. See appendix M for an example of coding.

4.5 Surveys

Two separate surveys were designed and distributed, one for teachers within the FE sector and another for students within the FE sector. These were designed to reinforce and to provide validity through triangulation. The questions were conceived during the in-depth interviews phase. The electronic surveys were distributed using Survey Monkey. An initial pilot surveys was distributed before the final questionnaires were distributed to a broader cohort of teachers and students. The student online questionnaire may be viewed in appendix F and the teacher online questionnaire in appendix G.

The teacher survey was distributed to four colleges who were the main providers of higher education in further education within the CDETB. The student survey was distributed using a data base of students over a three-year period within the largest college providing higher education within further education. The following questions were included in the teacher survey which was distributed via Survey Monkey to four FECs who provide higher education courses within the CDVEC.

Three colleges completed the survey which asked the following questions.

- Q1. What levels of course do you teach or lecture on here in (named College)?
- Q2. Were you in the past or are you now involved in the development of courses, modules, or programmes here in (named College)?
- Q3. How and why do you think (named College) developed higher education programmes up to level 8 on the NQF?

- Q4. How successful have these higher education programmes been for students of (named College)?
- Q5. How would you describe your impression of what type of educational institution (named College) is?
- Q6. Should (named College) be allowed continue developing and delivering higher level courses such as BTEC HND and degree programmes or should they be confined to further education at FETAC level five and six (Advanced Certificate)?
- Q7. Do you think (named College) is disadvantaged in any way? If so in what way and what should be done about it?
- Q8. What do you think is the general understanding the public have of (named College)? Do you think it has a reputation for anything?
- Q9. Do you think (named College) is different from other colleges?
- Q10. Having completed the questions above please write a few sentences about where you think (named college) is going. What you think of the place and how it might develop in the future particularly in respect of new developments like SOLAS and the CDET? Any thoughts or words are helpful.

4.6 Documentary Data

Documentary data, which included school prospecti, letters, memoranda of association and minutes of meetings, were collected in the largest provider of higher education within further education. A full trawl of the archives of Ballyfermot College of Further Education was undertaken in an attempt to discover possible leads and/or indicators to the thinking which led to the development of the College and its contribution to the creation of new courses of higher education.

4.7 Insider Research and Ethnography

Again it is important to outline my own involvement within this research. I work within the largest provider of higher education in further education in the State and have been substantially involved in the development of many of these programmes. The combination of an ethnographic perspective, in-depth interviews

and survey data will help ensure a level of validity by way of triangulation between the sources of data. Reflexivity is important in this type of research and I am acutely aware of my own subjectivity and biases and fully intend to represent all data accurately and truthfully.

4.8 Case Study and Mixed Methods

The research is predominantly a case study and therefore by its nature uses a combination of methods to best explore a case. Greene (2007) argues that a mixed method provides a full understanding of the phenomena being investigated.

The primary purpose of a study with a mixed methods way of thinking is to better understand the complexity of the social phenomena being studied. In a mixed method way of thinking, better understanding can take various forms, more of one of which can be invoked in a given study. (Greene, 2007 p 20)

'The past three decades of scholarship on case study research have produced more and 25 definitions'. (Van Wynsberghe, R. & Khan, S. 2007. P. 81). Bassey (1999) outlines three types or 'categories' of case study,

I am arguing that there are at least three categories of educational case study: theory-seeking and theory-testing case study; story-telling and picture-drawing case study; and evaluative case study.....(I will) demonstrate how theory-seeking, theory-testing, story-telling, picture-drawing and (to a lesser extent) evaluative case studies can contribute to theoretical frameworks which underpin both educational practice and policy.(1999 p 12)

There are many definitions and understandings of what a case study is. Many of these differences stem from the works of Yin (1994) and Stake (1995) each providing different approaches. Appleton (2002, p. 81) contends that there is a lack of clarity in relation to what constitutes 'a case'. Creswell (1994), Yin (1989) and Merriam (1988) see the case as operating within the boundaries of both time and the event being investigated. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that reality cannot be seen as something on its own but rather as in the Gestalt and state,

Pattern theories are systems of ideas that inform. The concepts and relations within them form a mutually reinforcing closed system. They specify a sequence of phases or link parts to a whole. (P. 38)

This hermeneutic approach looks at interpretation of meaningful human action. So reality is not just an interpretation but also includes the experiences and understanding of the observer to provide a contextual meaning. Creswell (1994) provides a useful definition of the case study,

...the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon ("the case") bounded by time and activity (a programme, event, process, institution or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (p. 12)

Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) believe that case studies are 'transparadigmatic'.

...we mean that case study is relevant regardless of one's research paradigms (i.e., postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism). By transdisciplinary, we are suggesting that case study has no particular disciplinary orientation; that is, it can be used in social science, science, applied science, business, fine arts, and human research, for example. (p. 80-81)

Flyvbjerg (2006) helps clarify by identifying and deconstructing five common misunderstandings about case studies. They are:

- 1) Theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge
- 2) One cannot generalise from a single case, therefore, the single case study cannot contribute to scientific development;
- 3) The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are suitable for hypothesis testing and theory building;
- 4) Case study contains a bias towards verification;
- 5) It is often difficult to summarise specific case studies. (p. 219)

Flyvbjerg explains and corrects these misunderstandings.

...according to the conventional view, a case and a case study cannot be of value in and of themselves; they need to be linked to hypotheses, following the well-known hypothetico-deductive model of explanation (p. 220)

He goes on to say that by and large the conventional wisdom is wrong and knowledge and understanding also includes the experiences and understanding of the observer to provide a contextual meaning.

... The case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the social sciences, and is a method that holds up well compare to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology. (p. 241)

Flyvbjerg argues that theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient and only provides the beginnings of understanding. He contends that without some interaction in a practical learning world the subject is left with a simple or basic understanding. In his analysis of human learning he shows how several types of skill combined in everyday activities bring a 'higher' learning socially, technically and intellectually. This context dependent knowledge and experience is at the centre of our everyday activities. He therefore argues that case studies are especially well suited to produce context dependent knowledge.

According to Yin (1984) case studies are preferably used 'when how or why questions' are being asked. These types of questions are typically qualitative

... The case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries. (p. 14)

It was once understood that case studies were only appropriate for exploratory investigations and were used as a foundation for more formal quantitative research methods. However it depends on the type of question being investigated and the context within which the information is held. According to Yin there are three conditions which must be met for particular strategies of research. They include,

...the type of research question posed; the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and the degree of focus in contemporary as opposed historical events. (p. 16)

He further explains.

...the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours can be manipulated. Thus the case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, but it adds to sources of evidence not usually included in the historian's repertoire: direct observation and systematic interviewing. (p.19)

Yin identifies a number of prejudices against case studies which included 'the sense of a lack of rigour', 'little basis for scientific generalisation', and the fact that they can end up as long 'meandering unreadable documents' usually taking too long to complete.

Yin proposes a number of different applications for case studies with the most important thing being to explain real-life situations which may be too complex for surveys or experiments. Other applications might include description evaluation and exploration.

I will conclude this section with three definitions, all cited in Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007. P. 81), which I feel are useful for my own understanding of case study research.

We suggest that there are several heuristics involved in case study research, and we propose that these heuristics serve continually to focus one's attention on locating or constructing the unit of analysis (the phenomenon for which evidence is collected). (Van Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007. P. 81)

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 1994. P. 13)

A case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a "case" or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. (Creswell, 2002, P. 61)

During my research on how higher education evolved within PLC Colleges and why it was perceived as a necessity to develop such courses it became apparent that the case study methodology would best serve the purpose of understanding what happened within the sector and specifically where any leadership may have come from. The following section will now explain the method used for data collection and analysis.

4.9 Fieldwork and Data Collection

Because the study was confined to colleges offering higher education in further education it was necessary to identify which colleges are doing just that. The CDVEC has 17 colleges of further education and a small number of these offer programmes above level 5 on the national qualifications framework. See **Table 1** above (P 26) for a list of CDVEC Colleges with Higher Education Provision.

It was decided that a combination of data collection methods would be used. These included a series of in-depth interviews with four separate cohorts of relevant

stakeholders, a small electronic survey questionnaire of teachers and students and documentary evidence which included both archival material and newspaper and other publications.

After identifying the sources of data it was important to obtain permission from the CEO of the CDVEC to undertake this study. Permissions were also granted from boards of management and each individual taking part in the in-depth interviews were given a plain language statement about the research and asked to complete a consent form. They were further furnished with copies of transcripts of interview for any amendments clarifications and general authorisation. A full report was provided to the ethics committee of Dublin City University and approved by them in July 2012.

The following three chapters will present the findings of the research. Chapter 5 will present data from the teachers' surveys. Chapter 6 will present data from the student surveys and Chapter 7 presents the findings from the in-depth interviews.

Chapter Five:

Teacher Surveys

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research and the data gathered from the electronic surveys with teachers in FECs, within the CDVEC, that provide higher education programmes. They are Ballyfermot College, Inchicore College, and Rathmines College. A fourth College did not partake in the electronic survey.

Tables will be used to display the answer choices along with separate breakdowns of the number and percentage of responses to each question. Relevant responses will be highlighted for each question. The same ten questions were asked of each of the colleges and the answers are presented for all three colleges together. This will allow greater comparability between the colleges for each question.

The greatest response came from the largest provider of higher education in further education, BCFE, with fifty-six respondents from a distribution list of eighty-six. The next greatest responses came from ICFE and RCFE with nineteen and three responses respectively. The fourth College returned one incomplete questionnaire. The data is not being used in any way to assert facts or generalise but rather to add to the richness of the research and provide a method of reliability through triangulation.

This section provides data on the levels of courses in the surveyed FECs.

5.1 Levels of Courses in FE Colleges

Table 3 presents the findings in relation to the levels of educational programmes delivered in Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

Answer Choices	Response	s
FETAC Level 5 National Qualification Framework	67.86%	38
BTEC National Diploma level 5 National Qualification Framework	23.21%	13
BTEC Higher National Diploma level 6 (Higher Certificate) National Qualification Framework	67.86%	38
BA (Hons) Degree level 8 National Qualification Framework	16.07%	9
Other (please specify)	12.50%	7
Total Respondents: 56		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	FETAC LEVEL 6	2/26/2013 4:15 AM
2	Deputy Principal	1/30/2013 4:43 AM
3	Also teach Return to Learning	1/29/2013 3:01 PM
4	DIT preliminary engineering (level 6) – up to 2011	1/24/2013 7:09 AM
5	RTL mix of level 5, not full award	1/24/2013 2:35 AM
6	FETAC level 6	1/24/2013 2:11 AM
7	Deputy Principal	1/23/2013 6:48 AM

Table 3
Courses levels in BCFE

It is interesting to note that 67.86% (N38) of the teachers in BCFE teach at a higher education level and that just over 16% (N9) teach an honours degree level 8 on the national qualifications framework. This is the highest level of HE teaching in a CFE within the CDVEC.

Table 4 presents the findings in relation to the levels of educational programmes delivered in Inchicore College of Further Education.

Answer Choices	Response	s
FETAC Level 5 National Qualification Framework	78.95%	15
BTEC National Diploma level 5 National Qualification Framework	10.53%	2
BTEC Higher National Diploma level 6 (Higher Certificate) National Qualification Framework	52.63%	10
BA (Hons) Degree level 8 National Qualification Framework	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	21.05%	4
Total Respondents: 19		

Table 4
Course levels ICFE

Within ICFE the largest proportion of teachers 78.95% (n15) deliver courses to FETAC level 5 on the NQF. Still a significant proportion 52.63% (n10) teach at

Higher Certificate level 6 on the NQF. ICFE do not provide any degree programmes and their higher education is at BTEC Excel Higher National Diploma.

Table 5 presents the findings in relation to the levels of educational programmes delivered in Rathmines College of Further Education.

Answer Choices	Responses	
FETAC Level 5 National Qualification Framework	66.67%	2
BTEC National Diploma level 5 National Qualification Framework	33.33%	1
BTEC Higher National Diploma level 6 (Higher Certificate) National Qualification Framework	66.67%	2
BA (Hons) Degree level 8 National Qualification Framework	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	33.33%	1
Total Respondents: 3		

Table 5
Course levels in RCFE

A small number of teachers responded to the survey in RCFE. Two teachers deliver at FETAC level 5 and BTEC Higher National Diploma (Higher Certificate NQF). The College does not provide any degree level programmes at level 8 on the NQF.

Overall the main proportion of delivery within these colleges is at FETAC level 5 on the national qualifications framework. However a significant number of teachers deliver programmes of education at Higher Certificate level 6 and in one college teachers work on courses at honours degree level 8 on the NQF.

The next question sought to gather information on teachers involvement in the development of courses at different levels within their college.

5.2 Teacher Involvement in Course Development

The following tables illustrate levels of involvement in course development and contributions made by teachers in FECs. **Table 6** shows levels of course development for teachers in Ballyfermot College.

Answer Choices	Response s
FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	44.64% 25
FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	12.50% 7
BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	16.07% 9
BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	60.71% 34
Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)	17.86% 10
Never contributed to the development of any courses in the College	17.86% 10
Total Respondents: 56	

Table 6
Involvement in Course Development in BCFE

60.71% (N34) of teachers within BCFE have contributed to the development of courses in higher education within the College at level 6 (Higher Certificate) on the NQF. 44.64% (N25) were involved in the development of FETAC level 5 programmes and 17.8% (N10) in the development of honours degree level 8 on the NQF. Another 17.86% (N10) have never contributed to development of programmes within the College.

Table 7 illustrates levels of involvement in course development and contributions made by teachers in Inchicore College of Further Education.

Answer Choices	Response s
FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	52.63% 10
FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	10.53% 2
BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	0.00% 0
BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	10.53% 2
Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)	0.00% 0
Never contributed to the development of any courses in the College	47.37% 9
Total Respondents: 19	

Table 7
Involvement in Course Development in ICFE

Within ICFE the largest proportion of teachers 52.63% (N10) were involved in the development of programmes at FETAC level 5 NQF. A small proportion of 10.53% (N2) contributed to the development of FETAC level 6 (Advance Certificate). Of

interest here is the large proportion of teachers who have never contributed to the development of courses within the ICFE 47.37% (N9).

Table 8 illustrates levels of involvement in course development and contributions made by teachers in Rathmines College of Further Education.

Answer Choices	Responses	
FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	100.00%	3
FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	66.67%	2
BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	33.33%	1
BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	33.33%	1
Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)	0.00%	0
Never contributed to the development of any courses in the College	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 3		

Table 8
Involvement in Course Development in RCFE

Only one of the three teachers was involved in the development of higher education within RCFE. This was the BTEC higher national diploma which is currently placed at level 6 higher certificate on the NQF. However all teachers were involved in the development of courses in the College and all three 100% contributed to development of programmes at FETAC level 5 on the NQF.

5.3 How and Why HE was developed in FE?

The third question in the teacher survey sought to seek answers on how and why higher education programmes were developed in FECs. It sought to enquire as to where leadership came from and if the development was an internally led process stemming from perceived needs or was there any direction from the CDVEC or Department of Education. The following tables show responses from the surveyed colleges.

Table 9 illustrates teachers responses to how and why higher education programmes were developed in Ballfermot College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / Maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
There was a perceived need coming from the students.	1.79% 1	0.00% 0	14.29% 8	39.29% 22	44.64% 25	56	4.25
The survival of the school was threatened.	3.92% 2	29.41% 15	33.33% 17	27.45% 14	5.88% 3	51	3.02
Internal management leadership was central to the development	3.64% 2	1.82% 1	25.45% 14	45.45% 25	23.64% 13	55	3.84
Certain teachers were motivated to develop new courses and led them out.	1.79% 1	0.00% 0	3.57% 2	37.50% 21	57.14% 32	56	4.48
CDVEC encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	28.57% 16	33.93% 19	28.57% 16	8.93% 5	0.00% 0	56	2.18
The Department of Education encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	46.43% 26	19.64% 11	32.14% 18	1.79% 1	0.00% 0	56	1.89

Table 9

How and Why Higher education Programmes were developed in BCFE

Teachers within BCFE strongly agreed 57.14% (N32) and 37.5% (N21) agreed with the statement that *'certain teachers were motivated to develop courses within the College'*. This gave an average rating for teachers' involvement at 4.48. In contrast teachers in this College strongly disagreed 46.43% (N26) and another 19.64% (N11) disagreed with the statement *'the DES encouraged and showed leadership in these developments'*. Similarly the CDVEC was not seen to encourage and show leadership with 33.93% (N19) disagreeing and 28.57% (N16) strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Internal management were considered central to development with 45.45% (N25) agreeing and 23.64%(N13) strongly agreeing. Student needs was strongly suggested as the reason for programme development with 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

Table 10 illustrates teachers responses to how and why higher education programmes were developed in Inchicore College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / Maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
There was a perceived need coming from the students.	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	10.53% 2	52.63% 10	26.32% 5	19	3.95
The survival of the school was threatened.	5.26% 1	21.05% 4	36.84% 7	21.05% 4	15.79% 3	19	3.21
Internal management leadership was central to the development	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	5.26% 1	47.37% 9	36.84% 7	19	4.11
Certain teachers were motivated to develop new courses and led them out.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	31.58% 6	63.16% 12	19	4.58
CDVEC encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	38.89% 7	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	18	3.28
The Department of Education encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	15.79% 3	36.84% 7	36.84% 7	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	19	2.42

Table 10

How and Why Higher Education Programmes were developed in ICFE

Teachers in ICFE also believed they were central to the development of new programmes with 63.16% (N12) strongly agreeing with the statement and 31.58% (N6) agreeing; giving an average rating of 4.58. The Department of Education was not seen to have encouraged or shown leadership in these developments with 36.84% (N7) disagreeing with the statement and 15.79% (N3) strongly disagreeing. Again internal management involvement scored highly with 47.37% (N9) agreeing with the statement and 36.84% (N7) strongly agreeing with the statement. Again student needs was the key driving force for course development with 80% stating this as the reason for development.

Table 11 illustrates teachers responses to how and why higher education programmes were developed in Rathmines College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / Maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
There was a perceived need coming from the students.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	3	4.00
The survival of the school was threatened.	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	2.00
Internal management leadership was central to the development	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	2	4.50
Certain teachers were motivated to develop new courses and led them out.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	3	4.33
CDVEC encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	3	2.33
The Department of Education encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	1.50

Table 11

How and Why Higher Education Programmes were developed in RCFE

Teachers in RCFE believed internal management was central to leadership in the development of new programmes within their College with 50% agreeing and 50% strongly agree giving an average rating of 4.5.

A perceived need for students scored very highly with 100% agreeing that this was the main reason. Again the Department of Education scored poorly in relation to encouragement and leadership in these developments with 50% strongly disagreeing and disagreeing respectively.

The overall responses would suggest that the main impetus for programme development came from within the colleges themselves with highly motivated teachers and strong internal leadership. The development of courses was driven by student need. Both the CDVEC and the Department of Education were not perceived to have shown leadership.

5.4 Success of HE in FE

The fourth question in the teacher's survey enquired as to the success of these higher education programmes for the students. The following tables illustrates the

range of responses for the success of higher education provision in FECs. **Table 12** illustrates the responses from Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
BCFE College has the type of courses students want.	0.00% 0	1.79% 1	3.57% 2	53.57% 30	41.07% 23	56	4.34
BCFE College is best placed to deliver the courses it does.	1.79% 1	5.36% 3	5.36% 3	46.43% 26	41.07% 23	56	4.20
BCFE has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35.71% 20	64.29% 36	56	4.64
Students gain an advantage by pursuing a pathway to higher education within BCFE College.	0.00% 0	1.79% 1	1.79% 1	41.07% 23	55.36% 31	56	4.50
Lecturers and teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach their specialist subjects.	0.00% 0	1.79% 1	1.79% 1	44.64% 25	51.79% 29	56	4.46
BCFE College is successful in what it does.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	44.64% 25	55.36% 31	56	4.55
BCFE College is a leader in the development and delivery of these types of courses.	1.79% 1	0.00% 0	8.93% 5	35.71% 20	53.57% 30	56	4.39
BCFE College approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.36% 3	48.21% 27	46.43% 26	56	4.41

Table 12

Reasons for Success of Higher Education Programmes in BCFE

Teachers in BCFE strongly agreed with the statement '*the College had a good reputation for the courses they deliver*' and had an overall average rating of 4.64. 64.29% (N36) strongly agreed with the statement and 35.71% (N20) agreed. Teachers also believed students gained an advantage by pursuing higher education within further education in the College. The overall average rating for this statement was 4.5 and 55.36% (N31) strongly agreed with the statement and 41.07% (N23) agreed. Interestingly one teacher didn't know whether this was an advantage or not and another disagreed with the statement.

Table 13 illustrates a range of responses for the success of higher education provision in Inchicore College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
Our College has the type of courses students want.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	52.63% 10	47.37% 9	19	4.47
Our College is best placed to deliver the courses it does.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	52.63% 10	42.11% 8	19	4.37
Our has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.32% 5	73.68% 14	19	4.74
Students gain an advantage by pursuing a pathway to higher education within our college.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	42.11% 8	57.89% 11	19	4.58
Lecturers and teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach their specialist subjects.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.32% 5	73.68% 14	19	4.74
Our college is successful in what it does.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36.84% 7	63.16% 12	19	4.63
Our college is a leader in the development and delivery of these types of courses.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	47.37% 9	42.11% 8	19	4.32
Our college approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	47.37% 9	52.63% 10	19	4.53

Table 13

Reasons for Success of Higher Education Programmes in ICFE

Teachers in ICFE believed that their College had a good reputation for the courses they delivered and the teachers were well qualified and experienced to teach their specialised subjects. Both these statements scored the highest overall average rating of 4.74 with 73.68% (N14) strongly agreeing with both statements and 26.32% (N5) agreeing. Teachers also believed the College was successful in what it did with 63.16% (N12) strongly agreeing with the statement and 36.84% (N7) agreeing.

Table 14 illustrates a range of responses for the success of higher education provision in Rathmines College of Further Education.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
Our College has the type of courses students want.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	4.67
Our College is best placed to deliver the courses it does	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	4.67
Our has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	4.67
Students gain an advantage by pursuing a pathway to higher education within our college.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	4.67
Lecturers and teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach their specialist subjects.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	4.67
Our college is successful in what it does.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	3	4.33
Our college is a leader in the development and delivery of these types of courses.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	3	4.33
Our college approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3	3.33

Table 14

Reasons for Success of Higher Education Programmes in RCFE

Two of the three respondents at RCFE believe their College delivered the type of courses students wanted, was well placed to deliver these courses, had a good reputation, and were well qualified and experienced in the specialist subject areas. They also believed that students gained an advantage by pursuing higher education within their College. The third teacher also agreed with these statements.

5.5 Type of Educational Institution

The fifth question in the survey sought to get teachers understanding of the type of educational institution where they taught. The following tables illustrate how teachers perceived their college. **Table 15** provides the responses from Ballyfermot College.

Answer Choices	Responses
A secondary school.	1.79% 1
A third level institution.	8.93% 5
A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.	14.29% 8
A college of further education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).	35.71% 20
A college of further and higher education (an alternative third level institution).	66.07% 37
Total Respondents: 56	

Table 15
Type of College as Described by Teachers in BCFE

66.07% (N37) of teachers at BCFE overwhelmingly felt the College was one of both further and higher education and was *'an alternative third level institution'*. A further 35.71% (N20) felt it was a college *'somewhere between secondary and third level'*. A small number 8.93% (N5) felt it was *'a third level institution'* and one respondent felt the College was *'a secondary school'*. 14.29% (N8) believed the College was *'a second chance education and training institution'*.

Table 16 illustrates how teachers in Inchicore College of Further Education perceived their College.

Answer Choices	Response s
A secondary school.	0.00% 0
A third level institution.	15.79% 3
A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.	10.53% 2
A college of further education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).	63.16% 12
A college of further and higher education (an alternative third level institution).	52.63% 10
Total Respondents: 19	

Table 16
Type of College as Described by Teachers in ICFE

At ICFE 63.16% (N12) believe their College was *'a further education institution somewhere between a secondary and a third level'*. While 52.63% (N10) believed it was *'a College of both further and higher education and an alternative third level institution'*. Three teachers and 15.79% felt their College was *'a third level institution'* and two others believed it was *'a second chance education and training institution'* 10.53%.

The final table in this section, **Table 17**, illustrates the responses of Rathmines College of Further Education teachers.

Answer Choices	Responses
A secondary school.	0.00% 0
A third level institution.	0.00% 0
A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.	0.00% 0
A college of further education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).	100.00% 3
A college of further and higher education (an alternative third level institution).	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 3	

Table 17
Type of College as Described by Teachers in RCFE

All teachers at RCFE believe their College was one of Further Education and described it as '*somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution*'.

These responses from the three colleges suggest the majority of teachers believe their college is either *a college of further and higher education, and acts as an alternative third level institution, or a college of further education somewhere between a second level and third level college.*

5.6 Should FECs continue to Develop HE Courses?

The sixth question in the survey sought to enquire whether FECs should be allowed to continue developing and delivering higher education courses within FE. The following tables give the responses from the surveyed FECs. **Table 18** shows the responses of Ballyfermot College teachers.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes. BCFE College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework	91.07% 51
Don't know	5.36% 3
No. BCFE College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the National Qualifications Framework/	3.57% 2
Total	56

Table 18
Permission to develop and deliver HE courses at BCFE

A very high percentage 91.07% (N51) of teachers at BCFE believed their College should be allowed to continue to develop and deliver courses of higher education up to and including level 8 on the NQF. Interestingly two teachers 3.57% felt quite the opposite and the College should be confined to delivering courses at further education to level 6 (Advanced Certificate).

Table 19 provides the responses for Inchicore College.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes. Inchicore College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework	73.68% 14
Don't know	5.26% 1
No. Inchicore College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the National Qualifications Framework/	21.05% 4
Total	19

Table 19
Permission to develop and deliver HE courses at ICFE

Again a very high percentage of teachers at ICFE 73.68% (N14) felt their College should be allowed continue to develop and deliver higher education course up to and including level 8 the NQF. Just over a fifth of the respondents 21.05% (N4) felt their College should be confined to delivering courses at level 6 (Advanced Certificate) on the NQF. One teacher didn't know.

The final table in this section, **Table 20**, gives the responses of Rathmines College.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes. Rathmines College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework	66.67% 2
Don't know	0.00% 0
No. Rathmines College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the National Qualifications Framework/	33.33% 1
Total	3

Table 20
Permission to develop and deliver HE courses at RCFE

Two of the three respondents as RCFE believe their College should be allowed to develop higher education programmes up to level 8 on the NQF. A third respondent felt the College should be confined to level 6 (Advanced Certificate).

5.7 Perceived Disadvantages in Further Education

The seventh question on the survey asked whether teachers felt their college was disadvantaged in any way. All of the FECs surveyed felt their colleges were disadvantaged in a number of distinct areas. These include: perceptions held by the Department of Education, lack of resources for FECs, a block on further development of higher education programmes, the cap on student numbers and the lack of grants for students in FECs. The following comments are typical of what teachers had to say in this regard.

5.7.1 Perceptions of FE Colleges

For one college, the key disadvantage was how the College was perceived by the Department of Education in relation to its status.

Teacher (B2) *The main disadvantage we suffer is the perception that the DES has in not recognising its unique approach & contribution to education. There is an attempt to pigeon hole us with FAS & other institutions through SOLAS but we are a unique college.*

Teacher (B49) *We are not viewed as a 3rd level institution. Our aim is to gain greater recognition in the eyes of the Dept. of Education, in terms of what difference the college can make to students lives and careers.*

5.7.2 Lack of Resources

The issue of resources was second-highest in the list of disadvantages for CFE's. The lack of funding and the fact that FECs operate on second level school funding was seen by many as a major disadvantage to the sector. The following is a sample of some of the comments made.

Teacher (B3) *We operate on a second level school budget, not a third level budget, and so the art department equipment and resources are very basic.*

Teacher (B22) *Yes there is no budget to upgrade studios and facilities. Many Rooms are equipped with 10- 15 year old systems with no money to upgrade or a plan to do it?*

Teacher: (B54) *Funding is incredibly low compared to similar courses running in ITs or universities. Resources are low - tiny 'library' (resource room), only paid for sports facilities, lack of clubs and societies, poor social life for students compared to UNIVs with larger campuses and SUs*

Teacher: (I2) *We receive very poor resources per capita compared to Higher Education. Our resources should be benchmarked in line with FEC funding levels in other countries.*

5.7.3 Permission to Develop HE Courses

The third most important issue in relation to disadvantage for the College was the block or the lack of permission to develop any further courses of more than one year in duration. This effectively blocks the development of any further courses at HE level.

Teacher: (B4) *It seems a shame to me that there is a HETAC level 6 Social Care course sitting on a shelf and not being used. In addition, this blocks any innovation and energy around further development of courses affiliated to the Irish qualification system.*

Teacher: (B26) *Yes, the college is constantly held back in its development by the CDVEC and Dept. of Ed. Both of which lack the imagination and initiative to lead and encourage us as an institution.*

Teacher (B32) *Yes refusal of the Department of Education to allow recognition by HEA of programmes in the college - Bar to development.*

Teacher (B46) *Decisions regarding course development of vital importance to students should be made as much as possible by those that know best; teachers and co-coordinators that have insight into the future of their area of expertise, not by external organisations.*

5.7.4 Cap on Student Enrolment in FECs

The cap on student numbers was also considered to be a significant disadvantage for the FECs. The following comments were made.

Teacher (B7) *The cap on the number of students is weakening the college, also the restrictions from developing higher-level courses; this all has a negative impact on the college.*

Teacher (B8) *Yes, caps on student intake and course development, lack of funding for courses in comparison to similar courses in higher institutions.*

Teacher (I15) *Disadvantaged by the cap on student numbers which restricts the options open to the College.*

5.7.5 Lack of Grants for FEC Students

Teachers also felt that the lack of grants for some further education students was also a serious disadvantage. This relates particularly to students who decide to continue beyond BTEC Excel Higher National Diplomas to degree level studies in a FEC.

Teacher (B1) *There is no access to grants for students.*

Teacher (B6) *BCFE is disadvantaged with regard to students studying on the BA (Hons) programmes being refused grants. By way of a case study: there are only two degree courses in animation in the country. One in BCFE College, the other in DLIADT....students wishing to study animation in BCFE would instead be forced to study in DLIADT where the teaching approach is not commensurate with that which they originally sought. Therefore, the degree courses in BCFE College should be recognised by the DES and students should be given grants.*

5.8 Public Perception of FECs

Question 8 on the survey asked teachers how they thought the public perceived their college and if it had a good reputation for anything. The following tables illustrate the responses. **Table 21** illustrates the responses of Ballyfermot College and is followed by the most often stated themes from the open questions regarding public perceptions of FECs.

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned or known	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned and recognised	Total	Average Rating
BCFE College has a good reputation and is well renowned for Media Production.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.71% 6	44.64% 25	44.64% 25	56	4.34
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for the Rock School (Music Performance Management and Sound)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.45% 3	56.36% 31	38.18% 21	55	4.33
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Animation	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.07% 9	83.93% 47	56	4.84
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Social Care	0.00% 0	3.64% 2	38.18% 21	40.00% 22	18.18% 10	55	3.73
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Art Design and Graphics	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	19.64% 11	51.79% 29	28.57% 16	56	4.09
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Travel and Tourism and Reception	3.64% 2	12.73% 7	56.36% 31	20.00% 11	7.27% 4	55	3.15
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Television and Film	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 10	61.82% 34	20.00% 11	55	4.02
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Engineering	16.67% 9	31.48% 17	42.59% 23	5.56% 3	3.70% 2	54	2.48
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Business Studies	1.79% 1	8.93% 5	60.71% 34	17.86% 10	10.71% 6	56	3.27
BCFE has a good reputation and is well renowned for Life Long Learning	0.00% 0	10.71% 6	35.71% 20	33.93% 19	19.64% 11	56	3.63

Table 21

Teachers' Perception of BCFE Reputation with Public

5.8.1 Unique Courses in FECs

The majority of teachers at BCFE believe their College is renowned for unique courses. The following are some of the responses.

Teacher (B1) *Sound Engineering, Video Games Development, Digital Media(Web).*

Teacher (B2) *The college is well known for its art courses, especially portfolio courses which have one of the highest reputations in the country. Illustration and graphics are growing in reputation The college has a unique and strong reputation for Traditional Irish Music and its contribution to the Irish music tradition is very well recognised.*

Teacher (B3) *The MPM Degree. Art & design courses are well-renowned, but particularly among other Higher Ed colleges.*

Teacher (B9) *I feel the Rock School is well known but the Ceoltoir (traditional Irish music) is completely unknown.*

5.8.2 Reputation of FECs

Many teachers believed the college had a good reputation for high standards and students freely chose to apply for the courses based on the reputation particularly from industry.

Teacher (I4) *Inchicore College has a reputation for high standards of qualifications which provide the learner with routes into employment and higher education.*

Teacher (I5) *The college has a good reputation and a lot of our students have come here because of recommendations from past students.*

Teacher (I7) *The college has a good industry (theatre & film) reputation for delivery of Technical Theatre (technicians, designers, costume personnel, stage management)*

Teacher (I13) *A springboard for students to gain the knowledge and confidence to pursue further education and the vocational training to be an active and current participant in the job market.*

Teacher (I17) *It is well regarded by institutions that take our students year after year. Very positive feedback is given by both past students and from employers. It is seen as a student centred environment.*

5.9 College Differences

Question 9 asked whether teachers thought their colleges was different in any way from other colleges. The following tables illustrate the responses starting with Ballyfermot College and **Table 22**.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
Ballyfermot College provides courses other Colleges do not.	0.00% 0	1.79% 1	3.57% 2	57.14% 32	37.50% 21	56	4.30
Ballyfermot College has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	0.00% 0	3.57% 2	10.71% 6	55.36% 31	30.36% 17	56	4.13
Ballyfermot College is different in the way courses are delivered.	0.00% 0	5.36% 3	17.86% 10	55.36% 31	21.43% 12	56	3.93
Ballyfermot College has contributed to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland e.g., media, art, animation and games, film, TV, Radio etc.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.79% 1	28.57% 16	69.64% 39	56	4.68

Table 22

How BCFE teachers felt they differed from other colleges

When asked if their college was different teachers at BCFE felt the college had *'contributed to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland'* with 69.64% (N39) strongly agreeing with the statement. A further 28.57% agreed giving the highest overall average rating of 4.68.

Teachers strongly agreed 37.5% (N21) with the statement *'BCFE provides courses other colleges do not'*. 57.14% (N31) agreed with the statement.

Table 23 provides the responses of teachers at Inchicore College of Further Education

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
Our college provides courses other colleges do not.	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	5.26% 1	47.37% 9	42.11% 8	19	4.26
Our college has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.79% 3	47.37% 9	36.84% 7	19	4.21
Our college is different in the way courses are delivered.	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	31.58% 6	36.84% 7	21.05% 4	19	3.68

Table 23

How ICFE teachers felt they differed from other colleges

Teachers at ICFE also believe their college *'provides courses other colleges did not'* with 47.37% (N9) agreeing with the statement and 42.11% (N8) strongly agreeing. Respondents also felt their college had *'a reputation with industry that helps students get work'* with 47.37% (N9) agreeing with the statement and 36.84% (N7) strongly agreeing.

Table 24 reflects the responses of teachers at Rathmines College of further Education

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
Our college provides courses other colleges do not.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	3	3.67
Our college has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3	3.67
Our college is different in the way courses are delivered.	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	2.33

Table 24
How RCFE teachers felt they differed from other colleges

Interestingly two of the three teachers, who responded to the survey, at RCFE disagreed their college differed in the way courses were delivered and didn't know whether their college had a reputation with industry that helps students get work. Two teachers agreed their college provides courses other colleges did not and one respondent didn't know.

Overall the three colleges believe they had a strong reputation for the programmes and courses they delivered. The largest provider of higher education within further education, BCFE, felt they had contributed strongly to the cultural industries in Ireland.

5.10 Possible Impact of SOLAS

When asked about where their college might be going in light of new developments with SOLAS and the CDET, teachers overwhelmingly responded showing they were worried and concerned. They were also uncertain for the future and in many cases felt the objectives and direction of the FECs would change and that proper recognition was never really achieved for their contribution. The following comments are categorised under the headings; uncertainty, objective or goal change, status recognition and worried about the future.

5.10.1 Uncertainty of FEC Staff

A considerable number of teachers felt very uncertain about how the new structures under SOLAS would work and believed there was no coherent plan in place to accommodate FECs.

Teacher (B16) *I am unsure and uncertain where it is going. The new developments with SOLAS do not inspire confidence. There is no plan for it under SOLAS. Neither do the CDVEC have a coherent plan.*

Teacher (B35) *To be perfectly honest I have no idea where this college is going. I can only speak really for the department that I work in and I know that there is a big push for games development both now and into the future. The college needs to embrace this and fully fund any new courses in order to progress. We have an excellent reputation in relation to games courses and with the ever increasing need for development we need to continue to uphold this rep and expand.*

Teacher (B47) *The future seems uncertain. There is an effort to amalgamate diverse institutions into one educational body. I wonder how that will impact the community resource. We are an integral link between the larger community, the creative arts and humanities, and industry. To lose that would leave a gaping hole in that network.*

5.10.2 Objective or Goal Change for FECs

Many teachers felt there was a distinct change of direction and that the goals and objectives which they had been pursuing over a large number of years were being changed to the detriment of their position in an educational context.

Teacher (B18) *BCFE should try and ensure it keeps courses which it has developed and is renowned for, - many students would not gain access to third level without these courses- maybe the college could split with one half concentrating on more vocational training/integration with FAS type courses and the other half higher level courses.*

Teacher (B26) *BCFE is entering choppy waters. It has been consigned to serve under an umbrella group (SOLAS) which takes no cognizance of*

what BCFE does in educational terms or where it sits in the educational framework of this country.

Teacher (B39) *I think BCFE will face significant issues if forced to amalgamate with SOLAS, as the nature, aims and objectives of both organisations are at odds with each other.*

Teacher (B45) *I don't feel it fits easily into new developments re SOLAS etc. and should strive for solo status on the basis of its current offerings and past contributions to the development of diverse and interesting courses and indeed to the development of new, and successful industries e.g. animation, gaming etc. in the wider community.*

Teacher (I12) *I think the developments such as SOLAS and CDETb place the sector back within a vocational approach. The college and sector have students from complex backgrounds and learning needs, we are unusual in catering for such a wide range of needs.*

Teacher (I16) *It is essential that Government develop an informed understanding of what is incorporated in our FE programmes. To date even the teaching council have failed to identify our place within the education service "neither second nor third level" ergo we do not really exist.*

Teacher (I13) *I hope that we do not become constrained by the bureaucracy that these new developments may bring.*

Teacher (I6) *The need to allow teachers develop and explore industry based partnerships to create industry ready students through the courses that it delivers.*

5.10.3 Status and Recognition of FECs

For many teachers it was felt FECs were not afforded the status and recognition they deserve. Further they believe the amalgamation of FECs and FÁS will be detrimental to the educational nature of FECs with a perceived poor reputation of FÁS now being associated with them.

Teacher (B2) *DES needs to look at BCFE's contribution & reputation and not assign it to a FAS type institution. It should encourage & help it to develop even more Level 8 qualifications with recognition within Ireland on the NFQ.*

- Teacher (B4)** *It seems that politics are at play once again, rather than giving quality and excellence priority. SOLAS is about an attempt to give FÁS respectability. However it could ultimately result in dragging down something that has been successful over many years if the powers that be are given the chance to destruct all in their path.*
- Teacher (B6)** *The DES now intends to relegate BCFE College to the status of a 'secondary school.' This will rapidly undo decades of pioneering educational development by the college.*
- Teacher (B51)** *It is essential that we create and gain recognition for our unique status within this changed environment. SOLAS will be placed in a strange administrative / advisory role with all ETBs due to the fact that most FECs in ETB's are combined colleges - part FE - part Junior and Leaving Cert. SOLAS will have a role in only part of the funding and direction for these colleges. So we have a strong argument that it is possible to be part under SOLAS for FE provision and outside SOLAS for HE provision.*
- Teacher (I4)** *Inchicore College, like other further education colleges, has developed individual strengths in curriculum areas which are unique and specialised. The importance of further education in the education system is under-recognised and requires backing from government.*
- Teacher (R2)** *Personally I am apprehensive that SOLAS which I think was FÁS will in some way dilute the academic standards we pride ourselves in... The fear is that HNDs will be abolished and replaced. The future is unclear, uncertain and definitely we are in a state of change, but the information as to where we go from here is not trickling down to the rank and file staff.*

It would appear from the above comments that teachers in FECs are very concerned about how their contributions to the education system may be changed through an amalgamation of CDVEC and FÁS. They also appear to be concerned about the differences between training and education and would worry that specific courses developed for the cultural industries may not sit well within the proposed new frameworks. Overall teachers feel vulnerable and in some instances demotivated because of recent changes to their work conditions. They feel under recognised and fear that the new structures of SOLAS may restrict what they believe to have been considerably positive contributions to the FE sector.

5.10.4 Worried About the Future of FECs

Teachers expressed a genuine fear for their future and saw SOLAS as a threat to education. The amalgamation of FECs and FÁS was perceived in a most negative light with the latter's poor reputation bringing all the wrong messages.

Teacher (B3) *I am very fearful for the future. I don't know enough about SOLAS, but I'd be worried that we might all become trainers instead of educators.*

Teacher (B12) *In recent decades in Music and Media, Ireland has had outsiders and subcultures find new niches and future trends. Ireland / the State has usually resisted or attempted to close off these developments. It could be described as criminal at worst criminally irresponsible at least. BCFE has been at the leading edge of almost all these developments and should be encouraged to do this more.*

Teacher (B44) *If BCFE is left alone by SOLAS and allowed to continue with its degree programmes it should prosper but if forced down the training route prospects don't look good.*

Teacher (B56) *SOLAS is a threat to our college. We should be allowed to continue to develop and deliver courses up to and including honour's degree level 8*

Teacher (I8) *It is hard to know how new developments such as SOLAS etc. will affect us. It is hoped that a college will not lose its identity and its remit for the variety of courses it provides. It would be detrimental to see the FE sector constrained.*

Teacher (I13) *I hope that we do not become constrained by the bureaucracy that these new developments may bring. I feel that Inchicore is and has been on a very secure, steady path over the last number of years and I am proud to work here.*

Teacher (I17) *I would hope the future is bright, but I honestly think that the teaching as a profession will look very different in the future.*

5.11 Summary of Teacher Survey

The following section provides a summary of the key findings in relation to the initial three broad questions which form the basis of this research. *1) How and why was higher education developed in further education? 2) Have these higher education programmes been successful in any way? 3) How might current DES policy impact on the development and delivery of higher education in further education?*

5.11.1 How and why was HE Developed in FE?

This question enquired as to who was responsible for the development and whether there were any key contributing factors which drove the development of higher education in further education. All colleges had teachers who contributed to course development but although all had higher education programmes only one college had significant input into the development of HE courses. In BCFE, 60.71% (N34) of teachers contributed to the development of courses in higher education at level 6 (Higher Certificate) on the NQF and 44.64% (N25) were involved in the development of FETAC level 5 programmes and 17.8% (N10) in the development of honours degree level 8 on the NQF. In contrast, in ICFE only 10.53% of teachers contributed to the development of FETAC level 6 (Advance Certificate) and a large proportion of teachers never contributed to the development of courses within the ICFE 47.37% (N9).

However all colleges strongly believed that course development came directly from teachers and local management with course development being driven from within the colleges themselves. The key driving force for much of this course development was a perceived student need. A small amount of tacit support for development came from the CDVEC but none at all from the DES. College management and key teachers were seen to lead the development.

5.11.2 Have these HE Programmes been Successful?

Success is considered by way of creating some advantage (capital) for learners and whether a new model offering such advantage was created by providing an alternative pathway for students. All three FECs believed they had a good reputation and their students gained advantage from the courses delivered. The courses were successful and had a good reputation with both students and

industry. A significant factor was the uniqueness of many of the courses being offered and how these courses attracted interested students. Courses in Animation, Film, Music Management, Illustration, amongst others, were cited as having achieved a major reputation. Most of the FECs felt they had something different to offer from other educational institutions and one college felt they had contributed significantly to the cultural industries.

However, all FECs felt they were disadvantaged distinctly by a lack of resources, and had to operate within the confines of a second level structure where systems of management and funding created obstacles. It could be argued contributions made by CFEs in the development and delivery of these new courses has flourished despite the many barriers which had to be overcome. It could also be argued that given appropriate funding and resources and a more appropriate management structure, somewhat akin to those existing at third level, the sector may well have achieved even greater success.

Further disadvantages cited by teachers were the block on permission to further develop higher education courses, the cap on student numbers and the lack of grants for students continuing on to higher education courses within the sector. For many teachers it was felt FECs were not afforded the status and recognition they deserve.

5.11.3 How might DES Policy impact on HE in FE?

This question would enquire about the continuation of higher education delivery within a further education provision while taking account of new legislation in the sector.

The majority of teachers believed their college was either a college of FE and HE, at third level, or a college somewhere between second and third level. Interestingly the largest provider of HE in FE has a stronger belief it was (or should be) a third level institution. 66.07% (N37) of teachers at BCFE overwhelmingly felt the College was one of both further and higher education and was '*an alternative third level institution*'. A further 35.71% (N20) felt it was a college '*somewhere between*

secondary and third level'. A small number 8.93% (N5) felt it was '*a third level institution*'.

All FECs believed development and delivery of HE courses should continue. There was genuine concern that the goals and objectives of FECs would change and that an amalgamation with FAS under SOLAS might seriously undermine the perceived mission, goals and objectives of the FE sector. Further, they believe the amalgamation of FECs and FÁS will be detrimental to the educational nature of FECs and were worried about the future of education and an over emphasis on training and preparing people for work.

It would appear teachers from all three colleges have experienced a level of uncertainty and apprehension for the future of their college and the courses they deliver. In general they believe the courses they developed were successful and provide an advantage for students who otherwise may not have been in a position to access higher education. There was also a concern that SOLAS may become a restrictive force and block the local development of educational programmes. The largest provider of HE in FE within the CDVEC was particularly concerned about the future of higher education programmes in their college.

Teachers also felt that leadership in the development of programmes came from within their colleges with little support coming from either the DES or the CDVEC. Many believed that innovative teachers and local management were central to this development and that they more fully understood the needs of their students. In fact one college pointed to the fact many teachers were now demotivated and no longer wanted to contribute as freely as they had in the past.

Most respondents felt their college was both a college of further and higher education and should be permitted to continue to develop programmes of two or more years in duration, up to and including level 8 on the national qualifications framework. One college remarked on how locally devised HETAC level 6 higher certificate programme in social care was shelved by the CDVEC after having been validated by HETAC.

Many teachers felt vulnerable and were worried about the future consequences in the amalgamation of further education and training. Some felt that education may be diluted and that it seemed the emphasis was on rescuing FÁS to the detriment of the further education sector. There was a strong feeling and belief that the further education sector was never properly recognised by the DES and that specialised programme development that emanated from these colleges was almost totally ignored. For some these feelings were reinforced through an emphasis on employment rather than holistic education and the development of the individual.

Chapter Six:

Student Survey

6.0 Introduction

The following survey was distributed electronically to a list of three hundred past students of Ballyfermot College. The list was generated by using random numbers for all students who attended BCFE across the years 2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012. There were one hundred and ten respondents just over a third of those invited to take part in the survey.

6.1 Student Reasons for Attending BCFE

Students gave the following responses as to why they chose to attend Ballyfermot College rather than any other college.

Answer Choices	Responses	
I could not get in anywhere else.	4.55%	5
Ballyfermot College had the type of course I wanted.	51.82%	57
Ballyfermot College has a good reputation in the area I wanted to pursue.	56.36%	62
Other (please specify)	10.00%	11
Total Respondents: 110		

Table 25
Why students chose to attend Ballyfermot College

56.36% (N62) of respondents chose to attend BCFE because *'it had a good reputation in the area of education they wanted to pursue'*. A further 51.82% (N57) chose the college because *'it had the type of course they wanted'*. Other comments were a mixture of students who had difficulty accessing third level elsewhere and FECs providing specific courses.

Student (10) *My number one choice on my CAO was "Clinical Speech and Language Studies" in TCD and I ended up doing media because it seemed to suit my personality more. The reason why I chose BCFE was because if you desire to make it in the media game in Ireland, you have to be educated in BCFE.*

Student (4) *BCFE, is renowned for its education in specific fields, as well as the nurturing of talent and the methods and skills that are instilled in there students.*

6.2 Level of Education Completed by Students at BCFE

The following table shows the levels of education attained by the students of Ballyfermot College.

Answer Choices	Response s
FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	52.73% 58
FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	6.36% 7
BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)	7.27% 8
BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate National Qualifications Framework)	28.18% 31
Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)	12.73% 14
Total Respondents: 110	

Table 26

Student education levels at BCFE

The majority of respondents 52.73% (N5) completed FETAC level 5 on the NQF but it is interesting to note that almost 41% of respondents completed higher education with 28.18% (N31) and 12.73% (N14) completing BTEC Excel higher national diploma level 6 (Higher Certificate) and honours degree level 8 on the NQF.

6.3 Student Experiences at BCFE

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
BCFE College had the type of course I wanted.	2.73% 3	1.82% 2	2.73% 3	30.91% 34	61.82% 68	110	4.47
BCFE College is best placed to deliver the programme I studied.	6.36% 7	2.73% 3	18.18% 20	30.91% 34	41.82% 46	110	3.99
BCFE has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.	2.73% 3	0.00% 0	5.45% 6	30.00% 33	61.82% 68	110	4.48
BCFE College showed good personal attention and support.	4.55% 5	9.09% 10	7.27% 8	43.64% 48	35.45% 39	110	3.96
Lecturers and teachers were well equipped to teach their specialist subjects.	5.45% 6	10.00% 11	12.73% 14	42.73% 47	29.09% 32	110	3.80
BCFE College met with my expectations.	10.00% 11	5.45% 6	10.91% 12	38.18% 42	35.45% 39	110	3.84
I learnt a lot about my particular field of study	7.27% 8	0.91% 1	5.45% 6	40.00% 44	46.36% 51	110	4.17
BCFE College approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.	6.36% 7	3.64% 4	10.00% 11	30.91% 34	49.09% 54	110	4.13

Table 27

How students described their experience at BCFE

The most significant response with regard to students experience at BCFE was that the college had the type of course they wanted and that it had a good reputation. 61.82% (N68) strongly agreed with these statements. A small number of respondents 10% (N11) felt the college didn't meet with their expectations. However the overall average ratings show a very positive experience for students at BCFE.

6.4 Student Impressions of BCFE Education Level

When asked what type of educational institution and the impression of Ballyfermot College students held, they gave the following responses.

Answer Choices	Responses	
A secondary school.	8.18%	9
A third level institution.	21.82%	24
A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.	8.18%	9
A college of further education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).	29.09%	32
A college of further and higher education (an alternative third level institution).	57.27%	63
Total Respondents: 110		

Table 28
Student impressions of BCFE educational level

Interestingly almost 80% of respondents felt BCFE was a third level education college with 21.82% (N24) stating their impression was that it was '*a third level institution*' and 57.27% (63) stating it was '*a college of further and higher education and an alternative third level institution*'. A significant number 29.09% (N32) felt the college was '*somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution*'. 8.18% (N9) felt the college was '*a second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers*' and a further 8.18% (N9) thought the college was a secondary school.

6.5 Advantage for Students Attending BCFE

The most frequent response students had, in relation to the advantage they thought BCFE had over other colleges, was its size and the teacher / student interaction. The second highest response was that the college had a very good reputation. The third highest response centred on the courses that BCFE delivered.

Other advantages included access and affordability, location, teachers' practical experience from industry and the opportunity provided for students. The following comment excerpts are categorised as follows; size and interaction, courses, reputation and practical and industrial teacher experience.

6.5.1 College Size and Teacher Student Interaction

The intimacy of the teacher student interaction that comes with smaller sized classes was considered by students as an important attribute for their learning.

Student (17) *Smaller classes than universities. This gave more attention to students. Very personal which suited me. I was not very academic in school but learned to study in BCFE and enjoyed working, which was a miracle.*

Student(10) *Hands on experience, smaller class sizes, extra time with lecturers who listen and explain when you don't understand*

Student (27) *Because it is a smaller college it can deliver more one to one training and you feel like you belong, you are a part of a whole, a unit, a family. However, the schooling is better than my friends who go to the official 'third level'*

Student (56) *I get a more interpersonal classroom experience. Students are able to build respectful friendships with their entire year and staff members.*

Student (5) *The atmosphere, the people, the lecturers are so unbelievably helpful, I don't think I would have half the confidence I have now, if it wasn't for them.*

6.5.2 Courses Provided at BCFE

Many of the students said they were attracted to attend the college because of the type of courses offered and the reputation the college had for the delivery of these courses.

Student (71) *It has one of the oldest and best Game Design courses. There is a hands-on focus, rather than a 'learn by rote' academic approach found in other courses.*

Student (69) *BCFE is a college that focuses on alternative courses e.g., the rock school that no other colleges have. It gives people the opportunity to focus on their main area of interest instead of settling on something they are 'kind of' interested in.*

Student (80) *The courses are far more specific to what people actually intend to study. Take for example the HND in radio, no other college/institution in Ireland offers such an in-depth and focused radio-specific course, which is why for someone with an interest in radio and radio alone, there is nowhere better than BCFE.*

Student (49) *They have BA Hons degree courses.*

Student (5) *When I heard about the MPM degree, I knew that it would be perfect for me and this academic year has been the best year in my life and I know it will benefit me in the future.*

6.5.3 Reputation of BCFE

It was apparent from the survey Ballyfermot College has an excellent reputation for the courses and programmes it delivers, particularly in the creative arts and media.

Student (50) *I did a portfolio preparation course before which was more Fine Art, where now I'm in the Animation Drawing Course and I feel that this college is where I'm meant to complete my education in Animation! It is an amazing college and it more than deserves its titanic reputation.*

Student (60) *The college has such a good reputation that most people will know you are just as well qualified as someone from a university.*

Student (35) *The college has a good reputation in most of its multimedia courses which I think helps when you want to look for work in your chosen field after studying here.*

Student (15) *Great reputation for what I wanted to study, very successful past students from the courses I pursued.*

6.5.4 Teachers' Practical and Industrial Experience

Students valued highly the fact that many teachers had industrial experience in the areas in which they taught. This was seen to be particularly valuable in courses such as animation, broadcasting and general media.

- Student (22)** *In the animation course, the teaching staff in BCFE have invaluable amounts of industrial experience which is extremely beneficial for students.*
- Student (37)** *I am in the MND course and from what I've heard from my friends in other colleges they don't get the hands on approach we get. I really enjoy the practical work!*
- Student (46)** *BCFE has passionate animation tutors, who are highly respected and experienced in the field,*
- Student (62)** *For my particular course I'm fully aware that our teachers are extremely qualified in their respective areas*
- Student (74)** *Experience of teachers who work in the field, who have contacts and can invite guest who work in the field.*
- Student (76)** *It is a very hands on college and gives you plenty of time in the TV studio*
- Student (108)** *Years and years of experience, lecturers who keep up with the latest technology and practices. Not bogged down...*

The comments above suggest that students' attitudes and beliefs about the advantages of having attended BCFE are very positive. Comments suggest the college has a serious reputation for the types of courses it provides and how these courses are linked through the teachers to the cultural industries where students want to work. There seems to be an appreciation of the applied nature of these courses where a significant amount of practical hands-on teaching and learning takes place.

The responses also suggest the small class size provides a greater one on one interaction between teaching staff and students and this in turn greatly enhances the learning environment.

6.6 Permission for Continued HE Development in BCFE

When students were asked whether or not Ballyfermot College should be allowed to continue to develop and deliver higher education programmes they responded as follows. Table 29 reflects their response.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes. Ballyfermot College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework	88.18% 97
Don't know	5.45% 6
No. Ballyfermot College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the National Qualifications Framework/	6.36% 7
Total	110

Table 29
Permission to continue developing/delivering HE in BCFE

An overwhelming number of students 88.18% (N97) believed '*BCFE should be allowed to continue to develop higher level courses up to and including level 8 on the national qualifications framework*'. A small number 6.36% (N7) believed '*BCFE should be confined to delivering courses to FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate)*'.

The following is a sample of some of the comments students made with regard to the college being permitted to continue to develop higher education programmes.

Student (2) *It's a brilliant college. It has an excellent name and it should be given more further education options.*

Student (1) *The college itself is more than able to perform within any criteria's laid out for higher level courses, the students are all friendly and most are smart and devoted to their future. Together there is absolutely no reason as to why the college should not be allowed continue educating people beyond FETAC level.*

Student (4) *Illustration in a degree course is very much needed in Ireland. You cannot do comics or sequential anywhere else, and the only degree course for Illustration is in England. Surely, the Irish want their young bright hopeful future to stay in Ireland? How can we as artists and visual communicators help Ireland if we are all off in another country?*

Student (7) *I really feel BCFE should be given the funding and backing to enhance its courses to the highest level and become one of the leading colleges in Europe. It specialised in areas such as animation, film, music etc. With BFECs long history since conception, and the vision the members had at that time I think it's the next step.*

Student (9) *If BCFE loses the HND's and Degree offerings it will be a death knell. I had a level five cert before moving on to the HND. It is, to a point, useless, unless you plan to progress onto a HND.*

The feedback from students with regard to Ballyfermot College being permitted to continue to develop higher education programmes is very strong with an overwhelming majority believing BCFE should be permitted to develop and continue delivering higher education programmes.

6.7 Student Impressions of BCFE Disadvantage

In response to the question whether students believed BCFE was disadvantaged in any way nearly all of the 110 respondents felt it was. The majority of respondents make comments about resources and this was the most frequent reason why students felt the college was disadvantaged. Students also felt there was a lack of recognition for BCFE, it had a poor image because of its location, and it lacked proper library facilities (the library had been closed for refurbishment during the survey). A number of students also commented on the lack of grants if they pursued a third year of study in the college at HE level. The following comments will be categorised under the headings resources, recognition, image and location and grants.

6.7.1 Lack of Resources at BCFE

The lack of resources at BCFE was the most significant response from students of the college. This resource discrepancy covered a few areas but was mainly to do with funding, equipment, social amenities and library facilities. It should be pointed out that at the time of the survey the library was undergoing

refurbishment and had been relocated and is now back in situ. The following comments give a fair reflection of what students thought.

Student (6) *Yes it is not seen as important enough for proper State funding to resources which could greatly improve the college and overall student development.*

Student (10) *Need more funding to allow more students do the course that they have high demand for.*

Student (32) *Underfunded! As the college is recognized worldwide for producing industry standard students that have won many awards over the years.*

Student (84) *Further Education Colleges may not receive the same funding as high level universities, but, still maintains a high level of respect for what is achieved through studying in BCFE.*

6.7.2 Lack of Recognition for BCFE

Also a considerable number of students felt BCFE was disadvantaged as a result of not having proper recognition for what it did. These responses mirror some of the perceptions held by teachers with regard to recognition for the college.

Student (22) *I think that because BCFE is just a college of further education that the education system doesn't recognise it as highly as they should.*

Student (27) *Yes, the Government looks down on it because it offers more than just the bog standard package. I know my grant was limited (although we have one income in the house and I live in Kildare, all I got was 600 euro.) just because of what it is.*

Student (72) *Yes, I believe that the main disadvantage is the lack of recognition for the degree courses offered in the college. The fact that it is not fully recognized as a third level institution means that students don't have equal opportunities with regard to grants. Despite so many success stories coming out of the college, it still struggles to be recognized in the way that it should be*

Student (96) *Not being recognised as a college that delivers Honour's Degrees. BCFE should be able to award their students with BCFE College Hons Degrees.*

6.7.3 Image and Location of BCFE

Some students felt the college was disadvantaged because of its location.

Student (14) *Only BFECs image could be at a disadvantage to some peoples' eyes, but that is more down to the area, and the area itself is coming along positively.*

Student (26) *The area it's in isn't what I would call a 'safe' area, always being paranoid that someone may or may not attempt to steal my belongings. Other than that I see no problems with Ballyfermot, in fact I enjoyed my time there. If only I were able to go more.*

Student (51) *Unfortunately due to the reputation of the area, some people see it as it is a disadvantaged college which is definitely not true.*

6.7.4 Lack of Student Grants for HE Students in BCFE

Some students of BCFE are ineligible for grants after having completed two years in the college normally at BTEC Excel higher national diploma level. The following comments suggest that this is one disadvantage to attending the college.

Student (5) *The only bad thing I feel about BCFE is that the degree courses don't have access to grants, the same as other students in level 8 courses across the country. I don't think it's fair.*

Student (57) *The college degree students have no place in the framework in the eyes of the Dept. of Education in terms of grants.*

Student (50) *I believe that we are extremely disadvantaged! I read recently that I will not be eligible for a grant from S.U.S.I. This is a disgrace as I am a student of Ireland and this college is in Ireland!*

Student (69) *BCFE is disadvantaged in that some of the courses in the college are stated not eligible for student grants. BCFE should be recognized as a third level institution and have equal rights in relation to any other college in Ireland. BCFE is also at a disadvantage because of the area it is situated, as BCFE is a disadvantaged area. Because of this, the reputation of BCFE is brought down slightly.*

Students of BCFE believe the college was disadvantaged mainly because of a lack of resources and a need for proper funding. They felt the courses being delivered were very good but could be improved greatly through the allocation of more resources. They also considered the college was not recognised properly by the DES, for what it did, and that this had some impact on the lack funding. Students also believed they were greatly disadvantaged through not being awarded grants and there was an absence of parity of esteem in this regard when considered against other third level institutions. A small number of students felt the college was disadvantaged by way of its location and the image of the area.

6.8 Students' Perception of BCFE's Public Reputation

Students were asked how they thought the general public perceived Ballyfermot College and what their understanding of the College might be. They were asked whether they thought the public would consider it reputable in any way. Table 30 gives their responses.

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned	Total	Average Rating
BCFE College has a good reputation and is a leader for Media Production.	1.82% 2	0.91% 1	18.18% 20	28.18% 31	50.91% 56	110	4.25
BCFE is well renowned for the Rock School (Music Performance Management and Sound)	0.91% 1	2.73% 3	30.91% 34	33.64% 37	31.82% 35	110	3.93
BCFE is well renowned for Animation	0.92% 1	0.92% 1	10.09% 11	13.76% 15	74.31% 81	109	4.60
BCFE is well renowned for Social Care	5.50% 6	11.93% 13	62.39% 68	15.60% 17	4.59% 5	109	3.02
BCFE is well renowned for Art Design and Graphics	1.83% 2	2.75% 3	25.69% 28	36.70% 40	33.03% 36	109	3.96
BCFE is well renowned for Travel and Tourism and Reception	8.33% 9	7.41% 8	63.89% 69	15.74% 17	4.63% 5	108	3.01
BCFE is well renowned for Television and Film	1.83% 2	3.67% 4	18.35% 20	39.45% 43	36.70% 40	109	4.06
BCFE is well renowned for Engineering	13.76% 15	14.68% 16	58.72% 64	9.17% 10	3.67% 4	109	2.74
BCFE is well renowned for Business Studies	11.01% 12	16.51% 18	54.13% 59	15.60% 17	2.75% 3	109	2.83
BCFE is well renowned for Lifelong Learning	9.17% 10	5.50% 6	46.79% 51	21.10% 23	17.43% 19	109	3.32

Table 30
Perceptions of Ballyfermot College's public reputation

Students felt BCFE was ‘*well renowned for its animation courses*’ scoring the highest overall rating of 4.6, with 74.31% (N81) believing it was well renowned in this regard. 50.91% (N56) believe the college had ‘*a good reputation as a leader in media production*’. Television and film, art design and graphics and the rock school also scored highly in terms of reputation with scores of 36.7%, 33.03% and 31.82% respectively. Students made the following comments with regard to animation and games.

Student (1) *You could probably mention BCFE to any one and first thing they will say is ‘oh Animation! Film! Etc.*

Student (2) *Game Design, many local developers consider that course the best in the country, might want to mention that.*

6.9 Students’ Perception of how BCFE differs from others

Students were asked whether they felt Ballyfermot College was different to other Colleges. Table 31 illustrates the responses.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Average Rating
BCFE College provides courses other colleges do not.	1.83% 2	7.34% 8	19.27% 21	30.28% 33	41.28% 45	109	4.02
Ballyfermot College has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	3.67% 4	4.59% 5	13.76% 15	32.11% 35	45.87% 50	109	4.12
Ballyfermot College is different in the way courses are delivered.	3.70% 4	4.63% 5	19.44% 21	31.48% 34	40.74% 44	108	4.01
Ballyfermot College has contributed to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland e.g., media, art, animation and games, film, TV, Radio etc.	0.93% 1	0.93% 1	11.11% 12	19.44% 21	67.59% 73	108	4.52

Table 31

How Ballyfermot College differs from other Colleges

The most frequent response from students with regard to whether BCFE was different to other colleges was the 67.59% (N73) who strongly agreed with the statement that ‘*BCFE had contributed to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland*’. The following two comments reflect this.

Student (3) *I’m a media student a BCFE and anytime I say that to outsiders the first thing they mention is how good the college is in terms of the various media courses it teaches.*

Student (2)

BCFE is the Disney of Ireland, and I feel it's not even reached its full potential in this one area of the renowned animation course run there. The course is taught grand but it's the investment that robs from this ground work. It's the talents that BCFE have nurtured that are its legacy.

6.10 What BCFE did for Students!

When students were asked what the college had done for them and where they thought the college might develop in the future a number of specific themes emerged. The majority said the college had offered them an opportunity and a chance to develop. Students also believed the college provided the type of courses that met their needs. Students also remarked on how the college courses had a high reputation and were renowned within the media industries. They also remarked on how the college had given them a certain level of confidence. The following student comments give a flavour of what they felt BCFE had done for them.

6.10.1 BCFE Provided Student Opportunity

A large proportion of students felt that Ballyfermot College had given them a great opportunity. Some students come to BCFE without a Leaving Certificate, go on to do a FETAC or even Return to Learning (RTL) course and progress to HEIs or a degree in BCFE. Many of those who came couldn't see themselves progressing beyond level 5 and had no confidence in their ability to do so. According to Hardiman (2014) many of the students developed confidence during their time with Ballyfermot College.

Student (4)

I am truly grateful that BCFE has given me a chance to go back to education and study a subject that not many colleges have. I have learnt a lot of researching skills and a lot about business in the sector I would be looking to work in. These are things I did not expect to learn and were a bonus

Student (8)

I really loved my course and the people in it. I just think BCFE is so friendly and welcoming and allowed me to actually want to come in and learn/do work. My course is only a year but I just don't want it to end. I'm pretty confident that BCFE has prepared me enough for third level education.

Student (81) *BCFE gave me the opportunity to explore learning about an area (music management) that I would have otherwise had no access to in Ireland, as I'm sure many of its courses do for a wide variety of people. Even though I returned to college as an unemployed UCD graduate BCFE provided me the opportunity to reskill in an area I had an interest in.*

Student (13) *BCFE helps everyone in a way they need to be helped. It helped me gain a course which I wanted to study for a long time and is now helping me to study for a course which I hope to go on further in this college to. It is well recognized for arts and music more than other courses and maybe other courses should be put forward a little more to gain the acknowledgement of it in this college so maybe more people would apply.*

Student (19) *BCFE College helped me to get contacts in the music industry and gave me industry knowledge providing me with the confidence and experience needed to give me a strong advantage entering into the competitive world of music management.*

6.10.2 Reputation for Special Courses at BCFE

Students stated they came to the College because of the specific courses offered.

Student (27) *It has changed my life and I hope I can get into the Illustration or Graphic Design course so it can continue to help and make me a better artist and person. I hope that it can continue, especially in the art field in courses. This place is a gem, and I'm sure that if people would realize how amazing it is, everyone else in the country would support it.*

Student (37) *BCFE is great. As a media student, it has really helped me get a good idea of the field I wish to pursue when I finish my time there. I've heard rumors that the HND courses may be discontinued and I think that would be a shame*

Student (64) *I have always gotten a good response from industry professionals when I mentioned I attend BCFE for a sound engineering course. I believe that the college's reputation for the music and film industry is one of its strongest strengths and believe that it will become a vital part to finding work in the future.*

6.11 Student Survey Conclusions

The following is a summary of the findings from the student survey for Ballyfermot College. They are grouped as in the previous chapter to address the three key questions central to the research.

6.11.1 How and why was HE developed in BCFE?

While the student survey was not intended to provide answers as to how and why higher education programmes were developed within Ballyfermot College it is interesting to note that students independently chose to attend the College because of the types of programmes that had been developed there. Students chose to attend BCFE because of the courses offered and because the college had a very good reputation. More than 40% of students surveyed completed higher education courses at BCFE and almost 80% of BCFE students felt it was a third level education college.

Student (71) *...has one of the oldest and best Game Design courses. There is a hands-on focus, rather than a 'learn by rote' academic approach found in other courses.*

Student (69) *BCFE is a college that focuses on alternative courses e.g., the rock school that no other colleges have. It gives people the opportunity to focus on their main area of interest instead of settling on something they are 'kind of' interested in.*

In keeping with findings from the teacher survey, which stated that courses had been specifically developed to attract students, 51.82% of students chose the college because *'it had the type of course they wanted'*. Many students (67.59%) believed Ballyfermot College had contributed significantly to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland and had an excellent reputation for the courses and programmes it delivered, particularly in the creative arts and media. Finally students expressed the belief that BCFE provided the specialist type courses that gave them an opportunity to enter industries they were interested in.

6.11.2 Have these HE Programmes been successful?

The student findings overwhelmingly suggest the programmes developed and delivered at Ballyfermot College created an advantage for learners. One of the most important things was how the College helped support individual confidence building for many students who otherwise would not have continued in education.

Student (19) *BCFE College helped me to get contacts in the music Industry and gave me industry knowledge providing me with the confidence and experience needed to give me a strong advantage entering into the competitive world of music management.*

Student (4) *I am truly grateful that BCFE has given me a chance to go back to education and study a subject that not many colleges have. I have learnt a lot of researching skills and a lot about business in the sector I would be looking to work in. These are things I did not expect to learn and were a bonus*

Students also felt smaller class sizes and close student teacher interaction gave them a greater chance to learn in a more intimate environment. Students were also attracted to attend the college because of the type of courses offered and the reputation the college had for the delivery of these courses.

Again a lack of resources was highlighted by the students. Almost all of the students surveyed felt that Ballyfermot College was disadvantaged particularly through the lack of resources and student grants for those continuing to HE level. Students felt BCFE was disadvantaged as a result of not been given proper recognition for what it did. These findings seem to suggest that had Ballyfermot College being given appropriate resources and management structures the College may have become even more successful than it already is. It is also interesting to note that students also believe the College was not afforded the official recognition it deserved and how this perception mirrors that of the teachers.

6.11.3 How might DES Policy Impact on HE in FE?

An overwhelming majority of students believed BCFE should be permitted to develop and continue delivering higher education programmes. Student responses made a strong case for the College being permitted to continue to develop and deliver the types of courses it had in the past and at the same levels.

Student (7) *I really feel BCFE should be given the funding and backing to enhance its courses to the highest level and become one of the leading colleges in Europe. It specialised in areas such as animation, film, music etc. With BFECs long history since conception, and the vision the members had at that time I think it's the next step.*

Student (9) *If BCFE loses the HND's and Degree offerings it will be a death knell. I had a level five cert before moving on to the HND. It is, to a point, useless, unless you plan to progress onto a HND.*

It should be important for Irish education policymakers to take cognizance of the needs and wants of students in our society. Too often it seems that students' voices are unheard if not ignored by educational authorities. The unquestionable success of the College which is proven year-on-year through increasing numbers of applications, which in turn has helped generate new and vibrant sectors in the cultural industries, is a fact which should be considered for the future of the College.

The next chapter analyses data from the in-depth interviews. Key areas are themed and mapped for clarity.

Chapter Seven:

In-depth Interviews

7.0 Introduction

The data from the in-depth interviews was gathered over a period of six months through semi structured interviews with identified experts within the field of further education. These included former CEOs from the curriculum development unit, management within the CDVEC, principals, deputy principals and teachers who were directly involved in the development, delivery and assessment of higher education programmes within the FE sector.

A total of fifteen experts were interviewed for up to one hour using a semi structured schedule of questions. Twelve of these interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate for analysis as some of the interviewees were less involved in the development of higher education programmes in FE. The twelve included; one senior manager from the CDVEC, seven principals, two deputy principals and two teachers. The DES responded to three critical questions in writing. All interviews were immediately transcribed and both the audio and text files were analysed for themes and codes using **MAXQDA 11** qualitative data analysis software.

For purposes of confidentiality and anonymity interviewees are only identified nominally by code. Teachers are coded simply as T1 and T2, Principals as P1 through P8, Deputy Principals as DP1 and DP2 and finally VEC management as VEC 1.

7.1 Department of Education Responses

As mentioned above the DES was contacted on several occasions with a view to carrying out an interview with the Minister for Education or one of his representatives. Unfortunately due to pressure of work the Minister was unable to grant my request for the interview but instead suggested I forward a short list of questions to which he might reply. The following questions were forwarded.

- Q1. Does the Minister believe there is or has been any advantage for students pursuing a path to higher education within further education colleges?
- Q2. Should colleges' of further education continue to develop and deliver higher education programmes?
- Q3. How might colleges' of further education best accommodate higher education programmes within the remit of the proposed new bodies of SOLAS and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB)?

The full response to these questions is provided in the appendices (appendix K) however it is very clear from the Department's response that the delivery of HE programmes within the FE sector is undesirable because of perceived duplication. The Department is also very resolute in its separation of the further and higher education sectors. What is not addressed here is that very many of the courses were specifically designed within the FE sector and have been running successfully within FECs for many years. On a note of optimism the Department is committed to the development of linkages between further and higher education in the pursuit of access transfer and progression, albeit through the higher education links scheme. The option for FECs to act as outreach centres is also suggested with a view to HEA funding.

The Department also clearly outlines the role of SOLAS which they say will provide funding based on 'good data and positive outcomes' with an emphasis on the individual learner and 'national skills needs'. The emphasis on skills maybe somewhat disconcerting for educationalists as they generally have a much more holistic interpretation of what education does for the enrichment of the individual.

It also appears from the response the Department ignored the first question which asked whether there was any advantage to students pursuing HE within FE.

In the next section I address the themes for analysis of the in-depth interviews.

7.2 Themes and Codes for Analysis

Eight themes emerged from the analysis with a number of codes within each. These relate to the schedule of questions used for interview. The following table shows the themes and codes that emerged.

Themes	Named Theme	Codes
1	Extent of HE in FE	A) Levels, B) BTEC, C) Definitions of FE and HE.
2	How and why HE developed in FE	A) Culture, B) Motivation, C) Innovation, D) Creativity, E) Student, F) Politics, G) Discrimination, H) Alternative pathway.
3	Who led the development?	A) Teachers, B) DES, C) Principals, D) Industry, E) CDVEC.
4	What was the perceived need?	A) Competition, B) Gap in market, C) Evolved, D) Certification.
5	Has He in FE been successful?	A) Disadvantages, B) Value, C) Attitude, D) Students, E) Success, F) Unique.
6	Should HE continue in FE?	A) Should HE be in FE? B) Permission, C) Funding, D) Structures and status.
7	Pathway advantage	A) FE versus HE, B) Education versus Training, C) Recognition, D) Position in space, E) Under Threat, F) Student Advantage.
8	The future of HE in FE	A) Amalgamation, B) Programme Development, C) Competition D) Resources, F) Assumptions, G) Culture, H) Industrial relations.

Table 32
Themes and Codes for In-depth Interview Data

The following analysis works through the initial themes and codes as identified through classical coding in the MAXQDA software. It begins with the 'Extent of HE in FE' and the codes associated with this theme. After working through each of the eight themes and associated codes the data will be further analysed using Bourdieu's theory of capital as a lens through which the evolution of higher education within the further education sector may be examined.

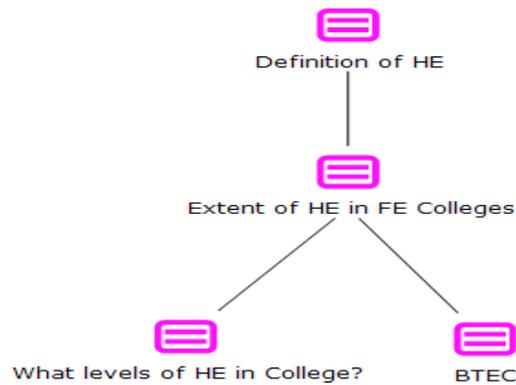
7.3 Extent of Higher Education in Further Education

The extent to which higher education exists in further education within the CDVEC is relatively small. The majority of further education colleges within the scheme provide courses up to level 5 on the national qualifications framework with some now developing FETAC programmes at level 6 (Advanced Certificate). However a small number of FECs provide HE courses, certified by BTEC Excel, and these are considered to be the equivalent of a foundation degree, with 120 ECTS on the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications UK (FHEQ). The QQI have aligned this award at level 6 (Higher Certificate) on the NQF.

A deputy principal in one of the colleges talked about the split at level 6 on the NQF.

***DP2:** We divided it. So we have a further certificate level six and higher certificate six. So they are very definite and that's why from this point on the QQI are very definite it's higher certificate level six, so that little debate that was always there, the BTEC Higher Nationals are higher education from the English point of view and now from the Irish point of view.*

The map below shows the link between the central theme *Extent of HE in FE* and the codes as spurs.



Map 1: Extent of HE in FE Colleges

7.3.1 Range of Course Levels in CFEs

While most FECs deliver courses up to and including level 6 (Advanced Certificate), there are a number of colleges who provide courses in higher education. One college provides two honours degree programmes at level 8 on the NQF and a small number provide professional courses which they claim to be at level 7 and 8 on the NQF.

T2: *PRII, it's their course, it's the Public Relations Institute of Ireland, Professional Institute. It's postgrad. Its level 8 and we've had to fight repeatedly, (name) and myself had to fight as to retaining that.*

P4: *For the purposes of talking here we have a lot of programmes say 30 or 40 programmes. I suppose that about 20 of those would-be FETAC level 5 followed on by FETAC level 6 and I think at last count we had about 15/16 Higher National Diplomas.*

P5: *We would have six or seven programmes that would be higher education. We have a number of HNDs... Then we would have a couple of things that would be higher education in dance. The Royal Academy of Dance was called the ISTD the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance. It equates to higher education, and there is a drama qualification called Trinity Guildhall, but Trinity College in London now certifies it at level 8.*

7.3.2 BTEC Courses in FECs

The Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) began certifying courses in Ireland in the late 80s and the principal of a leading provider of HE in FE had the following to say with regard to the introduction of BTEC.

P8: *We were the leading college in developing Post Leaving Certificate courses but I think the next strategically important thing that I did for sure was to bring in BTEC and that did so much.*

Is also interesting that some of the respondents believed that BTEC HNDs are somewhere between level six and seven and in some cases this had to do with the duration of the programme rather than the number of credits accrued by students.

T2: *We see it between a six and a seven. I don't think it's a seven because for a seven you need to do 3 years. We are doing two years.*

Another DP explains this quite well in terms of placement of BTEC on the NQF.

DP2: *We can argue whether they are six and a half or seven, it doesn't really matter anymore. And remember why they are on level six in the Irish framework because we have a level for a pass degree which is seven and then an honour's degree eight. In England they don't have a level for a pass degree so they go from the HND to an honour's degree.*

One teacher thought that two years in a FEC was no equivalent to the same amount of time in a University.

T2: *Well I wouldn't consider it here in the Irish education system as being the equivalent of doing two full years in University.*

From the responses it's quite easy to see where anomalous situations have evolved in relation to the level of BTEC HND programmes. There is also some confusion with regard to a clear definition of higher education and it would appear this has developed because of the 'in between' nature of further education.

7.3.3 Definitions of Further Education

The principal of one college believes there was no definition of further education in Ireland and blamed a lot of the confusion on the DES. The principal further points out that the Department showed a distinct lack of interest in the sector.

P2: *There is no definition of further education in Ireland. In the '99 Qualifications Act, it was defined in terms of what it was not, not in terms of what it is... okay what is it? But if it is not post primary yet the Department says PLCs exist in post primary. There's a contradiction straight away... an awful lot of these muddles or gaps or lack of clarity, come from a lack of interest on the Department's part.*

This Principal goes further to substantiate his point by pointing at the lack of any real data on the sector.

P2: *If you try to get any statistics on further education over the years, there is an absence of any counting even at a basic level. Is that not an expression of a lack of interest? If you're not interested in an issue you're not going to bother counting it!*

A deputy principal gave a very simple definition as follows.

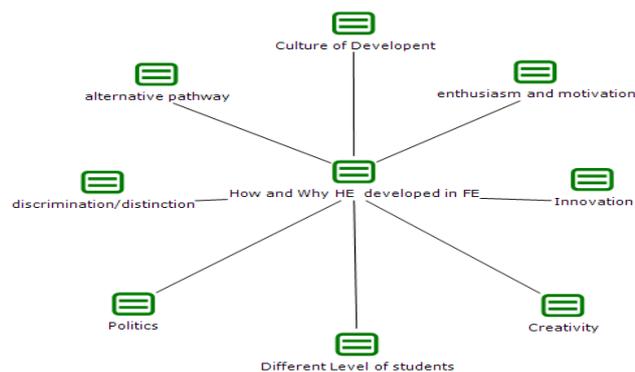
DP1: *I'm going to use a working definition of higher education as being the course at level six on the Irish NQAI or higher. Using that definition this college would have 20 courses out of 40, that's 50%.*

Definitions were less important for another respondent.

P5: *Well we didn't have any great consciousness of there being any differentiation but we knew as teachers we weren't being paid. We knew our students weren't being recognised for grants.*

7.4 How and why HE Developed in FE

There are many reasons why higher education developed within the further education sector. Some of this may have occurred as a consequence of chance but even if that is the case there is strong evidence to suggest a combination of creativity, innovation and a need for an alternative pathway developed a culture which grew rapidly over a period of 25 to 30 years. The map below shows the link between the central theme of 'How and why HE developed in FE' and the codes are depicted as spurs.



Map 2: How and why HE developed in FE

One of the earliest developments was the awarding of diplomas, by Sheridan College Toronto, for the animation graduates in a Dublin PLC college, in the early 80s. The principal of that college had this to say.

P8: *The Taoiseach was present to present the certificates and Sheridan College was there and they got the equivalent of Sheridan College diplomas in classical animation. The first Diplomas of Classical Animation outside of North America for the rest of the world and that was us up in the limelight and we were getting two or three thousand applications per year.*

7.4.1 Culture of Development in the FECs

The Deputy Principal of one college believed higher education programmes evolved because of the development of two year programmes and how that college had differentiated itself by doing just that.

DP2: *We were way ahead in taking the model I think (name) I suppose took the model and said we needed two-year programmes. It's the concept of having a two-year programme. That's what made the difference because everyone else was still looking at one-year programmes.*

Initially two-year courses were developed to allow students continue their education within the PLC sector. They were run in colleges before NCVA had been established and were mainly accredited by bodies outside of the State. The main accrediting body was BTEC Edexcel in the United Kingdom. Again teachers were to the forefront in the development of these programmes and many felt they were obliged to do so in order to further their students' prospects.

T1: *The students they were coming to the end of the year and they didn't want to finish and I discovered myself they were actually only getting switched into it. They realised they needed to do more and I said you know we need a two-year course and I remember going to (Name) and I said to him can I make this into two years I started to route around but in the end I came across this programme from BTEC in England.*

Another Deputy Principal believed a culture developed within his college through a mix of traditional teaching and the inclusion of specialists and practitioners from specific industries.

DP1: *The individual leadership and also I think the staff situation where you had two distinct cultures of staff, I think that produced a very interesting mix where you had traditional teachers, and a significant number of staff came from a completely different background. I think those two things married to create a synergy really.*

Principal 8 believes that the investment in the development of new programmes raised the status of the college he worked in.

P8: *We went into community care and we raised the level from a pre-employment course to Post Leaving Cert. Community Care. We invented pre-employment programmes of that quality... All of these things raised the status of the college.*

7.4.2 Teacher Motivation for Course Development

It appears there was a fair amount enthusiastic motivation with many teachers writing and developing modules alongside of their teaching time. Teacher 1 talked about how she took on the documentation and was learning as she went along. Teacher 2 also talked about writing up modules and how there was a great energy in the staff which pushed them along.

T1: *I would be writing modules at home, you know the way all handwritten at the time, no computers at the time. I was working and teaching away at the same time... at the same time another teacher was working on her application for an HND in social care.*

T2: *A lot of motivation, leadership there...Yeah well I think there was an energy and the staff interest certainly in pushing ourselves a bit harder, in raising the bar.*

Principal 1 felt staff were enthusiastic and were allowed to express their own ideas and the culture allowed them to express that.

P1: *People in the college were enthusiastic... the quality and the level of what we were doing... a lot of the staff had ideas and they were allowed to express themselves and were allowed to develop the programmes themselves.*

Principal 6 believed that programme development was an exciting and worthwhile thing to do and that staff had many great ideas and took these on to full development.

P6: *Most centres have good ideas coming from them... We were all the ones all the time writing the documents, looking for and making the statement. Programme development was a highly exciting and enterprising thing.*

7.4.3 College and Teacher Innovation

Evidence also suggests there was a high level of innovation in the development of new and unique programmes. T1 explains how she developed her own modules.

T1: I developed presentation broadcasting skills and we advertised that. I have my training and broadcast voice so I developed my module for broadcast voice. I had my own module

Principal 1 talked about how programmes were unique within the college and how no one else, in the country, was running programmes like this and that these were innovations developed within that college.

P1: The programmes that we do here are very unique; nobody else does them or developed them at the time. Just to give you an immediate one, Illustration is not done anywhere else. Animation wasn't anywhere else until we started it. Nobody in Ireland did the Rock School, lots of other programmes as well.

Principal 2 had this to say about the inventiveness and the buzz of seeing students do well.

P2: There was no greater buzz than when I was in the classroom and come up with an idea for a course, research it and develop it get approval for it, recruit teachers for it and watch the students go.

Principal 6 likened the development to a business situation expressing the excitement of new business. This principal also pointed out that there was no full understanding of further education at the time and that there seemed to be a *lack* of creativity within the third level sector.

P6: It was like a new business really, it was like an initiative, what would we like them to know now? What will we need/ like them to know next?

7.4.4 Teachers' Creativity

Just as innovation and motivation were central to how and why higher education developed within the further education sector there was also a fair amount of creativity. Again Teacher 1 explains how her creativity played a part.

T1: It had to progress. So that was a CDVEC course, and God forgive me I didn't believe the papers it was written on. It had no official standing, I felt in the work field, and I wanted something that the students could take out with them. So I developed a course and the name for it was Communications rather than English to differentiate it from the Leaving Certificate.

Principal 4 remarked about how you had to constantly be inventive as there was no real support for these course developments within the sector.

P4: *It's like we are always finding inventive ways it is like we're not... there's no wind at our backs we're finding ways around things which will always be the case it probably keeps you on your toes.*

7.4.5 Type of Student in FECs

It seems from the interviews that the type of student being catered for played a crucial role in the development of higher education in further education. Courses were lengthened in duration with a view to retaining students in times when there may have been no work. Similarly students themselves wanted to continue and had no other option in terms of continuing their education at third level. Teachers expressed a concern about one year courses and their inability to realistically further the development of their students. Teacher 2 explains how they had to look to BTEC HNDs in order to resolve these problems.

T2: *We suffered year on year with having only one year courses. It was to develop two-year courses to try and retain students and to give them a higher level of qualification going out. So there was no Irish alternative. We saw no other option but to go the HND route at the time.*

Principal 4 felt the HND finished the students off and gave them a more rounded education.

P4: *We run a foundation in FETAC and then the HND but it finishes off the students, they have a skill set... I believe that our students were better and more rounded and are better prepared for the real world doing HND than they are with a FETAC level 6.*

Principal 5 stressed they would have found it difficult in a University setting.

P5: *They would have struggled hugely in (University Name) with 20,000 students and 200 in a lecture. They would have been done by Christmas.*

Similarly Principal 7 also felt there would be a problem for these students in universities because of some form of snobbery between universities and other institutions.

P7: *Then there was recognition that there were different types of intelligence so I suppose the like of even in the current Universities there is snobbery between the real Universities the technological Universities.*

Principal 8 remarked on the very small percentages that proceeded from certain areas to third level education at the time and the absolute need to do something about this.

P8: *There was an absolute need for something between kids who would leave school at secondary education, and it was part again of the locality in a way because the percentage...studies said that 1% of central Dublin went on to University's. 1%... I decided there was something else needed.*

Principal 6 and Deputy Principal 1 both made reference to the disadvantage of students who had not been encultured in a third level way of thinking.

P6: *But in the initial stage it was straightforward students coming off the Leaving Cert. who couldn't get in through CAO or who didn't know enough about third level to have a track made for them by either their guidance counsellors in the schools or their parents who had never experienced third level.*

DP1: *Yeah broadly speaking with less points in the Leaving Cert, secondly and less significantly perhaps with less parental help were so disadvantaged.*

There was also some concern expressed about the second level system being detrimental to students. Deputy Principal 2 stressed the importance of helping those students with a poor Leaving Certificate.

DP2 *I think the educational system in the secondary school has been detrimental to a lot of people and we pick up some of those and we can make them blossom as well because that person is lost to society if they are not rescued from their poorer Leaving Cert.*

The issue of students developing at different rates and having different intelligences which may well be nurtured in a different environment was also an issue. Two principals made comments in relation to students' rates of development, intelligence types and the right for all to be given that opportunity.

P4: *Students develop at different rates and therefore many students, to get to a degree it's probably, maybe a four and five year but it's very worthwhile.*

P5: *It's that type of, the cohort of student, their ability in managing their ability and quite many of them are successful and many of them want to do go on to degrees and Masters and why shouldn't they?*

7.4.6 Politics and Competition in Education

Principals, deputy principals and teachers all had something to say about political relations. It appears there is a feeling within the further education sector that resistance to the development of higher education programmes was driven by competition from some higher education institutions. However management of the CDVEC explained how changes in funding compelled the government to more clearly define the sector in terms of resources, teachers and grants. It is also true that one higher education institution namely Dublin City University (DCU) was most supportive of Ballyfermot College when that college was developing its first BA honours degree. They acted as advisers and latterly as external examiners to the programme. Later when the UK University no longer wanted to operate in Ireland DCU took over accreditation of that honours degree programme.

In relation to the change in funding the following comment was made by VEC management:

VEC1: *Then ESF funding stopped and the government took over the funding and they began to put their own local stamp on the structure. The PLC programmes were first of all limited to 2 years max and FE became more defined in terms of the resources, the teachers, the grants and those things that surround further education*

Principal 1 felt the Department of Education were unhappy with the situation when DCU agreed to take over the BA honours degree at Ballyfermot College.

P1: *The brilliance that DCU agreed to take over, I mean that was very unusual and caused a furor politically at the time because the Department of Education were not happy with that and there was an awful lot of say ripples after that.*

Other principals remarked on the blockages and how the Department was really only learning how the FE sector actually worked.

P6: *Here was a very high powered committee setting within NCVA whose aim was to push beyond level 5 but there were blockages at every level. The real curtain came down when we started having to fill in our annual request to run our courses...it was the Department actually learning about further education. They didn't know. I think '84 or '85 might have been the first time we were asked for statistics on further education.*

Another Deputy Principal talked about perceptions of political interference in the development of programmes.

DP1: Let's imagine the guy again. He comes in and he's looking and saying great you developed courses and then what happened? You haven't developed a course in 3 to 4 years, where is all the innovation gone, what happened? Did politics interfere?

Deputy Principal 2 felt there were too many vested interests and it was very hard to open the debate. He also mentions comments made by the Minister for Education when meeting about the status of their college.

DP2: There are so many vested interests political vested interests that make it very hard to open that debate and the Department still doesn't seem to be prepared to create a formal further education sector. They haven't done that.

When this Deputy Principal and I asked Ruairí Quinn (prior to being in Government as Minister for Education) how the newly proposed SOLAS legislation might impact on our college he told us there would be no legal impediment to our developing programmes at any level. However the Department of Education could still block such development.

DP2: What he said was that there was no legal impediment to us developing programmes at any level and therefore he wouldn't introduce Ballyfermot College as a special case in the legislation but he also said that's up to the Department. So he's right! There is no legal impediment but the departments mightn't allow it and by that he means they won't fund it.

7.4.7 Student Discrimination

Discrimination against students who didn't progress to higher education through the traditional route was also high on the agenda for many of the respondents. This discrimination seemed to be made all the more acute because of the distinction between one route of entry and another. When asked about the impending changes, with SOLAS and the ban on further development of two year courses, Teacher 2 felt it was limiting the choice for the students.

T2: I think it is limiting because I don't think alternatives exist, so it really is closing the door entirely.

Principal 2 made some strong statements in relation to how people had to self-label in a most discriminatory way and that the traditional route was the most advantageous for students wanting to progress to third level education.

P2: *Like the idea that in many cases that somebody would try to re-enter education through the further education or the mature student route or 'the here or there' scheme, like the CAO system. The easiest way to get into it is to go through the most advantaged route through with the Leaving Certificate. If you're going through any other mechanism first of all you have to self-label, I am a personal disability I am from the socially disadvantaged route.*

Pressing the point further Principal 2 remarked how the new legislation had taken away the distinction between further and higher education.

P2: *It's not a question of what you've learned it's how you've learned it. Effectively that's the basis of what the discrimination is and it is discrimination in my view. It is interesting in the new qualifications act that there is no longer a distinction between further and higher education.*

Principal 5 remarked that the distinction between further and higher education in Ireland is quite distinct. She makes the point that it is very difficult for students in further education to break through and she compares this with the apparent opposite situation in the UK.

P5: *The division between higher and further here in Ireland is quite distinct and quite negative in a way. It's awfully difficult to break down the door to try and make some sort of arrangement or an alignment, or progress students into our higher education whereas in the UK it is perceived as being the done thing.*

When asked whether there was any form of distinction or discrimination between liberal and vocational education, Principal 5 continued to make the point that an historical snobbery existed with regard to vocational education.

P5: *I think there still is. I mean the vocational school in this country has always had like something stuck on your foot shoe. That's where the guys who didn't make the school on the hill go and they are not capable of a good Leaving Cert. and they'll do woodwork or metalwork or whatever. Vocational schools around the country they were always a little bit of a second partner compared to the secondary school, the Convent or whatever; Christian Brothers...*

Deputy Principal 1 remarked that Department of Education was a bureaucratic entity that viewed education distinctively and therefore categorised it and placed education according to its type in specific institutions.

DP1: *At all times the Department of Education from my perception is one of a bureaucratic entity. It is dominated by a bureaucratic view that certain types of education should be in certain types of constrictions, certain types of boxes and should never vary from that.*

Deputy Principal 2 had similar comments to make about categorisation in education and compared this to the ghettoization of education.

DP2: *I don't think education should be in the ghetto of any type and you can have good ghettos and bad ghettos, and when you're considering sites at (University Name), well that's a good ghetto but it's still a ghetto in my view. So I think we, I think you want to mix the students, you want a mix of backgrounds, you want a mix of courses and I think that's where things happen best.*

Principal 6 is critical of the CAO system as the main route of entry to third level education and questions how they know those students will be fit for purpose.

P6: *Well it was highly unlikely, unusual to go through any other than the CAO and I blame the CAO system for delivering students into the doors so easily whatever fit they made we don't know.*

Principal 8 remembers arguing with educational correspondents from the press who consistently referred to 'second choice' or 'second chance' education.

P8: *I used go out of my mind I've been talking to Christina Murphy and others from The Irish Times and The Independent who were dealing with and would also say there is hope for some sort of mini survival in a PLC, I still get red behind the ears when (Name) the guy there in The Irish Times is still at the same old argument, if you can't make it to University don't just die just yet, there is a little bit of life in a PLC curriculum kind of crap.*

It appears from comments of teachers, principals and deputy principals that discrimination and distinction between further and higher education is part of the common discourse and is reinforced every year after the CAO offers are made, when educational correspondents offer hope through what is generally perceived to be second chance education.

7.4.8 FEC's as an Alternative Pathway to HE

Another significant reason for the development of higher education within the further education sector appears to have been the need to create alternative pathways for students who had difficulty accessing third level education elsewhere. Teacher 2 felt that while the FETAC Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs) had begun entry levels were still limited.

T2: Because they had nowhere to go after a level 5, in many cases they weren't getting in. The pilot scheme had begun but they were very few and very limited places for a level 5 journalism student to go anywhere.

This teacher also felt by providing the second year of a HND the student was better advantaged to enter the second year of a third level course.

T2: People are reluctant to take into 1st year because the numbers are full and by the time you get to 2nd year in (Named HEIs) places have freed up, so there was an access route there which wasn't available to level 5 graduates.

Principal 4 made the point that some of the Institutes of Technology hadn't come into existence yet and they were already developing programmes for their students.

P4: Blanchardstown wasn't there, Tallaght probably wasn't there, it was DIT, DCU was in its infancy it was probably NIHE, Trinity was sacrosanct, UCD was a long way south of the river and you wouldn't go there from Coolock anyway, you wouldn't go to Trinity either.

Principal 7 also makes the point that there was no real or proper progression for their students and that there were serious disadvantages for students who had not come through the traditional Leaving Certificate route.

P7: At the time the students were staying on the VPTP and were doing the group cert or inter-cert as it was and they weren't able to go on to a Leaving Cert. because the Leaving Cert. was only for a certain percentage of the population at that time because it was a pre-university course

One of the deputy principals stated that the courses developed as an alternative to the CAO system with traditional courses but later diversified into alternative courses which were not provided anywhere else.

DP1: Our courses developed firstly as the CAO alternative strand and initially focused on what you might call traditional courses, later in the sort of second wave of programme development FECs like Ballyfermot offered alternative courses. Music and Media are the two areas that immediately come to mind.

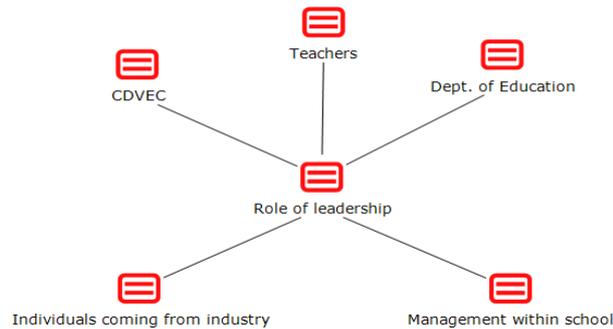
This deputy principal also remarked on how there was an absolute need to provide education for students who were unable to gain access elsewhere.

DP1: We took in people that nobody else would take, the students that were difficult students that weren't really welcomed in other colleges, the CDVEC took. I think that value is held amongst staff... in parallel with that there was a real need to offer many students who were unsuccessful in the CAO applications, to offer them an alternative and that's very much why we started so many courses.

It would appear from an analysis of how and why higher education developed within the further education sector that a clear culture of programme development was fostered amongst the staff of the various colleges. Motivation came mainly from perceived needs that students were being discriminated against and had nowhere else to go and that by developing two-year programmes students were given a greater advantage for access to third level education, particularly when they were in competition with the CAO system for which they were ill-suited. An alternative pathway was developed.

7.5 Who Led the Development of HE Courses?

The question of leadership and more particularly where leadership, if any, came from in the development of higher education within further education sector is central to this study. Analysis of the in-depth interviews identified that leadership predominately came from within the schools themselves and was mainly driven by teachers and principals with some small support from the CDVEC but apparently none from the Department of Education. The map below shows the link between the central theme of *'Role of leadership'* and the codes are depicted as spurs.



Map 3: The Role of Leadership

7.5.1 Leading Teachers within the College

One teacher was adamant that leadership didn't come from outside of the colleges and rather was led by teachers and management.

T2: I don't think that leadership came from outside at all.

Management in the VEC felt that the leadership grew from the bottom up and possibly through links with industry while the DES weren't aware of the developments.

VEC1: It grew from the bottom up but the little germ of the idea I'm not sure whether it also had an industry link initially but by any stretch of the imagination it was nurtured, grown, developed, invented, pushed through the PLC absolutely with no context at all in this country... I'd say the VEC kind of stepped out of the way and encouraged the local development.

Management in the VEC also felt that the certain amount of professional expertise in the teachers meant they often took on leadership roles themselves.

VEC1: The leadership I think within some of the big colleges were maybe not even the key leadership roles. I think the knowledge strength, professional expertise of certain teachers who took on leadership roles were the key, who actually knew the course areas, the industry links. They were the people who actually led it. It was very much lead on the ground by individuals.

Principal 4, who was a teacher at the time, recalls sitting at home with fellow teachers during out-of-school hours.

P4: *I would remember sitting at home with a bottle of wine filling up those BTEC approval documents with (name & name) and children around the floor.*

Principal 6 felt it was their role as teachers at the time to be involved in the development of programmes. This early programme development may have led to the culture later used in the development of HE in FE.

P6: *We mostly would have taught in secondary schools at one stage and be handed syllabuses but that was not something that we wanted any more. We wanted to be designing and developing it was part of a role. There was no resistance actually at that stage from anybody.*

Deputy Principal 1 also felt that leadership came from individuals.

DP1: *Most courses in any institutions, that are new, are championed by individuals and that's the case in media and social care. Pretty much... all of our courses, particularly in courses that were unusual, I think the leadership was within.*

Deputy Principal 2 agreed.

DP2: *I guess the teachers, well I suppose the principal and the teachers created the developmental environment and that happened within the college here.*

7.5.2 Lack of Leadership in Department of Education

Almost all of the respondents felt the Department of Education showed no leadership whatsoever in the development of programmes within the further education sector. In fact some mentioned that they were totally unaware of, or at least ignored, these developments. Deputy Principal 1 believes the Department have increasingly put pressures on FECs and increasingly put boundaries in the way of future development.

DP1: *A cynic would argue that our success is not based on the support of the Department of Education despite them at times and it certainly feels like that increasingly that there is a constant desire to put boundaries on what a college like (named college) can do.*

Deputy Principal 2 felt the Department showed no leadership.

DP2: *I think the support from the Department of Education was none. There was no leadership. At all times the Department of Education from my perception is one of a bureaucratic entity.*

Deputy Principal 2 also thought the Department didn't really realise what was going on and this was because they didn't pay much attention to further education.

DP2: *The Department, I think didn't know what was going on at all. I don't think they bothered it was a small sector; they heard things were happening in these places but they didn't pay much attention. They expected it to fade away and this wasn't really a sector that existed.*

Principal 1 also felt the Department didn't really appreciate what was going on.

P1: *I don't think that was really appreciated by the powers that be. Like what the staff have done has been incredible in the development of programmes.*

Principal 1 continued by saying the development of the further education sector proceeded despite the Department of Education and the fact that they put many barriers in the way.

P1: *I've always said publicly and in a number of places that the development of this sector went along despite or in spite of the Department of Education, not with their help and support but in spite of them putting barriers in place.*

Principal 6 felt there was resistance from the Department and that little attention was ever paid to the further education sector by the Department.

P6: *They were trying to resist BTEC at the time. For a sector that has 30,000 students we were never, nobody ever talked about the FE sector... I think you have to forget about the Department because if you talk to anybody who is linking in with the Department about FE there are 4 or 5 people in there and they haven't a clue. So they don't know what we do.*

The general consensus from this analysis would suggest the Department of Education more or less ignored the growth of the PLC/FE sector and continued to regard it as a secondary school level and therefore seemed not to have had any cognizance of the development of the higher education programmes within that sector.

7.5.3 Leadership from School Management

There is some evidence to suggest school management had a part to play in the leadership of this development. Principals in a number of colleges were instrumental in leading their staff.

P5: *Yes and the big man himself was Jerome. My God that man what he did with the college was... Nobody ever did anything like that before and nobody ever will.*

DP1: *I do think that the college had changed very quickly earlier on and I think that direction certainly came from Jerome Morrissey's time. I thought he had really crafted a very original enterprise in a very bureaucratic framework.*

7.5.4 Leadership from CDVEC

In terms of leadership coming from the CDVEC it seems there was, what someone described as, passive support for the developments within the sector. Until relatively recently there was no resistance or barriers put in place to the development of higher education within the further education sector. The most recent objection was to the running of an approved HETAC level 6 (higher certificate) in Social Care because of departmental constraints on the delivery of higher education within the sector. This was the first time the CDVEC took such action and enforced a departmental directive which disallowed colleges of further education from delivering programmes above level 5 and 6 on the national qualifications framework. This was an important turning point which raised questions about where the objections came from and why the college should be disallowed deliver programmes accredited by an Irish education awards council. Individuals who had invested their time and energy over a period of more than two years were greatly disappointed. One member of staff recollected the words of the previous principal of this college who was often heard to say 'never asked for permission'. Still CDVEC management believes that a lot of development would not have happened without their support.

VEC1 *I think it's also true to say that none of that could have happened without the support sometimes tacit support, but certainly the support of higher up leadership but the core growth leadership role I think was very local.*

Principal 1 has this to say about the CDVEC.

P1: *In fairness, to the VEC they have a certain autonomy in running programmes and everybody has their own view and their own way of doing things. That's good. I don't think we were straitjacketed.*

Deputy Principal 1 also felt leadership from the CDVEC was passive.

DP1: *I think the leadership or the support from the CDVEC would have been passive rather than active and over the years dis-improved from passive I think...passive, benign passive, and that's a deliberately chosen phrase it sums it up. Without necessarily going through all the bureaucratic detail that was needed it was at least not disapproved.*

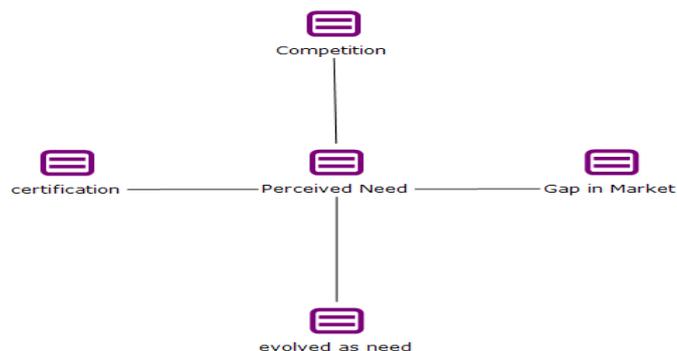
Similarly Deputy Principal 2 felt the CDVEC was neutral.

DP2: *The CDVEC seemed to be happy with that. They weren't going to help in a lot of ways but they weren't going to hinder it. They were kind of a neutral force.*

So it appears, from this analysis that leadership in the development of HE within the FE sector came mostly from within the colleges themselves. There was a combination of teachers who recognised the gaps for student progression, an influx of new teachers from industry, and leading principals directing operations. Probably the most interesting thing is that there was very little evidence of leadership from outside of the colleges and a distinct lack from the Department of Education.

7.6 What was the perceived need for HE in FE?

There appeared to have been a number of needs for the development of higher education within further education. It appears the programmes involved as a need and certification was also of importance for students who had begun on this alternative path. The map below shows the link between the central theme 'Perceived Need' and the codes as spurs.



Map 4: What was the Perceived Need?

7.6.1 Competition amongst Education Providers

Teacher 2 felt that competition played a bigger part today than it did several years ago.

T2: *I think we were maybe perhaps too complacent about numbers for many years and now we have to be more competitive or ruthless yes specially now with private colleges setting up.*

Principal 1 however felt that competition was vital for survival especially in the current climate where many of the courses developed within the further education sector and are being copied and delivered in other FE colleges and third level institutions. However this has nothing to do with the development of HE in FE.

P1: *There's no question that other institutions have taken our courses for example Music Production as they call it, sure it wasn't anywhere else until we ran it for quite some time.*

Deputy Principal 1 felt it was a certain amount of cloning from the other colleges.

DP1: *There wasn't any competition then we went through the phase of I suppose cloning. In my view a lot of the colleges saw what we were doing and copied it.*

So it appears competition wasn't really a driver of the development of higher education in further education and only became an issue firstly when other colleges within the scheme copied leaders of new programme development and secondly when HEI's also began to develop and copy programmes which originated in the FE sector.

7.6.2 Gap in the Market for New HE Courses

Management in the CDVEC believed in some instances the need came from industry but that in another circumstances it may have created industries.

VEC1: *Industry wouldn't have driven for instance radio programming or animation for instance because there wasn't an industry. There wasn't an animation industry.*

Principal 7 talked about how they evolved to meet a market niche and Principal 6 believed that industry had a major contribution in terms of their development.

P7: *I suppose they did evolve to fit a market and the niche that was there and nobody else was serving it.*

P6: *We had the likes of Cadburys and all of those factories around there. They used to come up in those early days and sit with us on various committees and things like that and look at whatever.*

7.6.3 New HE Courses Evolved to Meet Student Needs

This ubiquitous category became apparent during the analysis of the interviews. It became apparent the need to develop these programmes was somewhat universal. A number of teachers remarked about how the need evolved through their interaction with students.

T1: *The students got involved in their own learning. I was learning from them I would start something, they would see it and moved further and I would see that they had done with it and I would say God let's go and do this.*

T2: *It came up in surveys. A lot of them expressed an interest in staying here. Is there nothing we can do here? Can we not stay in the college and continue our study? So really it came from surveys of students and it came from staff frustration at losing good quality students who weren't getting a good option route out of here.*

This sentiment was echoed by a number of principals.

P4: *The certification was invented to match the need rather than the other way around.*

P6: *Very often you start by having a group of students and you'd say they're really doing great and it would be fabulous if they could pursue, where are they going to find work now? They are not the finished article yet we need them to go further.*

7.6.4 Need for Certification

There was also an apparent need to get certification for the courses being delivered. CDVEC management felt that certification was a central need.

VEC1: *They gave certification to activity where there was no appropriate certification available because certification is what has currency in industry. We were a long time when we didn't have any kind of certification and then people moved out to the BTEC certification and alternative higher education and that was very good and that also brought rigour to the sector.*

P4: *Certification was invented to match the need rather than the other way around.*

Principal 5 said there was no certification only that which came through the CDU and that they were looking for equivalents in the UK.

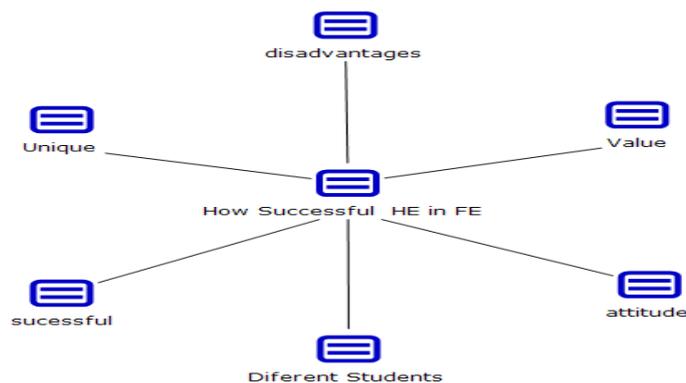
P5: There was no certification. The VEC ran our own through the CDU so we started looking around... The basic response was at HND. So we went on trips to England and we got advice.

Teacher 1 talked about how certification was very important for the students and how she was involved in working on that. She also remarks on how this had to be paid for. This was a new departure and the beginning of the relationship with BTEC Edexcel in the United Kingdom.

T1: You need certification. There is no point in doing something unless you have a piece of paper, that's where we come to show that you've done it.

7.7 Has HE in FE been Successful?

The general perception is that higher education in further education has been quite successful. The main reasons for this success centres mainly on the value afforded the students and the uniqueness of the programmes being delivered. The map below shows the links between the central theme of 'How Successful-HE in FE' with the codes are depicted as spurs.



Map 5: How successful has HE in FE been?

7.7.1 Disadvantages within the FEC Sector

When talking about the success of higher education in further education many of the respondents referred to some of the disadvantages they felt the sector was operating through. Teachers talked about the lack of resources, the lack of publicity, a poor attitude toward the sector and a general sense of inequality.

P6: *We got no publicity for a sector that has 30,000 students. We were never, nobody ever talked about the FE sector today it's a mystery.*

Deputy Principal 1 sees disadvantages in resourcing,

DP1: *There is a limit of resources all round but maybe 3 or 4 years ago when there were less limits it was still difficult enough for this college to get resources.*

Deputy Principal 1 talked about how the general public may perceive the sector in a rather negative way.

DP1: *Well the Irish people in my opinion have a somewhat distorted view of education. They see really two extremes of no education or being in the professions such as medical or legal and there is an excessive value placed on professions compared to other countries. We don't value it we see vocational; the tech as a derogatory term, significantly derogatory and that divide has been in Irish education since vocational educational set up. There's no doubt that there is a major inequality in that area.*

Deputy Principal 2 remarked that while He in FE is good students are disadvantaged by restrictions and don't get the full range of services and grants.

DP2: *I think for restricting our students completely to the full range of educational services that are in other institutions and that goes as you know also for grants and funding. I would argue very strongly the students here are being disadvantaged. Now you could say that's very bad that maybe they should go elsewhere, well the students decide where they go and they seem to keep coming despite the disadvantage.*

Principal 6 also felt that the sector was disadvantaged because of the lack of funding.

P6: *If we had the funding they had we'd probably do 3 times better ourselves because we are used to making do with little.*

7.7.2 Value of HE Courses in FECs

Deputy Principal 1 talked about inclusivity as being a central value of the system.

DP1: One of the values I think did exist or may or may not still exist, that traditional VEC people be they teachers administrators will talk about, is the value of inclusivity and VEC people are proud and rightly so.

Principal 8 for students really valued the education and remarked that people came who may otherwise never have visited the area.

P8: Of course they valued it; the other side of the story the consequence of that was that the students were receiving an excellent education and you had people coming to (named area); would drive through it at 40 miles an hour with the doors locked.

Principal 1 felt the courses were valued simply through their demand.

P1: I suppose the demand for the courses and there is a good consistent demand. Thousands, literally thousands of students have gone through the courses and while we don't know the outcomes for all students we are certainly aware of a lot of good outcomes. I would consider there is success in those terms, certainly in terms of their demand.

7.7.3 Attitudes of Snobbery toward FECs

There was some consideration given to the issue of attitudes toward colleges of further education. With one principal stating,

P1: It's a different kind of socio-economic group and there's definitely a problem with the parents and their attitudes and view because it's all about the points.

Another interviewee also talked about snobbery,

DP1: Certainly the level of snobbery is extremely high and even in the case of developments like the national framework universities don't really want to know about them.

7.7.4 Different Students Learning Needs

There was also continued reference to different students or different learners.

T2: I think some of them are weaker students. You know the ones who have passed average would not be capable of doing an honour's degree that would be my argument.

A VEC representative felt that some learners progress in a less standard way.

VEC1: *A lot of learners mightn't be standard pathway learners; maybe not having an initial amount of success. They suit people who haven't had a tradition of attendance or engagement with further and higher education and the local nature suits a number of people who may be beginning new areas within their own social and family set-ups. So it's slightly more protective.*

P1: *They certainly would not have succeeded in 3rd level... They would not survive in a big class and neither would they survive financially from a family point of view. So you could say it's a better fit option for some groups.*

P4: *There's also an argument to say students develop at different rates and therefore many students to get a degree it's probably, maybe a 4 and 5 year but it's very worthwhile.*

7.7.5 Success of HE Provision in FE

There was a general consensus amongst the interviewees that higher education provision within the further education sector had been significantly successful.

VEC1: *We were a long time when we didn't have any kind of certification and then people moved out to the BTEC certification and alternative higher education and that was very good and also brought rigor to the sector that mightn't have been there before.*

P1: *I think they've been extremely successful. They have done very well in industry and are willing to talk about us in a way you don't hear other people saying in other universities or faculties they say oh I went to (school name)*

P4: *Absolutely they are successful... So it suits.*

P6: *We had massive success in terms of employment and in terms of progression.*

7.7.6 Uniqueness Courses Contributed to Success

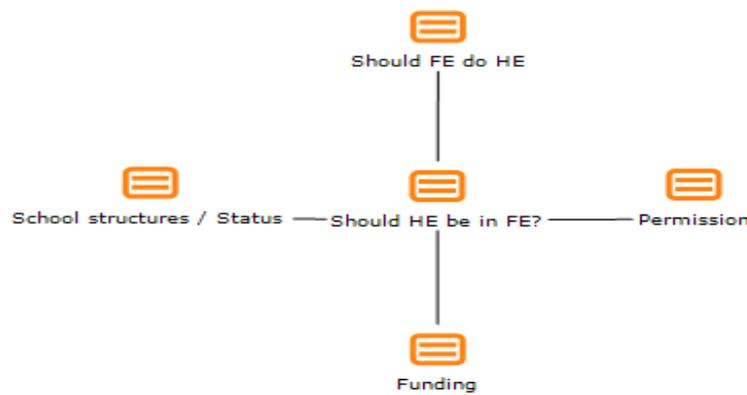
One of the key reasons given for the success of higher education in further education was attributed to the uniqueness of the courses.

VEC1: *They were successful because they were unique and they fulfilled a very unique role initially.*

P1: *An awful lot of the programmes that we do here are very unique nobody else does them or developed them. Just to give you an immediate one, Illustration is not done anywhere else... We wrote it from scratch... One in one of the selling points in the college was our uniqueness.*

7.8 Should HE Continue in FE?

The key issues to emerge from the question asking whether higher education should continue to be delivered within further education included: permission, funding, structures and status. These are depicted in the map as displayed below.



Map 6: Should He be in FE?

The majority of interviewees felt higher education should continue within the further education sector but some had mixed feelings.

T2: *I think the level 6, in the further education, aren't delivering necessarily in terms of access routes going forward to the same extent. So I would like to see us as having longer programmes at higher levels on the national framework.*

The spokesperson from the CDVEC was concerned about how HE in FE might block certain learners. When asked should FECs provide higher education he said:

VEC1: *Well I think there's room for some but I think also the reality is that they will be squeezed out... There is an opinion that when you have a certain number of places in FE for a certain number of learners, and we have more applicants than we need, to give some of those places to people who are in our higher education is actually blocking access to other further education learners.*

Principal 1 would prefer FECs to feed ITs.

P1: *I think it's not a bad idea actually... but what I would like is that instead of the ITs starting at levels 5 and 6 that we would deliver the students to them to top up their degrees.*

When probed on this question and asked about the model of a top up degree within FECs, Principal 1 gave the following reply.

P1: *I think it's a very good model. I mean in a way you could say that it's a standard model in the UK. I think the model is very good but in order to do it on a bigger scale we would certainly require more resources than we actually have now.*

7.8.1 Permission to Develop and Deliver HE in FE

It became apparent during the course of the interviews that permission was seldom sought before embarking on the development of new programmes and when it was it was most often refused.

T1: *She did things because she wasn't supposed to do them and didn't ask permission and then asked permission afterwards. Teachers to be having a meeting... She had to become quite creative with the timetable.*

T2: *I don't know that we ever thought about the VEC at the time. I knew we were always on dangerous waters, we always knew that this was to a certain extent frowned upon.*

P4: *Didn't we write to the Department and 'no can do'. We looked for articulation agreements 'no can do'. We have validation secured with Wolverhampton on programmes. No can do.*

7.8.2 Funding Programme Development

Funding for a lot of the development of new programmes originally came from the European Social Fund but after that stopped the Government did not continue to fund any further development of courses.

VEC1: *ESF funding stopped and the Government here took over the funding and began to put their own local stamp on the structure and within the PLC programmes.*

P2: *As ESF was being phased out and National Exchequer was coming in so did all the controls that came with it.*

P5: *In terms of funding and resources in the last 25 years very few colleges of further education got any sort of serious funding.*

P7: *The ETB is going to have to go to SOLAS for funding... SOLAS an extra application and okay you have to justify what you're looking for funding for.*

P8: *I raised the money in Brussels to buy all the equipment and it was very expensive. We got millions out of Europe. Really we could produce that change in their attitude and there were officials from the Department out there all the time with the City of Dublin VEC. We had that link right into the Department.*

7.8.3 FECs with Second Level Structures and Status

The issue of structure was also important for a number of people. The structure which came with the secondary school status was mentioned a number of times. The McIver report had recommended changes to the structure as mentioned earlier. This report was shelved by the Department.

T1: *We were working in the structures of a second level school which we still are...*

Another commented on how you couldn't do things within that structure and needed to import staff from industry.

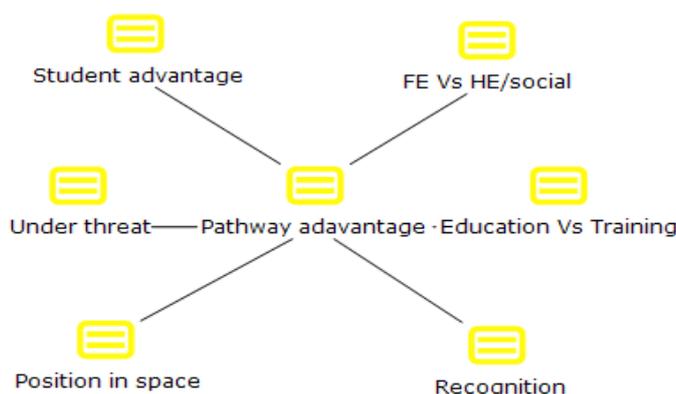
P8 *You couldn't staff a Rock School or even some of the artistic areas without bringing in practitioners. I insisted that rather than having one full-time teacher, or anything, the person came in from industry with practical experience where they were well ahead of people who just had theory.*

Some believed that the structure and status of their college would change and that there was an implicit strategy to do this.

DP1: *There was something of a strategy. I don't think it was a hugely coherent long-term strategy but I think there was a strategy to develop two-year courses. That's strategy was always predicated on the idea that someday soon we are going to restructure and make us a logical unit and give us loosely some sort of 3rd level status but certainly my own first interview here 'when we get 3rd level status' was used.*

7.9 Pathway Advantage of HE in FE

This section of the analysis seeks to determine whether there is any advantage to learners pursuing higher education within the further education sector. A number of themes were identified as illustrated in the map below.



Map 7: Pathway Advantage

7.9.1 Further Education versus Higher Education

There were many interesting comments made on the distinction between further and higher education. Some expressed an opinion that there was an increased blurring between the sectors while others felt those in further education were being labelled in a negative way. Others felt there may be industrial relations issues in the context of FE in HE.

When asked what the understanding was of the divide between further and higher education one teacher had this to say.

T2: *Ever blurring... Yes I can see why there is territorial approaches and why a lot of the IT sector and maybe others are reluctant for us to go any further in this area but I actually think the FE sector are very well equipped to deliver.*

Another principal also expressed the negative distinction between the sectors.

P5: *The division between higher and further education here in Ireland is quite distinct and quite negative in a way...Whereas in the UK it is perceived as being the 'done thing'.*

The ease with which higher education operated within further education in the United Kingdom was also mentioned.

P6: *And they have no problem running from FE and HE right through... it's done successfully and as a whole conduit for students to run through and it's an easy progression and also acts as a way of encouraging students.*

7.9.2 Education versus Training

The issue of training versus education was quite prevalent amongst respondents with the key issues centring on learning for learning sake and the expansion of cognitive abilities as opposed to training and skills development for work and employment. A respondent from the CDVEC was concerned that education and training may no longer be differentiated.

VEC1: *The concern I have is related to the protection of the role of education... The fight will be about making sure that the only type of provision that we deliver in any ETB retains the education and not necessarily the training and that it holds a value on people who learn for learning sake as opposed to learn with the sole focus of getting a job.*

The fear that SOLAS would concentrate on job creation rather than education would be the norm was also emphasised.

VEC1: *I think there's a danger in SOLAS and I think there's a danger in Government thinking and there's a control in funding that might leave all those things to job-related activities only in the ETB. I think we should protect that, with every single ability at our means because I think we are responsible for a whole layer of people who don't fit that.*

Similarly a number of principals made the distinction between education and training.

P4: *I'd just be really afraid this is an age-old argument about education and training you can train monkeys you educate people.*

P7: *The biggest fear is we don't want to lose our educational remit.*

7.9.3 Lack of Recognition of Contribution by FECs

A significant number of respondents felt they didn't receive the proper recognition they deserved for the contributions made in course development and student success rates over the years.

P6: *Like we do Liberal Arts here and we had 20 students from UCD last year and in the light of the discussion around third level and the making of main courses generic at first year level I believe we should be pitching for that at least.*

P8: *But the critically important thing to the college, to its reputation again and to the quality of the output, the quality of the teachers, the evidence of what they had achieved you know it's international value. We never got the same cooperation from the colleges or universities because the ITs always saw us as competition.*

7.9.4 Position of FECs in Educational Space

A number of respondents believed the centre where students were placed was important to their learning and development. However, often how these centres were perceived politically would go against the general or official consensus of officialdom.

P6: *If somebody is in a centre and they're making progress very often the centre is the place where they are being successful and I think if you have education being delivered especially where you're having a social inclusion remit then you have to provide education where it's best needed and where it provides the best outcomes for the recipients.*

Deputy Principal 1 believes that their college was seen as an 'upstart'.

DP1: *In my opinion, within the VEC our college would be perceived, I don't mean as an official policy but in a colloquial way amongst staff, certainly there would be a perception that it is a maverick and something of an upstart almost. There certainly is a perception of that, definitely.*

Deputy Principal 2 stressed the political imposition of vested interests that are creating barriers to entry for FECs.

DP2: *That would seem normal their politics goes against it. There's too many, there is vested interests who don't want that to happen. They've created; I mean the Government is in a bit of a bind. What is it? Fourteen ITs, I think they've created. I remember a former educational*

officer Tony Breen saying to me what the Department would like is all our students to go to the ITs because they created these. There are stages, and it might still be the case, I was shocked when the IADT it is quite a big institution and a big campus, there is a stage last year the year before we had more students than them. So it's beyond belief this.

7.9.5 FECs under Threat

Many respondents felt FECs were under threat and this had become more prominent in recent years as a consequence of new legislation. This in turn had demotivated those who had previously been involved in development and innovation within the centres.

P4: *Every year of those 25 that will come in at least 15 of them will go on to DCU and the other 10 will go in to Med-Lab HND and move that way. That course is under threat because it doesn't fit into the niche of the NQAI.*

P8: *I don't see massive innovation like you and I did on the degree programme. The point is where is the new innovation that's going to make it hard for somebody to say no and how is it tied back into industry.*

DP2: *Very bad for us, very bad for the teachers. It is very bad for the future students because there are new programmes out there that we could development and move but I think for us at this phase of our development the college has, I don't know if you think that way, but the college has a phasing. So certain things happen at certain times and there was a stage that I think we didn't take advantage of the opportunities that were there to develop or to push out ourselves and when you miss a phase of development it's very hard to catch up.*

So it would appear innovation and development has been stymied through legislation and that many teachers have been demotivated.

7.9.6 Advantage for Students Attending FECs

When asked whether students gained any advantage by attending FECs the majority of respondents agreed they did and particularly for students who may have been disadvantaged in their past educational pursuits. Others pointed to the fact that students freely chose to attend FECs. Deputy Principal 2 had this to say.

DP2: *Well there must be because they wouldn't keep coming. Like word-of-mouth is the advertisement, that tells students, I think that what we give here is a more personalised education. Meaning the class groups are smaller. Like when you talk to somebody for instance like my daughter, she's doing business in UCD, you walk in to 250. You might as well just get notes and stay at home.*

P5: *I think it's very beneficial for a large proportion of our students. The type of student that comes into the FE College quite often, 1) they are from around the immediate locale geographically and 2) quite often they have been quite disadvantaged, either in the secondary education or in the social home life.*

Principal 1 pointed to the fact that many of the students would apply to the college as a first choice option and weren't necessarily weaker or second chance students.

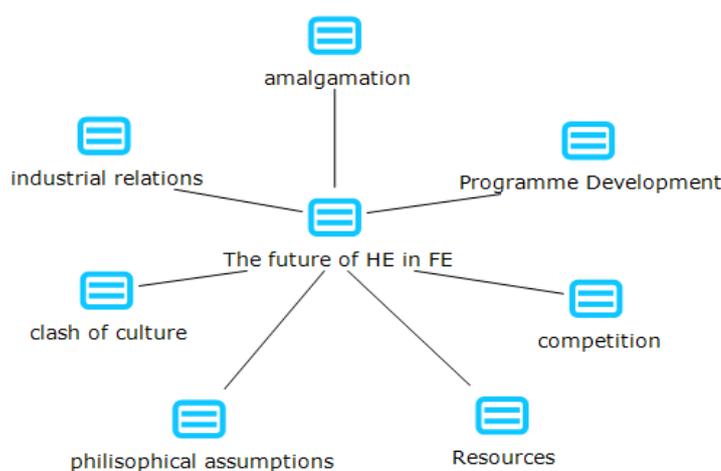
P1: *Yes only a proportion of our students would come on as a category of weaker student or second chance or CAO. A certain proportion will come here as a first choice, you know maybe even a second choice who have applied to Dun Laoghaire IT and us. We would be high up their level of choices.*

In summary, the evidence suggests that FECs provide an alternative pathway for students wishing to pursue educational programmes of choice including higher education courses. While the sector does provide another pathway and greater advantage to some students it is important not to overlook the eclectic mix of participants and the benefits that this diverse body of students brings to teaching and learning.

There is also a distinct fear that the sector, as it has evolved, is under threat both politically and legislatively from certain HEI's and recent laws which have reshaped the sector.

7.10 The Future of HE in FE

As the number of mature students grew rapidly and many students didn't have a Leaving Certificate, PLCs eventually became FECs providing accommodation for non-traditional students in FE. The courses provided by FECs were in many cases unique and focused on education rather than training which was the remit of the National Training and Employment board FÁS. The following section of the analysis deals with some of the factors which may impact on the future of higher education within further education.



Map 8: The Future of HE in FE

7.10.1 Amalgamation of FÁS and VECs

Respondents were concerned about how amalgamation might work. Teacher 1 expressed the opinion that FECs and FÁS may share similar courses but that FECs were different in that they provided education rather than training.

T2: *Yes we're merging with FÁS and were becoming SOLAS and I see us as having you know practical trades and having courses that are similar to what FÁS has provided for years and what a lot of FE colleges have provided for years, but I think there is a huge role for the FE sector to play in providing academically focused courses.*

Similarly, CDVEC management felt it was important that the amalgamation was not to the detriment of education and purely focused on job-related outcomes.

VEC1: *But they will be funders and they will be the guys calling the shots. Funding is kind of critical because if you have the money and say how it's going to be spent and SOLAS has got the money and Government says everything has to be spent on job-related activities then I think we lose a whole range of people and it's our job in this forum transition to try and protect our traditions in that regard and that's a big job.*

Principal 5 thought it may be too much to have the combined education and training authority.

P5: *It could be almost too much to have one education and training board doing what we are currently doing in terms of FETAC courses trying to do some of the higher education. In some senses the numbers are so small, seminary colleges probably doing anything of any consequence and then trying to deliver the training as well and how that's going to roll out?*

Principal 7 and Deputy Principal 2 thought amalgamation was a good thing because it would bring consolidation.

P7: *I think the hard part is going to be for all the course providers when they are doing their looking for money... that their subjects adds up and then it goes into SOLAS and Ballyfermot are looking for funding for this but sure this other place is also looking for funding for something similar and we can't do both. So the problem is going to cause...it's not a bad problem it's a good problem it will cause consolidation.*

DP2: *Amalgamation; you're going to specialise in Music and Media and Art, and you're not to do any of this stuff. You're to do something else. So you become colleges of excellence in a particular area.*

7.10.2 Future Programme Development

While programme development was a normal occurrence within the PLC sector it seems this was no longer an option particularly in the development of higher education courses. Teacher 2 explained how they had considered the idea of developing degree programmes.

T2: *A few years ago we did look at the idea of whether we should be running foundation degrees as they call them in the UK but we didn't, we were very conscious the word degree was never going to be met with any level of approval around the Department of Education.*

Deputy Principal 1 expressed the opinion that the CDVEC would tolerate programmes that had been set up but would not encourage any new ones.

***DP1:** Well the CDVEC had shown no real enthusiasm. I use the word I think correctly, shown no enthusiasm, perhaps a tolerance; they have conceded that whatever programmes were set up since 2005 or whatever will stay but there's been no encouragement.*

Deputy Principal 2 pointed to new avenues of development.

***DP2:** What we need to do in terms of development is get our name on other lists, like we could get our name on an ERASMUS list. We could apply for a ERASMUS funding and students can go abroad and do a few months abroad or whenever you know and come back but we haven't accessed that's what I mean we haven't accessed a lot of educational opportunity.*

7.10.3 Competition from other HE Providers

CDVEC management believes that HE programmes would eventually be squeezed out of FECs as a consequence of competition from Institutes of Technology and other HEI's.

***VEC1:** Well I think there's room for some but I think also the reality is that they will be squeezed out and they're being squeezed out because there are now options in the IT system and the higher education that weren't there before.*

Principal 6 also expressed the opinion that HEI's were competing and that this was generally a consequence of economics.

***P6:** I think there is a fear because third level is trying to find their own little, you know there are obviously trying to, there is economics playing a huge part in terms of student numbers.*

7.10.4 Lack of Resources in FECs

The lack of resources was also seen to be an obstacle for the future of HE within FE. Principal 1 felt that while FECs may be more creative due to a lack of resources

colleges wouldn't be encouraged to continue to develop without proper funding support.

P1: I think you're more creative when you have a lack of resources. I'll probably be shot for saying that but I certainly believe that because you have to. I don't think we want to continue to develop a huge number of degree programmes. I don't think we could support it properly. If you are going to do something you do it right and I think we're very limited with resources

7.10.5 Philosophical Assumptions about Education

A number of philosophical assumptions were expressed during the interviews and a key one was the difference between education and training and the purpose for which each is used. The new ideal that FECs should provide programmes which led to employment seemed to be in contradiction with the philosophical approach to education. Deputy Principal 2 explains that many courses, including the animation course, would not have been set up if the purpose was simply to fill jobs.

DP2: What's the predicted job success like? So already we see there is a movement towards education for work. Now I'm not against that but if that starts to dominate the reason why you put on programmes we certainly wouldn't have had an Animation programme. We wouldn't have the Music programme. We wouldn't have a Film programme.

Principal 1 explained the difference between education and training very well, as the difference between thinking and doing.

P1: You've got people who might be able to go in and use machinery and not know why they're using it and not know the consequences of why they're using it and that seems to have been a traditional way that I'm a very good carpenter but don't ask me what way to design the thing. I may be able to make what you want but I won't be able to design it.

7.10.6 Clash of Cultures between Training and Education

Deputy Principal 2 felt that there would be a clash of cultures and that the amalgamation would prove problematic and difficult to implement.

DP2: You have two large organisations and CDVEC is quite large in educational terms, the coming together from different cultures... So I'd be very concerned about how it works out. It's a clash of cultures

almost and unless we have very farsighted people in charge of both organisations nothing will happen. Nothing good will happen.

7.10.7 Industrial Relations in FECs.

Deputy Principal 1 believed HE in FE was a non-runner because of the knock-on effect of industrial action in regard to 3rd level remuneration.

DP1: They are terrified that should Moate College of Further Education, whatever, set up a level 8 degree the teachers and in Moate will strike and they will all get third level pay and that will knock on to 15,000 teachers and it will break down the walls.

7.11 Interview Conclusions

The following is a summary of the findings taken from comments made by those most directly involved in the further education sector of the former CDVEC now CDETB. The findings will be grouped within the three key questions of the research.

7.11.1 How and why was HE developed in FE?

Evidence from the data overwhelmingly acknowledges the development of these higher education programmes to have come from the schools themselves with specific leadership coming from both teachers and college principals. A culture of programme development, in many of the colleges, combined with enthusiastic teaching staff, who wanted their students to do well, laid the bedrock for the development. It is also quite evident from the research that the type of student being catered for played a crucial role in the development. Students' needs combined with innovative and motivated teachers and principals were seen as the key drivers for the development of two year courses and HE programmes. Teachers recognised the need to retain students in the colleges and went on to create two-year programmes and seek validation and certification from awarding bodies outside of the State. The lack of Irish certification was also a key driver in the development of new courses.

CDVEC management also recognised the role teachers and principals played in the creation of higher education programmes within their colleges. Leadership was identified in teachers who knew the course areas well and had important links

with industry. The growth had come from the ground up with teachers clearly identifying with the needs of their students and then adapting the teaching and learning to take account of a changing socio-economic environment.

It was nurtured, grown, developed, invented, and pushed through the PLC absolutely with no context at all in this country... The knowledge strength of professional expertise of certain teachers took on leadership roles were the key, who actually knew the course areas, the industry links. (VEC 1)

Evidence also suggests the CDVEC provided passive support and did not hinder the developments. However it has also been suggested that permission was seldom sought and that if it was it would be mostly refused. Similarly it would appear the Department of Education was never officially asked permission for the development of these higher education programmes and either didn't know about them or simply refused to acknowledge their existence.

7.11.2 Have these HE programmes been successful?

While the extent of higher education within further education is small a significant number of FECs have provided higher education for many years. One FEC has more than 50% of courses at HE level and provides three degree programmes at level 8 on the NQF. BTEC HNDs are the most common courses of higher education within FECs but there was some confusion as to their level on the NQF. The Quality and Qualifications Authority have agreed they are higher education and compared them to level 6 (higher certificate) on the NQF.

In many cases FECs provide the best environment for students pursuing further and higher education. There was consistent reference made to the students and their learning needs. The suggestion was that sometimes the standard pathway to third level education was not the most likely means for higher education attainment for these students. Values such as inclusivity, affinity and trust were seen to be central to a successful education outcome. FECs are considered as an alternative pathway for learners who had difficulty accessing 3rd level education. Also unique courses were seen to contribute to the success of the sector and were considered to be of great value to students.

Even though the provision of higher education within further education was generally deemed to be very successful with many thousands of students being awarded higher certification the sector is not without its disadvantages. Poor funding and a lack of resources were the main disadvantages for FECs. As funding from the ESF was discontinued the Government did not continue with funding and therefore there was a significant demise in programme development. Many teachers talked about a general sense of inequality which manifests itself through a lack of resources and funding, negative attitudes and snobbery towards the sector and a misunderstanding and/or lack of recognition of the contribution made by FECs. Second level structures were seen as a hindrance within FECs and many believed that these should change to more appropriate structures. However the McIver report, which supported the structural changes, was subsequently shelved by the Department after its publication in 2003.

Definitions of FE are equivocal and many blame the DES and their neglect of the sector for this confusion. Many expressed the opinion that discrimination and distinction between FE and HE is part of the common discourse and that this is constantly reinforced in the media.

7.11.3 How might DES Policy Impact on HE in FE?

Most respondents felt HE should continue to some extent within FE where resources are adequate. CDVEC management felt it could continue but that in many cases there was a need for more resources if it were to cater adequately for the increasing numbers of students looking for places. However the Department of Education is resolute in its separation of further education and higher education. The following is their official position on the issue.

It is not desirable that third level courses should be offered through further education colleges. The provision of third level courses by further education colleges could lead to large scale duplication with the Institute of Technology sector. This would also create confusion about the mission of the respective sectors which would ill serve the needs of learners seeking to re-skill and upskill. (DES, Appendix K, 2013)

As already highlighted above duplication of programmes only came about after the Institutes of Technology cloned many of the courses which were uniquely developed within the FE sector and students clearly still choose FECs for these programmes because of their excellent reputation. Furthermore many teachers expressed the opinion the Department of Education showed a lack of recognition for the contributions made by FECs over the years and recent legislation threatens the future of HE in FE and makes no reference to developments made by FECs.

Teachers were also concerned how recent legislation showed a lack of distinction between education and training. They considered their profession might be threatened by the establishment of SOLAS and the amalgamation of FÁS and VECs. The clash of cultures, predicated on differences between training and education, was seen as potentially problematic. The main fear was that the focus of attention was on developing skills in an effort to boost employment and that this was to the detriment of the broader purpose of education where learning was central to the development of cognitive abilities. As one teacher commented,

I'd just be really afraid this is an age old argument about education and training, you can train monkeys but you educate people. (P4)

In the following chapter I will discuss the findings in relation to both the substantive issues of leadership in the evolution of higher education within further education using the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production focusing on habitus, capital and field.

Chapter 8:

Discussion and Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

The following chapter begins by discussing the key findings in association with Bourdieu's theory of capital, namely *symbolic, economic, social and cultural capital*. I will explore how 'institutional habitus' was developed within FECs and how it contributed to the development of programmes of education and particularly higher education within further education. The following section will address the key findings in relation to how HE in FE evolved within the PLC sector of the CDVEC and what roles leadership had to play in that development. The general questions are augmented with a number of specific questions each of which will be briefly revisited.

8.1 The Creation and Accumulation of Bourdieu's Capital

The central tenet of this study was to understand the evolution of HE within FE and the role leadership played and if an 'institutional habitus' evolved where greater social and cultural capital was created or enhanced. I am also interested in the concept of 'power relations' and Bourdieu's conflictual theories in relation to capital; whether in fact it operated as either a positive driving force or a negative restricting force in the sector. The intention is to examine whether, capital from Bourdieu's perspective is a means of explaining the reproduction of dominant classes within society. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of habitus, capital and field with the central concept of 'distinction and taste' being a central marker of 'cultural capital' will provide the main framework for my analysis. For Bourdieu capital does not exist in isolation but rather comes about in its relation to fields of operation. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 101)

The following table was adapted from Glover (2010) and lists the codes associated with each of Bourdieu's forms of capital.

Bourdieu's Capitals	Codes
Symbolic Capital	Status, identity, tradition, born to teach, tradition, pride, emotion, ownership, symbolic resource, legacy, college, students.
Economic Capital	Money, costs, prices, loans, grants, equipment, income, fees, funding.
Social Capital	Networks, industry, community, markets, unions, friends, professional acquaintances, social connections, family, isolation.
Cultural Capital	Experience, skills, knowledge, values, know-how, education, qualifications, understanding, cultural artefacts, artistic inclination, awareness of the culture of PLCs and FE, norms.

Table 33

Codes for analysing data using Bourdieu's capitals

(Adapted from Glover 2010)

I will now discuss Bourdieu's capital in relation to the findings from both the surveys and the in-depth interviews.

8.1.1 Teachers and Symbolic Capital

Teachers were quite strong in their belief that they had contributed significantly to the development of the FEC sector. They expressed pride in the development of their programmes which they believed was driven by them. They also believed they had a good reputation with both students and industry. Further they believed that students gained considerable advantage by having attended their courses because of their unique nature. The following comments reflect their pride status and the emotional ownership of the programmes they developed.

Teacher (B2) *The college is well known for its art courses, especially portfolio courses which have one of the highest reputations in the country.*

Teacher (I7) *The college has a good industry (theatre & film) reputation for delivery of Technical Theatre (technicians, designers, costume personnel, stage management)*

However, teachers were also very concerned with the lack of recognition (of this symbolic capital) particularly by the Department of Education. The comments below give an indication of the conflict between their perceptions and those of Government and the Department of Education in relation to symbolic capital.

Teacher (B2) *DES needs to look at BCFE's contribution & reputation and not assign it to a FAS type institution. It should encourage & help it to develop even more Level 8 qualifications with recognition within Ireland on the NFQ.*

Teacher (I16) *It is essential that government develop an informed understanding what is incorporated in our FE programmes. To date even the Teaching Council have failed to identify our place within the education service "neither second nor third level" ergo we do not really exist.*

8.1.2 Students and Symbolic Capital

It can also be argued that students felt the college had a certain level of symbolic capital. They expressed the opinion that the courses and reputation of the college was the reason they attended. They also commended the teaching staff. They saw teachers as having a tradition in industry which was invaluable to teaching and learning for particular courses. This could be expressed as a symbolic resource.

Student (1) *You could probably mention BCFE to anyone and the first thing they will say is 'oh Animation! Film! Etc.*

Student (2) *Game Design, many local developers consider that course the best in the country, might want to mention that.*

Student (22) *In the Animation course, the teaching staff in BCFE has invaluable amounts of industrial experience which is extremely beneficial for students.*

Student (64) *I always got a good response from industry professionals when I mentioned I attend BCFE for a sound engineering course. I believe that the college's reputation for the music and film industry is one of its strongest strengths and believe that it will become a vital part to finding work in the future.*

However students, just like teachers, also felt their college was disadvantaged as a result of not having proper recognition.

Student (22) *I think that because BCFE is just a College of Further Education that the education system doesn't recognise it as highly as they should.*

Student (27) *Yes, the Government looks down on it because it offers more than just the bog standard package.*

Student (72) *I believe that the main disadvantage is the lack of recognition for the degree courses offered in the college. The fact that it is not fully recognized as a third level institution means that students don't have equal opportunities. Despite so many success stories coming out of the college, it still struggles to be recognized in the way that it should be.*

8.1.3 FEC Experts and Symbolic Capital

The general perception is that higher education in further education has been quite successful. The main reasons for this success centres mainly on the value afforded the students and the uniqueness of the programmes being delivered. The sector was symbolised by the motivation and creativity of the staff in the development of programmes. Great pride was expressed in the ownership of this development and how it had been of benefit to the students.

P1: *People in the college were enthusiastic... the quality and the level of what we were doing... a lot of the staff had ideas and they were allowed to express themselves and were allowed to develop the programmes themselves.*

T1: *I developed presentation broadcasting skills and we advertised that. I have my training and broadcast voice so I developed my module for broadcast voice. I had my own module*

However the Department of Education is resolute in its separation of FE and HE and while BTEC HNDs are the most common programmes of higher education within FECs there is a dispute as to their level on the NQF. Definitions of FE are equivocal and many blame the neglect shown by the DESs for this confusion.

Discrimination and distinction between FE and HE seems to be part of the common discourse which is reinforced constantly in the media. So symbolically the perception held by the majority, i.e. the general public, would appear to be out of sync with that of those who are more closely involved. The following selection of comments helps explain this distinction and discrimination.

P5: *The division between higher and further here in Ireland is quite distinct and quite negative in a way. It's awfully difficult to break down the door to try and make some sort of arrangement or an alignment, or a progress students into our higher education whereas in the UK is perceived as being the done thing.*

P1: *It's a different kind of socio-economic group and there's definitely a problem with the parents and their attitudes and view because it's all about the points.*

P2: *If you try to get any statistics on further education over the years, there is an absence of any counting even at a basic level. Is that not an expression of a lack of interest? If you're not interested in an issue you're not going to bother counting it!*

8.1.4 Symbolic Capital Conclusion

There is a distinct division in the perceptions of students, teachers and FEC experts with those in Government, the media and the general public. On the one hand teachers and students acknowledged the reputation of the FEC sector and the contribution it has made both to individuals and society. For the former, FECs symbolise success, innovation and the creation of advantage for students. A tradition of programme development designed specifically to meet the needs of

students had generated great pride for those involved. However there is also a perception, constantly reinforced by the media, that FECs are second chance education institutions and this in turn would appear to contribute to a mass learning of negative attitudes which includes snobbery.

8.2 Teachers and Economic Capital

All FECs felt they were disadvantaged distinctly by a lack of resources, a block on permission to further develop HE courses, a cap on student numbers and the lack of grants for students continuing on to higher education courses within the sector. Teachers had felt FECs were being discriminated against and were not been given sufficient or adequate resources to deliver their programmes. This in effect was slowly dismantling what had been built up over the years and therefore appeared as a form of discrimination.

Teacher (B3) *We operate on a second level school budget, not a third level budget, and so the art department equipment and resources are very basic.*

Teacher (B7) *The cap on the number of student is weakening the college, also the restrictions from developing higher-level courses; this all has a negative impact on the college.*

8.2.1 Students and Economic Capital

Almost all of the students surveyed felt their college was disadvantaged particularly through the lack of resources and student grants for those continuing to higher education level.

Student (6) *Yes it is not seen as important enough for proper State funding to resources which could greatly improve the college and overall student development.*

Student (32) *Underfunded! As the college is recognized worldwide for producing industry standard students that have won many awards over the years.*

Student (84) *Further Education Colleges may not receive the same funding as high level universities, but, still maintains a high level of respect for what is achieved through studying in BCFE.*

FEC students are ineligible for grants after having completed two years in a college normally at BTEC Excel Higher National Diploma level.

Student (50) *I believe that we are extremely disadvantaged! I read recently that I will not be eligible for a grant from SUSI. This is a disgrace as I am a student of Ireland and this college is in Ireland!*

8.2.2 FEC Experts and Economic Capital

Poor funding and a lack of resources were the main disadvantages for FECs and as funding from the ESF was discontinued the Government did not continue with funding and therefore there was a significant demise in new programme development.

P2: *As ESF being phased out and national Exchequer was coming in so did all the controls that came with it.*

P5: *In terms of funding and resources in the last 25 years very few colleges of further education got any sort of serious funding.*

P8: *I raised the money in Brussels to buy all the equipment and it was very expensive. We got millions out of Europe really we could produce that change in their attitude and there were officials from the Department out there all the time with the City of Dublin VEC. We had that link right into the Department.*

8.2.3 Economic Capital Conclusion

It is apparent that FECs have been ignored in relation to capital funding with the Department continually funding them as second level institutions. When European Social Funding ceased the Department did not continue to fund the sector. Also the Department ceased providing grants to students who were pursuing higher education within the sector. All of this has contributed to a level of decline within FECs and has stopped the development of any further courses of HE in FE.

8.3 Teachers and Social Capital

From its earliest days Ballyfermot College was set on a path to develop and deliver programmes which enhanced local students' ability to access third level education and to provide adult and lifelong learning. It was a new model where a partnership had been formed between the local Ballyfermot Community Association, the Department of Education and the CDVEC. This partnership was initially led by Principal Sister Margaret Mac Curtain. This social relationship between an educational institution and a local community was not unique and in fact was mirrored right across PLCs within the CDVEC. In excess of 80% of teachers surveyed said the key driving force for course development was the perceived need of students. Many teachers felt students weren't getting enough and it was important to provide them with better opportunities. One teacher talked about the early days when they were working with the local Community Association to support young learners.

They wanted to be a wife and that was the end of it. As soon as they reach 14 they wanted to get a job and there were plenty of jobs available in the sewing factories and that was their ambition. There was no academic ambition what so ever. (Murray 2011c)

8.3.1 Students and Social Capital

Students felt smaller class sizes and close student teacher interaction gave them a greater chance to learn in a more intimate environment. Word-of-mouth and connections with friends and professional acquaintances informed students of the nature of the college.

Student (37) *I am in the MND course and from what I've heard from my friends in other colleges they don't get the hands on approach we get.*

Students put great worth and value on the fact that the college was very well-connected with industry and saw how this could help them in their future careers.

Student (19) *BCFE College helped me to get contacts in the music industry and gave me industry knowledge providing me with the confidence and experience needed to give me a strong advantage entering into the competitive world of music management.*

8.3.2 FEC Experts and Social Capital

Interviewees believed students' needs combined with innovative and motivated teachers and principals were seen as the key drivers for the development of two year courses and HE programmes. The lack of Irish certification was a key driver in the development of new courses. Also teachers perceived a need for students to get more than a one-year course for their personal development and in many cases FECs were considered the best environment for students pursuing further and higher education.

VEC1: *A lot of learners mightn't be standard pathway learners; maybe not having an initial amount of success. They suit people who haven't had a tradition of attendance or engagement with further and higher education and the local nature suits a number of people who may be beginning new areas within their own social and family set-ups. So it's slightly more protective.*

P6: *If somebody is in a centre and they're making progress very often the centre is the place where they are being successful and I think if you have education being delivered especially where you're having a social inclusion remit then you have to provide education where it's best needed and where it provides the best outcomes for the recipients.*

Recent legislation is having a major impact on the FECs sector and many respondents related their fears for the future and their sense of isolation or alienation. FECs are threatened by the amalgamation of FÁS and VECs and a clash of cultures is seen as potentially problematic.

DP2: *You have two large organisations and CDVEC is quite large in educational terms, the coming together from different cultures... So I'd be very concerned about how it works out it's a clash of cultures almost and unless we have very farsighted people in charge of both organisations nothing good will happen.*

8.3.3 Social Capital Conclusion

Social connections between colleges, communities, industry, and the ongoing relations between past and present students continue to add value to FECs. Teachers were enthusiastic about creating a better environment for the students and many felt their college had created such a space. Links were continually developed with the community, industry and past students in an effort to create a network of positive relations for the betterment of all.

8.4 Teachers and Cultural Capital

The majority of teachers surveyed believed they had the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver programmes at both further and higher education levels. All surveyed FECs provided HE programmes with one college providing 68% of teaching at higher level and more than 50% of their courses at HE level. The majority of teachers believed their college was either a college of FE and HE, at third level, or a college somewhere between second and third level. Interestingly the largest provider of HE in FE had a stronger belief it was or should be a third level institution. One college felt they had contributed significantly to the cultural industries

Teacher (B45) *I don't feel it fits easily into new developments re SOLAS etc. and should strive for solo status on the basis of its current offerings and past contributions to the development of diverse and interesting courses and indeed to the development of new, and successful industries e.g. Animation, Gaming etc. in the wider community.*

All FECs believed development and delivery of HE courses should continue and were worried about the future of education and an over emphasis on training and preparing people for work. The following comment captures the general sentiment.

Teacher (B47) *The future seems uncertain. There is an effort to amalgamate diverse institutions into one educational body. I wonder how that will impact the community resource. We are an integral link between the larger community, the creative arts and humanities, and industry. To lose that would leave a gaping hole in that network.*

8.4.1 Students and Cultural Capital

Many students chose to attend FECs because of the courses offered and a very good reputation. In one college almost 80% believed they were in a third level institution and more than 40% of the students in that college had completed a higher education programme. Many students believed BCFE had contributed significantly to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland and were

attracted to attend the college because of the type of courses offered and the reputation the college had for the delivery of these courses.

Student (37) *BCFE is great. As a media student, it has really helped me get a good idea of the field I wish to pursue when I finish my time there. I've heard rumors that the HND courses may be discontinued and I think that would be a shame*

Student (19) *BCFE College helped me to get contacts in the music industry and gave me industry knowledge providing me with the confidence and experience needed to give me a strong advantage entering into the competitive world of music management.*

8.4.2 FEC Experts and Cultural Capital

It was apparent from the interviews that many in FECs felt they had the experience skills and knowledge to continue to develop and deliver programmes of higher education within the sector. There was an understanding within the sector of how best to do this and many believed HE should continue to some extent within FE where resources were adequate.

Interviewees acknowledged that definitions of FE were equivocal however many blamed neglect of the sector by the DES for this confusion. This was particularly the case in those FECs delivering HE programmes.

Unique courses in FECs are seen to contribute to the success of the sector and were considered great value for students. The following two comments give an indication of the cultural capital accrued in FECs.

DP2: *We were way ahead in taking the model I think (name) I suppose took the model and said we needed two-year programmes. It's the concept of having a two-year programme. That's what made the difference because everyone else was still looking at one-year programmes.*

P8: *The Taoiseach was present to present the certificates and Sheridan College was there and they got the equivalent of Sheridan College diplomas in classical animation. The first Diplomas of Classical Animation outside of North America for the rest of the world and that was us up in the limelight and we were getting two or three thousand applications per year.*

8.5 The Creation of Institutional Habitus in FECs

In this section I will explore the 'conditions of existence' in FECs in an attempt to understand the 'institutional habitus' within which stakeholders found themselves. I will apply Bourdieu's 'habitus and the space of lifestyles' in my analysis of the data which relates to the development of higher education within the further education sector. As mentioned above disposition is central to Bourdieu's concept of habitus where perceptions and conditioning structure the individual agent's practice. Habitus links individual actions with the various fields through which individuals move and operate.

...by habitus, Bourdieu means the relevance of durable principals of judgement and practice generated by an actor's early life experiences and modified apprentices to a greater or lesser degree later in life... The habitus is a mechanism linking individual action and the macro structural settings within which future action is taken. (Emirbayer, M, & Johnson, V. 2008, P 4)

In attempting to explore the 'conditions of existence' for individuals in FECs it is useful to understand the historical and cultural backdrop to their existence. Over 40 years ago, innovative and enthusiastic individuals combined with members of a local community to tackle socio-economic problems through education. Individuals such as Anton Trant, Margaret Mac curtain, Tommy Phelan, Jerome Morrissey, and many others, set out on a mission to create a better environment for a young population. These enlightened individuals knew something had to be done for this generation of educationally disadvantaged. A culture of course development was born and a new system, where teachers and communities collaborated in the development of beneficial educational programmes, flourished. The Curriculum Development Unit was established and provided a platform for teachers to become more involved in their work.

From this current research it is evident the development continued unabated for more than 30 years and contributed to the creation of many new, exciting and often unique courses in the FE sector. European Social Funding gave great support to this development however there was a lack of certification within the Irish education system and this was often sought abroad, usually from the UK. In recent years it appears the development of higher education programmes within the

sector has ceased completely and it would seem this is a consequence of reshaping and restructuring of the FE sector. The process, of reshaping (some would say dismantling) the sector began in the early 90s with the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Awards and continued through to the establishment of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, SOLAS and the ETB's. Granville (2003) describes the FE system as a catalyst for a qualifications framework.

The growth of an *ad hoc* system of further education, incorporating a neglected adult and continuing education sector, has been a more recent development since the early 1980s. Yet, it has been this new and, until recently, informal sector that has been the catalyst for (if not the engine driving) both the rationale and the template for a qualifications framework. (P.260)

The Qualifications Education and Training Act 1999 was instrumental in setting the distinction or difference between one form of education and another and statutorily separated further education from higher education. The Act established three new statutory bodies; the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC) and from this point the educational environment was changing for those who had contributed to the great success stories within the PLC sector. Higher education courses were already being delivered within further education. Many teachers across the sector had become fully engaged and involved in the development of these courses and were duly proud of their success.

The NQAI engaged in a public consultation process and asked interested bodies for their opinions and beliefs with regard to further and higher education and specifically whether or not they should be separated. It is apparent from the submissions provided (above) the consensus stated there should be no separation and the distinction should be blurred. This following was my own submission regarding FE and HE.

The philosophical differences should revolve around levels rather than trying to differentiate on the characteristics of further and higher education. In many cases further education is higher education and higher education is further education. There should be overlap, and differentiation should focus on learners' abilities to describe, apply and critically analyse. In an era of lifelong and continuing education any other distinctions between HE and FE are unhelpful and unwelcome. (Murray, 2002)

Stone (2012) argues against the separation of vocational and higher education in the UK and states the distinction should be eliminated as it seems to hinder student development and economic growth.

Perceptions of what further education is can often be quite confused in Ireland and this is not helped by the constant referral to the sector as a 'second chance' type of education. The media have had no small part to play in this perception and seem to treat the sector as a second best option for those who weren't good enough to attain third level education through the CAO system. To this day they refer to the sector as Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) colleges even though they have been re-categorised as Colleges of Further Education for more than a decade. This would suggest a lack of interest from key national informants. It could be argued it is part of a national snobbery which has been previously alluded to in this research. Still it is important to have a clear and broadly accepted definition of further education. The confusion is unhelpful and for many who have worked in the sector quite insulting.

This is not to say there is no definition of FE in Ireland. The NQAI (2003) defined further education and training 'as those at levels one through six on the National Framework of Qualifications and higher education as those at levels six through 10'. The problem with this definition is that it could be viewed as a quantitative definition; 'level one through six' whereas a qualitative definition might be more appropriate. Further the source of the definition has an important part to play. Staunton (2009) makes the point that different levels of funding and qualifications 'give less agency to staff and learners' in FE and that this in turn has implications 'for expansion, differentiation and participation' in undergraduate education. Brown (2005) argues; that perspective is important and the perspective which is most dominant steers the focus of attention. In many cases the students lose out where structural change is the objective and dominates the modus operandi rather than what many would consider being the much more important factor of teaching and learning.

Until recently research on FE in Ireland has been both scant and overly quantitative in nature. A study by Watson, McCoy, and Gorby, (2006) focused on employment opportunities for learners in PLCs and gives no indication of what actually goes on within the sector. On the other hand the McIver report (2003), which made some worthwhile suggestions, was subsequently shelved by the Department of Education. For those who participated in this research it was a bitter pill to swallow and seemed to reiterate the Department's lack of interest in what was actually happening in FECs. Whether 'power relations' regarding practitioners in FECs was being prejudiced by 'organisational habitus' as defined by Bourdieu occupied some people's minds. If the premise was that FECs were indeed second chance educational institutions whose key role was to mop up the remnants of the CAO entrance system then the disregard may be understandable. However, the premise is false and most likely was built on a combination of inherent snobbery, poor research and misrepresentation in the media.

Traditions of vocational education and training had also been established through the years, but these have tended to be inferior in status and esteem (Granville, P.206. 2003)

A recent report by the HEA (2013) 'The Review of the Provision of Creative Arts Programmes in Dublin promotes greater links between further education and higher education particularly in the areas of art, culture and the media. The review addresses this misperception and points to the fact that '70 to 80% of FE teachers in the arts areas have a Master's or higher degree, with 6% holding PhDs. (P 41). The review also addresses the lack of connections between qualifications and the focus on institutions rather than the learner. This highlights the inappropriate separation of further and higher education. Bathmaker (2008) addresses the policy in the UK to provide greater access for learners and refers to greater links between FE and HE, particularly in the delivery in colleges and universities.

It has been noted (Clancy 2002, Granville 2003) that historically education and training have been seen as separate entities, in Ireland, with education being given greater esteem and therefore being the preferred choice for many Irish people.

The relative status of vocational education has been consistently lower than that of the academic or liberal education provided in the secondary school system. (Granville, 2003, P263)

However increasing participation rates, in the then PLC sector, led to the establishment of the NCVA in 1991 and subsequently FETAC in 1999. The key purpose of these organisations was to bring order to what Granville described as 'chaos within the sector'. But, as pointed out above, FECs had accumulated enough capital to attract participants and much of this capital for those FECs providing HE was cultural capital. The period of growth and development in FECs provided time for practitioners to establish their own peculiar culture which incorporated their own forms of capital and the opportunity to develop the field. As new entrants took their positions in the field they inherited these cultural attitudes and dispositions and created new forms of social capital within the field. This cultural capital included unique programmes of education which had a reputation with industry and potential learners alike. It seems much of the capital of FECs is either ignored or not recognised by dominant players in the field. As Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) put it;

Relevant in this context, moreover, are not only the volume and composition of an organization's capital in the present state of the field, but also its trajectory within the field over time, symbolic authority often (but by no means always) been attached to the most venerable establishments within the field rather than to the newcomers, challengers, or upstarts. (P. 12)

Participants in FECs have created their own special habitus which includes the perceptions, thoughts and actions that define their 'conditions of existence'.

The following section will draw conclusions from the findings and make some recommendations arising from the three key areas of investigation.

8.6 Conclusion: How and Why HE Programmes Developed

All teachers, deputy principals, principals agreed that the programmes developed through a combination of enthusiastic teachers, who had been encultured in programme development, and a perceived need to create a better environment for students to continue in their education. In fact many of the programmes developed within schools and colleges were later adapted by the new NCVA, later to become FETAC. Higher education programmes really developed by chance when teachers and principals began to seek certification for these newly developed programmes. This was because there was no certification body within the State for vocational awards prior to the establishment of the NCVA. Most of the certification came from the UK and was predominantly BTEC Edexcel certification. The first degree programme developed in a PLC was a one-year top up media programme accredited by Thames Valley University in London. While this model was common in the UK it was a first in Ireland and is still unique to just one College of Further Education within the State. This degree programme has been running for 20 years and is now accredited by Dublin City University.

8.6.1 The Role of Leadership in HE Course Development

Leadership for the development of these programmes dates back to the groundbreaking innovations of Anton Trant and the establishment of the Curriculum Development Unit. Vocational Preparation Training Programmes initially funded through ESF were originally quite standard and covered areas such as secretarial and preliminary engineering courses. However one PLC moved in the direction of arts culture and media and was instrumental in developing courses in Animation, Film, Radio and Television, Fiber-art, and Illustration amongst others. A number of people within this college were centrally involved but it would be fair to say that one principal stood out in the leadership of this development: Jerome Morrissey. He encouraged his staff to look to develop new programmes and when I approached him with the idea for a media production and management degree I got his full support. Similarly, principals in other colleges along with their teaching staff led the development of these courses. It is not clear what role if any the Department of Education played in the development of HE programmes. It may be

they were unaware of what was going on within the sector or simply adopted a wait and see approach to these developments. It has been stated the CDVEC gave tacit support by way of amicable education officers.

8.6.2 Perceived Need for HE in FE

Many reasons were proffered in relation to the need for these courses. They included demographic change in each college's locality, a falling off in numbers of students attending, and a need to create a better learning programme for students. However the majority stated it was for the betterment of students 'who had nowhere else to go'. It could be argued, in the case of one college, there was a personal drive to develop programmes in arts, culture and media as these courses hadn't existed before and concepts such as 'The Rock School' would have been considered somewhat avant-garde at the beginning of the 80s.

8.7 Conclusion: Levels of Success of HE within FE

The research suggests that these higher education programmes have been most successful with in excess of 7,000 students having attained higher education qualifications from one college alone over the past 22 years. Almost 1000 of these completed BA honour's degree level 8 programmes. While many of these graduates have gone on to work in industry as much as 25% continued to master's degree level and increasing numbers from this cohort have completed doctoral level studies. The success of these higher education programmes can also be measured by the increasing number of applications each year. Ballyfermot College has consistently had more than 5000 applicants for 1200 places over the past five years. This success is mirrored in all of the FECs that provide higher education programmes within the CDVEC. Students' testimonials promoting the courses continue to reinforce this success.

8.7.1 Advantage of an Alternative Path to HE

The key advantage to students pursuing these programmes is the manner in which they can access, transfer and progress within one college. Students normally enter at FETAC level 5 and progress through BTEC HND programmes and then the final degree year. The model is designed to be student friendly and allow students develop at their own pace. This is central to the philosophy of BTEC HND

programmes. Another advantage for students relates to the intimate nature of FECs. Smaller class sizes and greater one-on-one tuition and guidance enhance social capital for both the learners and the college. Students also remarked about the types of programmes being delivered and how they were more suited to what the students wanted. The concept of 'bait and switch' comes to mind when I think of courses like Music Management or Radio and Television Production because students may never have considered they would be studying subjects like Financial Planning, Law, Consumer Behaviour or Research Methods, all of which are fundamental to these programmes.

8.8 Conclusion: How might DES Policy Impact on HE in FE?

The Department of Education is not in favour of HE within FE but have agreed to allow legacy programmes continue. A block has been put on the development of any further programmes of HE that are intended to be delivered within FECs. Students past and present, teachers, principals and industry have all benefited from these programmes. New industries have been created in the State where employment is growing; examples would include Animation, Game Design and Illustration. These courses, which were developed within the FE sector, have been delivered for more than 20 years and are now being copied and delivered by the ITs. The success of these programmes is unquestionable as is the authenticity of those who developed them and it is wrong to penalize the students and the FECs by focusing on structure rather than pedagogy. It might be time the Department took an interest in what has been going on within the FEC sector and acknowledge the fact that alternative paths to higher education have contributed substantially to the socio-economic development of our country.

8.8.1 HE in FE under the remit of SOLAS

The problem with the future direction of both SOLAS and the ETBs is the overemphasis on jobs and skills. There seems to be little time for any form of thinking or cerebral activity. You may be able to train people to work in the cultural industries but in most cases they will only employ creative people. In other words people who think. Cognizance should be taken of the fact that in today's work environment a primary degree is necessary at basic entry level. The big question is; what type of job will a FETAC level five entitle the learner to? The

argument has been made that learners may progress to other HEIs to complete their education but in specific sectors such as arts culture and media those with the best cultural capital by way of experience qualifications and skills are well established within FECs.

8.9 Recommendations

This section will identify some of the limitations of the study and then go on to summarise the contribution the study has made. Finally it will present some recommendations for future researchers and particularly for those interested in the future of higher education within the FEC sector.

8.9.1 Limitations of the Research

This was a small-scale case study of FECs within the CDETB that provide courses of higher education. It was an interpretivist study and the data was intended to be descriptive and therefore help to explain the position of participants within the sector. It was never intended the study should be generalised to a broader cohort of FECs and therefore was bounded using the concept of Stake's *Graphic Illustration Model of a Case*. Data was collected from three separate sources using semi structured questionnaires and semi structured in-depth interviews with students, teachers, principals, and others considered expert in the field of further education. The research methodology was designed to provide triangulation which would highlight consensus of opinions, beliefs and attitudes. While every effort was taken to ensure validity this is still an interpretation although it is a shared interpretation with all who participated.

Another limitation was the absence of rich data from the Department of Education and their refusal to fully partake in the research. It would have been interesting to get a fuller understanding of their role in the evolution of higher education within the further education sector. The short script they provided, in answer to my questions, is very matter-of-fact and only relates to the present position. They totally ignored one of the most pertinent questions which asked whether there was any advantage to students pursuing higher education in FECs.

Finally there may have been voices omitted from the research who could have added either greater depth or another dimension not covered in the current data. Unfortunately I will never know but can only say that the greatest effort was made to ensure inclusivity for all who might have had something to say within the limited boundaries of the research case.

8.9.2 Contribution of the Research

There has been very little qualitative research in the PLC/FE sector and none that I could find looking at higher education provision within further education. This dearth of information and the gap that existed in the general information and understanding of the sector was the driving force for the research. As an insider I saw misinformation all of the time. It appeared the general public was unaware of what exactly was going on within the FE sector. Additionally it appeared the Department of Education didn't fully understand the developments within further education particularly in relation to the development and delivery of higher education courses. The 1999 Qualifications (Education and Training) Act gave statutory basis to further education and put in place a framework of bodies to regulate the sector. It was clear from this stage that HE in FE was not being considered within the new framework. There are two palpable reasons why this might be the case; the first being simply that they were unaware it existed and the second being the intention to abandon it. Either way the contribution of dedicated and enthusiastic principals and teachers in FECs, to the development of these new higher education programmes, was being sidestepped.

The data suggests higher education programmes were developed 'from the ground up', as Robinson (2013) identified by those who know best. Teachers saw the need for students to progress and provided attractive and appropriate courses to both retain students who had nowhere else to go and to meet the needs of new socio-economic structures. A healthy culture of programme development was encouraged and those involved amassed commensurate levels of Bourdieu's 'symbolic capital'. The high levels of involvement created feelings of ownership and pride which in turn reinforced a healthy FE sector.

The research also shows there was great success for students who partook in these courses with many students continuing to master's degree level and some to PhDs. The ever-increasing number of applicants for these courses is also testament to their success with students opting for FEC places as a first choice in higher education. Student voices are central to this research and are given priority over more quantitative and structure based research. This insight into students' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and opinions about HE in FE presents an aspect never fully explored before. It is because of this success I believe FE colleges should continue to provide courses of HE and the sector should be developed with full recognition and appropriate structural and resource supports.

An insight was also provided into the affective aspect of teachers and principals involved in the provision of HE in FE. It is important to engage with the feelings and emotions and to ensure they are fully understood. In my opinion this has never been properly addressed in any previous research. The health of the human resource in any organisation is probably the most important concern for effective and efficient operations. The research suggests governance took little or no accord of those involved, for years, in the strategic development and implementation of a range of highly successful programmes of higher education in FECs. Confusion, malaise, demotivation and elements of alienation are all consequences of being ignored. This is not good practice.

8.9.3 Final Recommendations

A large cohort of educationalists seems to have been left behind and an anomalous situation exists within a number of FECs who provide higher education programmes. It would seem sensible to allow FECs to continue to develop and deliver higher education programmes especially where that experience already exists and quality assurance procedures are in place. Principals and teachers are closest to the action and therefore in a better position to understand the needs of their learners. While it is the Government's intention to consolidate education provision and ensure there is no overlap; the concept of 'best course provider' should not be overlooked. The Department of Education may believe it is undesirable 'that third level courses should be offered through further education colleges' because of 'large scale duplication' and mission drift but maybe the

mission as articulated by the Department for FE is wrong and does not reflect the true nature of the sector. As for duplication it should be remembered many of these courses were created and developed within the FE sector and later adopted by other HEIs particularly Institutes of Technology. Therefore duplication is not the fault of FECs. The Department also claims this creates confusion and 'would ill serve the needs of learners seeking to reskill and up skill'. This has been disproved in this research which shows that students fully understand what is on offer in FECs. While the Department is committed to the development of linkages between FE and HE and progression transfer and access between the sectors through the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) they have chosen to ignore the great benefits students have found in being able to do this within the FEC sector and often within one college. Again the needs of students seems to be ignored i.e., their preference for local education, small class sizes and a more friendly and less intimidating environment in which to learn. This research has also shown the relatively small progression from FE to HE through this scheme.

Funding for the sector is provided by the Department under the terms of the PLC scheme. It might be timely to review this and properly fund FECs who have successfully provided courses in higher education and with appropriate quality assurance is in place.

Finally it is important that education and training retain their respective meanings and philosophical base. The amalgamation of education and training may well be common across Europe and very much part of European directives for the creation and maintenance of employment prospects. However education is fundamentally different to training and it is my opinion that education is about expanding the mind and developing the ability to conceptualise and therefore be creative and innovative. Training does not do this. I would suggest that further research should be conducted to investigate the differences between education and training in the Irish education system which engages with practitioners. The possibility now exists for a broad-based project of action research involving practitioners in the creation of their role, future and position within the field of further education in Ireland.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: The evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

I confirm that I have read and understand the above information on this study and am willing to participate as part of this research.

Name of participant

Organisation

Signature

Date

Please return to Denis Murray, 48 Summerville, Clontarf, Dublin 3 in enclosed stamped addresses envelopes.

APPENDIX B

Plain Language Statement

1. Introduction to the Research Study

My name is Denis Murray and I am in the third year of a four year Doctoral Programme in Education at Dublin City University. The purpose of this research is to investigate evolutionary change in Further Education (FE) within the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) sector with a particular emphasis on the development of Higher Education (HE) courses within the CDVEC. My objective is to understand what role leadership played in this development and identify opportunities of best practice in structures of management/leadership and how these might integrate with the Government decision to create a new authority 'with responsibility for the coordination and funding of Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland'. (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p. 1)

I want to understand how the current situation has come about where a variety of HE courses are now available in FE, up to and including level 8 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. I want to explore how contextual and historical situations brought about a perceived need for a change in the approach to paths in continuing education. I hope to gain an understanding of how these courses are perceived in terms of success by both Teachers who contributed to their development and students who undertook the courses of study. I also want to investigate whether these courses should continue and be retained within the newly developing sector of FET or if they belong purely within the HE sector.

2. Indicative Content of Interviews

- a) To what extent to does higher education exist within further education colleges in the CDVEC?
- b) How and why did these higher education programmes develop?
- c) What was the perceived need for these higher education programmes?
- d) What role if any did leadership play in the development of HE in FE?
- e) How successful have these higher education programmes been?

- f) Is there any advantage for students pursuing a path to higher education within further education?
- g) Should colleges of further education continue to deliver higher education programmes?
- h) How might colleges of further education best accommodate higher education programmes within the remit of the proposed new bodies of SOLAS and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDET B)?

3. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require

I am using a qualitative research methodology using an interview method of data collection. I hope that the interview will be more of a conversation about the role lasting between 45 to 60 minutes at a time and place suitable to the participant. I would appreciate the permission of the participant to tape this interview and I will return a fully word -processed copy to them which they can feel free to amend if necessary.

4. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research

I guarantee that all information given by the participants in this research will be treated as strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of this study. In writing up the final thesis I will protect the anonymity of all participants at all times. .

5. Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study

I see this research doing a number of things. It should answer the following questions and therefore raise awareness and provide an understanding of higher education provision in the Post Leaving Certificate / Further Education sector. It will provide a new insight into the sector's contribution to continuing education and facilitation of new pathways to higher education.

Secondly it will help establish recognition and some sense of 'parity of esteem'. Again the contribution of the sector has proved highly successful and there is a growing body of evidence of learner success coming through what would have been considered 'non-traditional' pathways of education.

Finally I hope to gain a personal expertise on the development and continuing evolution of the sector where my contributions may help craft new strategies for the future.

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

All transcripts of interviews and tapes will be destroyed as soon as the researcher receives confirmation from Dublin City University that the research has been accepted for the thesis of the Professional Doctoral Programme.

7. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Participation in the Research Study is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

APPENDIX C

Interview Request Letter

Name
Title
Address 1
Address 2

Date

Dear,

Following my phone call to your office today, I am writing to ask if you would be kind enough to grant me an interview. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education at DCU and am writing to request your participation in this research. My thesis topic is a case study of Higher Education in Further Education titled: *The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: The evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the CDVEC.*

Participation will involve an in-depth semi-structured interview of 1 hour duration and / or completion of a questionnaire. No more than an hour of your time will be required. I will be taping the interview, and transcribing it to be used solely for the purpose of my doctoral study. As such, only you, course tutors and examiners will have access to it. I will let you have a draft copy of the transcript beforehand so you may make any amendments or propose suggestions for any changes. Of course you will have the right to withdraw at any time. If you are agreeable, I suggest the interview be held at your office at a time that is convenient to you.

The study which has been sanctioned by our CEO Ms Jacinta Steward will be published as part of a doctoral thesis and it is hoped will help to inform and progress education and training in the FE sector in Ireland. All information collected about you or your institution will be kept completely confidential and any information from you used in the study will have your name removed and that of your institution so you cannot be identified. I have attached a plain language statement of the research. Please indicate below if you are willing to participate in this research on the form attached and return to me in enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Kind Regards,

Denis Murray, BA, MBS.
Doctor of Education Candidate,
Department of Educational Studies, Dublin City University
00-353-1-6298516 (Office)
00-353-87-2426364 (Mobile)

APPENDIX D

Board of Management Permission Request Letter

Councilor Vincent Jackson
Chair Board of Management
Ballyfermot College of Further Education
Dublin 10

20th February 2012

Dear Vincent,

I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education at DCU and as part of that I am researching the Further Education sector in Ireland. As such, I wish to seek permission to carry out research within Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

The research will involve mainly interviews and some surveys. The data will be used solely for the purpose of my doctoral study and the CDVEC, course tutors and examiners will have access to it. All materials will be checked for accuracy and anonymity will be used where required.

Yours sincerely

Denis Murray

Assistant Principal
Course Chair BA (Hons) Media Production Management
BFEC
Ballyfermot Road
Dublin 10
00-353-1-6298516 (Office)
00-353-87-2426364 (Mobile)

Email: <denis.murray@bfec.cdvec.ie>

APPENDIX E

CEO CDVEC Permission Request Letter

Jacinta Stewart
Chief Executive Officer
City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
Town Hall
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

16th April 2012

Dear Jacinta,

I am writing to request permission to carry out research on the Post Leaving Certificate / Further Education sector within the CDVEC. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education at DCU and my thesis topic is a case study of Higher Education in Further Education titled: *The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: The evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.*

The methodology will be qualitative using a case study consisting of semi structured, in-depth interviews, with a small number of relevant stakeholders, a survey of students pursuing higher education in colleges of further education and a survey of Teachers within the further education sector. I will also include official documents and archival records relating to the development, validation and accreditation of HE programmes in FE.

All participants will be forwarded a 'Plain Language Statement' of the research and an 'Informed Consent' form. Participation in this research will be voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Of course all data will be confidential and only gathered for the purpose of the research project. Anonymity will also be assured.

I would appreciate your permission to conduct this research as I believe it will raise awareness and provide an understanding of higher education provision in the Post Leaving Certificate / Further Education sector. It will provide a new insight into the sector's contribution to continuing education and facilitation of new pathways to higher education. The contribution of the sector has proved highly successful and there is a growing body of evidence of learner success coming through what would have been considered 'non-traditional' pathways of education.

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Denis Murray BA, MBS.
Assistant Principal
Course Director BA (Hons) Media Production Management
BFEC
Ballyfermot Road
Dublin 10

00-353-1-6298516 (Office)
00-353-87-2426364 (Mobile)

Email: <denis.murray@bfec.cdvec.ie

APPENDIX F

Student Survey

Why did you choose to come to Named College rather than any other college?

- I couldn't get in anywhere else.
- Named College had the type of course I wanted.
- Named College has a good reputation in the area I wanted to pursue.
- Other (please specify)



1. What is the highest level of education you have completed here at Named College?

- FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)
- BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)
- Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)
- FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)
- BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate National Qualifications Framework)

2. How would you describe your experience at Named College?

- | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't know | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Named College had the type of course I wanted. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
Named College is best placed to deliver the programme I studied.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College showed good personal attention and support.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lecturers and Teachers were well equipped to teach their specialist subjects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College met with my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learnt a lot about my particular field of study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)					

3. How would you describe your impression of what Named College is?

- A secondary school.
- A third level institution.
- A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.
- A College of Further Education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).
- A College of Further and Higher education (an alternative third level institution).

Other (please specify)

5. What advantage if any do you think Named College has over other colleges providing courses similar to the ones you completed in the college? Please write a few sentences explaining below.

4. Should Named College be allowed continue developing and delivering higher level courses such as BTEC HND and

Degree programmes or should they be confined to further education at FETAC level 5 and 6?

- Yes. Named College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework
- Don't know
- No. Named College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the National Qualifications Framework/

Other (please specify)

7. Do you think Named College is disadvantaged in any way? If so in what way and what should be done about it?

8. What do you think is the general understanding the public have of Named College? Do you think it has a reputation for anything?

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned
Named College has a good reputation and is a leader for Media Production.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for					

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned
the Rock School (Music Performance Management and Sound)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Animation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Social Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Art Design and Graphics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Travel and Tourism and Reception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Television and Film	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Engineering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Business Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named is well renowned for Life Long Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)					



9. Do you think Named is different from other Colleges?

	Stronly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree
Named College provides courses other colleges do not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College is different in the way courses are delivered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College has contributed to the development of the cultural industries in Ireland e.g., media, art, animation and games, film, TV, Radio etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

An empty rectangular text box with a light gray background and a thin border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

10. Having completed the questions above please write a few sentences about what Named College has done for you. What you think of the place and how it might develop in the future. Any thoughts or words are helpful.

An empty rectangular text box with a light gray background and a thin border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

APPENDIX G

Teacher Survey

1. What levels of course do you teach or lecture on here in Named College?

- What levels of course do you teach or lecture on here in Named College? FETAC Level 5 National Qualification Framework
- BTEC National Diploma level 5 National Qualification Framework
- BTEC Higher National Diploma level 6 (Higher Certificate) National Qualification Framework
- BA (Hons) Degree level 8 National Qualification Framework
- Other (please specify)



2. Were you in the past or are you now involved in the development of courses, modules programmes here in Named College?

- FETAC level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)
- FETAC level 6 (Advanced Certificate National Qualifications Framework)
- BTEC National Diploma level 5 (National Qualifications Framework)
- BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 6 (Higher Certificate NQF)
- Degree (Hons) level 8 (National Qualifications Framework)
- Never contributed to the development of any courses in the College
Please give a brief description of your involvement



3. How and why do you think Named College developed higher education programmes up to level 8 on the National Qualification Framework?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / Maybe	Agree	Strongly agree
There was a perceived need coming from the students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The survival of the school was threatened.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internal management leadership was central to the development	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certain Teachers were motivated to develop new courses and led them out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CDVEC encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Don't know / Maybe

Agree

Strongly agree

The Department of Education encouraged and showed leadership in the development of new courses

Other (please specify)

4. How successful have these higher education programmes been for students of Named College?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Don't know

Agree

Strongly agree

Named College has the type of courses students want.

Named College is best placed to deliver the courses it does.

Named has a good reputation for the courses they deliver.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Don't know

Agree

Strongly agree

Students gain an advantage by pursuing a pathway to higher education within Named College.

Lecturers and Teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach their specialist subjects.

Named College is successful in what it does.

Named College is a leader in the development and delivery of these types of courses.

Named College approaches teaching and learning in a positive and interesting way.

Please add any other particular comment you'd like to make.

5. How would you describe your impression of what type of educational institution Named College is?

- How would you describe your impression of what type of educational institution Named College is? A secondary school.
 - A third level institution.
 - A second chance education and training institution for unemployed and academic underachievers.
 - A College of Further Education (somewhere between a secondary school and a third level institution).
 - A College of Further and Higher education (an alternative third level institution).
- Other (please specify)

6. Should Named College be allowed continue developing and delivering higher level courses such as BTEC HND and Degree programmes or should they be confined to further education at FETAC level 5 and 6 (Advanced Certificate)?

- Yes. Named College should be allowed develop and deliver higher level courses up to and including (Hons) Degree level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework
- Don't know
- No. Named College should be confined to delivering courses at further education level to level 6 Advanced Certificate on the NQF

Other (please specify)

7. Do you think Named College is disadvantaged in any way? If so in what way and what should be done about it?

8. What do you think is the general understanding the public have of Named College? Do you think it has a reputation for anything?

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned or known	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned and recognised
Named College has a good reputation and is well renowned for Media Production.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for the Rock School (Music Performance Management and Sound)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Animation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	No one knows about it	No not well renowned or known	Don't know / maybe	Yes well renowned	Yes very well renowned and recognised
good reputation and is well renowned for Social Care					
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Art Design and Graphics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Travel and Tourism and Reception	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Television and Film	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Engineering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Business Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

No one knows about it **No not well renowned or known** **Don't know / maybe** **Yes well renowned** **Yes very well renowned and recognised**

Named has a good reputation and is well renowned for Life Long Learning

Other (please specify)

9. Do you think Named is different from other Colleges?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know / maybe	Agree	Strongly agree
Named College provides courses other colleges do not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College has a reputation with industry that helps students get work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College is different in the way courses are delivered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named College has contributed to the development of the cultural industries in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Don't know / maybe

Agree

Strongly agree

Ireland e.g.,
media, art,
animation and
games, film,
TV, Radio etc.

Other (please specify)

10. Having completed the questions above please write a few sentences about where you think Named College is going. What you think of the place and how it might develop in the future particularly in respect of new developments like SOLAS and the CDETB.. Any thoughts or words are helpful.

APPENDIX H

Interview Schedule

Leadership

- 1) Could I ask you to tell me about your personal background – early family life, school life, later education and other key influencers?**

What were your memories of being a child? What interested you? Were your family strong influencers? Do you remember any particular Teachers and what did you think about them? What sort of games did you play as a young boy? Did you have a best friend and/or a couple of close friends? How do you think any of this early part of your life might have shaped the person you are today?

- 2) What was your early working life like? What was your plan when you left education?**

How would you describe your first experiences in the work place? What stood out or what did you learn in your first few months in the job? Did the role meet with your expectations? What promotional ambitions did you hold? Had you any specific ideas about your career development? What influences would have contributed to where you are today?

- 3) How did you prepare for your leadership role with Named Organisation?**

Were there conscious and deliberate actions you took to achieve the position? How hard was it to get the position? What helped? Were there any colleagues, friends or superiors who either inspired or supported you? Were there any barriers or obstacles which you had to overcome? What was your experience of the application process?

4) Tell me about your earliest experiences of being CEO with Named Organisation.

How did you feel when you were offered the position? How confident were you about how you would fulfill the role? Did you find it challenging? Were there any aspects of the job that you felt might be overwhelming? What would have been the most significant issue you had to deal with in your first year as CEO? Were you happy with the outcome? What do you feel you learnt in that first year? What advice would you give someone embarking on a new leadership position?

5) What was your plan for Named Organisation?

Did you have a specific vision of the future? What goals did you set? Do you think your own values influenced these objectives? How did you go about implementing these goals? What sorts of changes were made? Were there any environmental factors either internal or external to the organization that made it difficult? How successful do you think you have been? What would you change?

6) What type of a leader or manager are you?

Can you describe the style of management you most employ? What are your thoughts about leadership styles? What do you believe makes a good leader? Can you give me an example of a situation where leadership skills were important in a decision you made for the organization? How much do you think your own values, beliefs or opinions influence your management style? How do you instill leadership skills in others? Are there any particular competencies you believe necessary to being a good leader?

7) To whom are you accountable?

Who are the key stakeholders? What roles do they have? How would you describe your interactions with them? What formal structures of reportage are there?

8) What do you do to maintain your own personal and professional development?

How are you informed? What type of exercises do you undertake to keep on top of things? Have you experienced overload and or stress? How do you deal with this? What parts of the job are most stressful or difficult?

9) How have things changed in Further Education?

What have you seen to be the most significant changes in the sector? Do you believe these are good for Irish education? How do you think they might contribute to the future of the country?

10) What would you like to see for the future of Further Education in Ireland?

Are there any areas where you think improvements could be made? Where do you see Named Organisation in ten years? What would you like to see achieved?

APPENDIX I

Interview schedule

The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: the evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the CDVEC.

- **To what extent does higher education exist within further education colleges in the CDVEC?**

How many higher education programmes do you have?

What levels are they on the NQF grid?

What percentage of HE programmes is being delivered in this college?

How long have they been running?

- **How and why did these higher education programmes develop?**

Can you remember when these courses began to develop?

How did they evolve? Was there a strategy or was it an ad-hoc development?

Why were they developed?

What was the process for their development; were there any procedures?

Were there any Teachers in particular involved in the development?

Do you believe higher education should be part of vocational education?

What is your understanding of the vocational / academic divide?

- **What was the perceived need for these higher education programmes?**

Was there a perceived need for the development of these programmes?

What was the perceived need? Was access to education a factor? Was competition a factor?

Was there a demand from the student cohort or any other 'learner stakeholder'?

Was there a gap in the provision of any of these courses?

Was there any environmental or social factors influencing the perceived need?

Did the issue of school survival have anything to do with it?

- **What role did leadership play in the development of HE in FE?**

Was there any leadership factors involved in the development of these courses?

Were there any individuals who showed such leadership?

Where did the leadership come from? How did it work?

Was there any official external leadership from either the Dept. or the CDVEC?

- **How successful have these higher education programmes been?**

How would you rate these programmes in terms of success?

What about participation and access?

What type of post-delivery data do you have for students of these courses?

Have numbers of applicants increased?

What impact have these courses had on the college?

- **Is there any advantage for students pursuing a path to higher education within further education?**

Do you think students gain any advantage by pursuing HE programmes in a FEC?

What would those advantages be?

Are there any disadvantages?

- **Should colleges' of further education continue to deliver higher education programmes?**

Do you believe colleges of further education should continue to provide these courses?

Why? What role does politics play?

Are there any values which might impact on the delivery of HE in FE?

- **How might colleges' of further education best accommodate higher education programmes within the remit of the proposed new bodies of SOLAS and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb)?**

What do you think we should do now?

What do you think will happen?

Should programme development be part of what we do?

Is programme development a motivating factor for Teachers?

Appendix J

Research Approval Ethics Committee

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Mr Denis Murray
School of Education
Studies
17th July 2012

REC Reference: DCUREC/2012/099

Proposal Title: The case of Higher Education provision in Further Education: The evolution of Higher Education in the Post Leaving Certificate sector of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee

Applicants: Dr. Gerry McNamara, Mr. Denis Murray

Dear Denis

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal. Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,



Donal O'Mathuna

Dr. Donal O'Mathuna
Chairperson

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
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DCU Research Ethics Committee

Appendix K

Response from the Department of Education

The Department is committed to the development of linkages between the further and higher education sectors by improving access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners between the two sectors. For example, through the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs), PLC courses provide an alternative access route to higher education.

It is not desirable that third level courses should be offered through further education colleges. The provision of third level courses by further education colleges could lead to large scale duplication with the Institute of Technology sector. This would also create confusion about the mission of the respective sectors which would ill serve the needs of learners seeking to re-skill and upskill.

Further Education colleges are approved Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) centres which are managed and funded by VECs from grants provided by the Department. Under the terms and conditions of the PLC Scheme, courses provided by approved PLC centres must be at QQAI (formerly FETAC) Level 5 or 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or equivalent.

This Department has facilitated the provision of a small number of courses as the equivalent of a Level 7 or 8 award on the NFQ in further education colleges for a number of years however such arrangements were agreed and are continued as an exceptional measure.

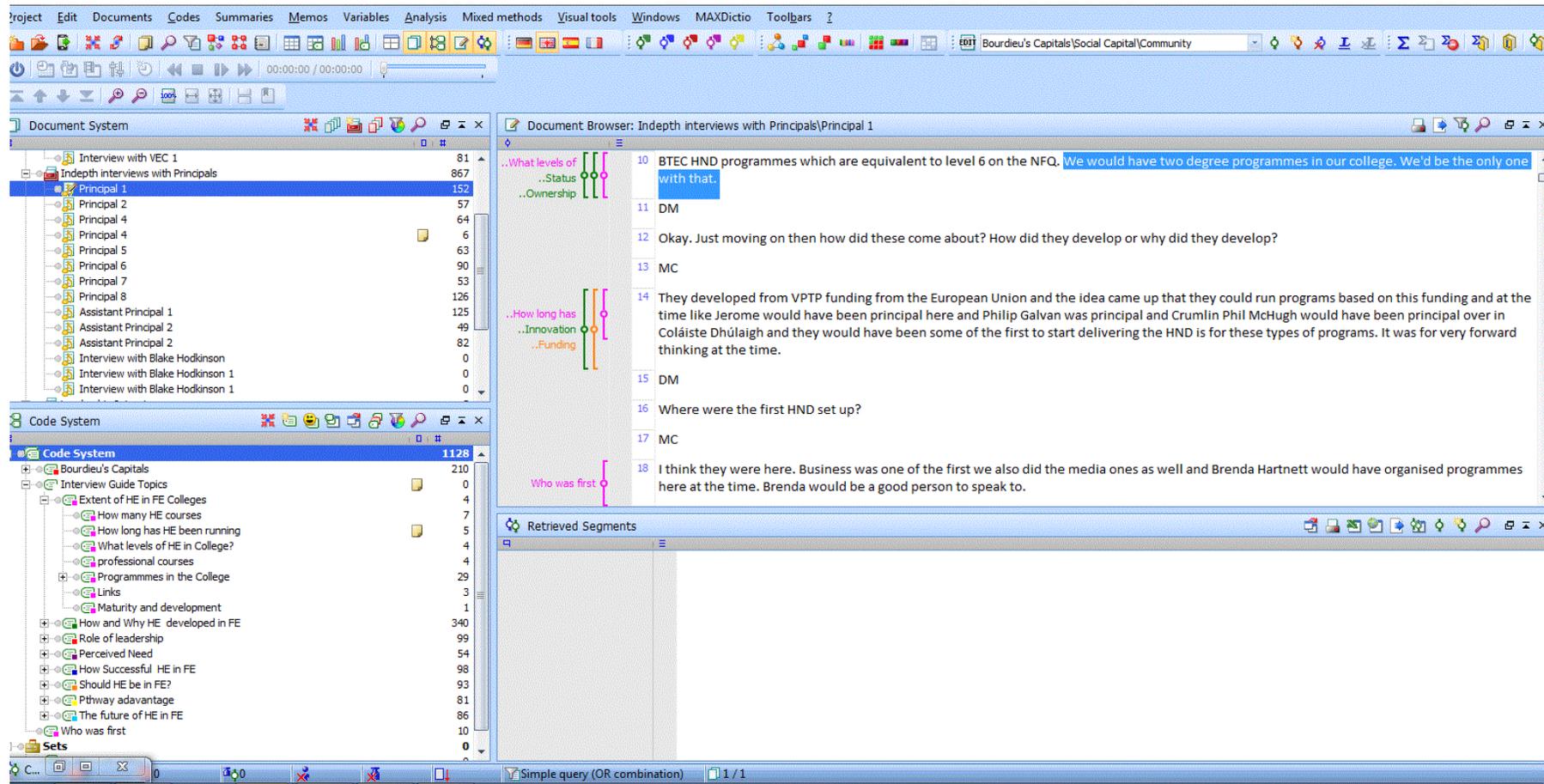
However, it is open to further education colleges to come to an agreement with a higher education college to operate as an outreach centre for that college. The course offered would be accredited by the higher education institution and the funding provided by the HEA for the course. This would ensure that students would be able to access maintenance grants and have the same rights as other third level students.

The function of SOLAS, upon its establishment, will be to manage, co-ordinate and support the delivery of integrated Further Education and Training by Education and Training Boards, to monitor delivery and provide funding based on good data and positive outcomes and to promote Further Education and Training provision that is relevant to individual learner needs and national skills needs.

APPENDIX L

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

	1	2	3	4	5
HE qualifications as set out in the FHEQ	FHEQ level	Minimum credits*	Minimum credits at the level of the qualification	FQ-EHEA cycles	ECTS credit ranges from the FQ-EHEA
PhD/DPhil	8	Not typically credit-rated		Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	Not typically credit-rated
Professional doctorates (only if credit based) (eg EdD, DBA, DCLinPsy)**		540	360		
Research master's degrees (eg MPhil, MLitt)	7	Not typically credit-rated		Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	The minimum requirement is 60 ECTS credits; however a range of 90-120 ECTS credits is more typical at second cycle level
Taught MPhil		360	240		
Taught master's degrees (eg MA, MSc, MRes)		180	150		
Integrated master's degrees (eg MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm)***		480	120		
Postgraduate diplomas		120	90		
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		60	40		
Postgraduate certificates		60	40		
Bachelor's degrees with honours (eg BA/BSc Hons)	6	360	90	First cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	180-240 ECTS credits
Bachelor's degrees		300	60		
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)****		60*****	40		
Graduate diplomas		80	80		
Graduate certificates		40	40		
Foundation Degrees (eg FdA, FdSc)	5	240	90	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications	approximately 120 ECTS credits
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)		240	90		
Higher National Diplomas (HND)		240	90		
Higher National Certificates (HNC)*****	4	150	120		
Certificates of Higher Education (Cert HE)		120	90		



APPENDIX M

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