The Professional Development needs of appointed Middle Leaders in Education and Training Board, Post-Primary Schools.

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

Signed: _Siobhán Kavenagh_   ID No.: 16211569   Date:

Abstract

Siobhán Kavanagh
**The Professional Development needs of appointed Middle Leaders in   Educati
on and Training Board, Post-Primary Schools.**

Professional Development is an intrinsic element to ensure that teachers are
effective. It supports teachers to effectively evolve and adapt in their classroom
practice to respond to change; in society, curricula and student needs. However,
achieving high quality PD which simultaneously meets the needs of the teacher and
the school community is a complex matter and one which has been described as a
"wicked problem" (Louis *et al.,* 1999, p.56).

When teachers assume an appointed, middle leader role, they have the potential to
influence both policy and practice and are central to the implementation of new
practices. This role requires an additional skillset to that needed by a classroom
teacher. However, many teachers do not receive appropriate training or guidance
(Irvine and Brundrett, 2016). Pressures from the top and the bottom of the school
system make the role of ML a challenging one (Irvine and Brundrett, 2016) and
specific development and support is required to ensure MLs are to reach their
potential (Fleming, 2012).

A thematic literature review of relevant peer-reviewed literature from the past ten
years and seminal work in the field of middle leaders and teachers' PD was
undertaken for this study.

This pragmatic research involved exploratory sequential Quantitative > qualitative
elements. The Quantitative research was informed by a set of five semi-structured
interviews that were used as an instrument development for the online surveys. It
was envisaged that the use of both methods would increase the validity of the
research and provide a deeper understanding of AP1 post holders PD needs. The
focus however was clear; the quantitative data from the web interviews was
paramount. The findings were subsequently presented to 10 post holders to verify
them and to gain further insight.

The development of MLs can be supported by five elements: career self-
management, principal support, provision of leadership programmes, supportive
school culture and clearly defined roles (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013). These needs are
reflected in the findings and subsequent recommendations of this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Glossary of Acronyms

AP	Assistant Principal
APST	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
ATECI	Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuing/Continuous Professional Development
CPED	Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate
CSL	Centre for School Leadership
DCU	Dublin City University
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DL	Distributed Leadership
EdD	Educational Doctorate
ESCI	Education Support Centres of Ireland
ETB	Education and Training Board
ICDU	In-Career Development Unit
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals Network
LAOS	Looking at Our Schools
MHAI	Mental Health Awareness Initiative
ML	Middle Leader
MLiS	Middle Leadership in Schools
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCTM	National Council of Teachers of Maths
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PD	Professional Development
PDSL	Post Graduate Diploma is School Leadership
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PL	Professional Learning
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SDPI	School Development Planning Initiative

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SL	Senior Leaders
SLSS	Second Level Support Service
SPHE	Social Personal and Health Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
TC	Teaching Council
TES	Teacher Education Section
TL	Teacher Leaders
TL21	Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Statement of Purpose

"Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death" (Albert
Einstein).

Imparting or acquiring knowledge and skills is not confined to our formal schooling
and is a concept that should be viewed as a lifelong endeavour. As part of my lifelong
endeavour to learn, this study has been completed as part of the requirement of a
Professional Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Evaluation in Dublin City
University (DCU). Professional doctorates have grown in popularity over the past 20
years (Lunt, 2018) and are seen to develop 'researching professionals' as opposed
to 'professional researchers' who would traditionally be associated with a PhD
(Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001, p.81). The Carnegie Project (CPED) (a
consortium of over 100 colleges and schools of Education in the US and Canada)
undertook a critical examination of doctorates and concluded that the aim of
professional doctorates should be to,

> develop scholarly practitioners who possess the abilities to not only
> engage in effective inquiries of practice, but also apply research
> findings to improve educational settings and advocate in policy arenas
> (Hochbein and Perry, 2013, p.183).

Therefore, I chose a topic informed by my experience as a practitioner, a Middle
Leader (ML) in a second level (Education and Training Board (ETB)) school, for this
research. Hochbein and Perry (2013) explain that topics for Educational Doctorates
(EdDs) must be universal topics (on which robust literature exists) rather than unique
topics (where solutions rely on local contexts). A significant volume of literature is
available on leadership in the education system. The role of the EdD is to enable a
researcher to "decipher, debate and design" (p.186) and to find "practical solutions to
address pressing universal problems of practice" (p.187). The universal problem of
practice in this study is that of identifying the professional development (PD) needs of
appointed middle leaders in ETB schools.

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is the national representative body for
Ireland's 16 ETBs (previously VEC's). ETBs are statutory education authorities which
have responsibilities that include the management and operation of 245 of the
country's post primary schools. In accordance with Section 8 (4) of the 1998

Education Act, the ETB is the patron of the school and shall discharge all the functions of the patron as set out under relevant legislation. DES funding for each school is administered through and allocated by the ETB.

This study is an opportunity for me to bring together theory and practice, to move beyond the school setting and examine through the 'research lens' a complex problem (Lunt, 2018) informed by my professional experience.

1.2   Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the Professional Development needs of appointed middle leaders in schools under the management of ETBs. The impetus for this study derived from my own personal experience (as an AP1 post holder in an ETB school) and the crucial role that PD played in my career. A recognition of the merit and value on research led practice was an important factor in pursuing PD opportunities to fulfil my professional needs.

This study is underpinned by an interest in an employee-centric management strategy (Hoogervorst, 2017). This strategy is championed by the founder of Virgin, Richard Branson. He espouses that if you take care of your employees, they in turn will take care of your business. This strategy also highlights the importance of developing the next generation of people-centric leaders. This is achieved by "providing appropriate experience, feedback and reflection" (Peters, 2019, p.119); through training, on the job experience and coaching. This would validate that providing appropriate training or PD opportunities to leaders is an initial step in developing their leadership capabilities. As a researcher, I wish to gain a greater understanding of the PD needs of appointed MLs, so that they can better serve their needs, which is providing for the needs of their students.

Day *et al.* (2007) explain that PD is a key element in ensuring that teachers are effective and that they can change and adapt their classroom practice to respond to changes in society, curricula and student needs. In addition to improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools, PD is instrumental in maintaining the motivation and interest of teachers. The interest in and engagement with PD has grown worldwide over the past 20-25 years (Anglin-Lawlor, 2014) and is a topic of relevance and discussion in many educational policies (Banks and Smyth, 2011). Furthermore,

discussions on the topic of school improvement invariably include high quality PD as an essential component (Mitchell and Sackney, 2011).

The provision of high-quality PD, which simultaneously meets the needs of the teacher and the school community, is a complex matter and one which has been described as a "wicked problem" (Louis, Toole and Hargreaves, 1999, p.56). Wicked problems are "generally seen as complex, open-ended, and intractable. Both the nature of the 'problem' and the preferred 'solution' are strongly contested. (Head, 2008, p.101). Wicked problems "come with built-in complexities that make them doubly difficult" (Packanowsky, 1995, p.37). McConnell states that despite the different definitions, there is consensus that wicked problems are "highly complex; there are no clear solutions available, and information about the likely impact of any interventions is limited" (2016, p.1). The specific school contexts and their specific leadership responses have been identified as important influencing factors on teacher learning (Day *et al.*, 2016) which further complicates the provision of PD. The complex nature of PD highlights the need for further research, as it is central to the provision of and enhancement of effective teachers (Day, 1999). Guskey (2002) concluded that significant improvements in education rarely transpire without PD.

PD has been recognised as a significant requirement for the education system and for the individuals that constitute the system. PD can assist to keep a teacher upskilled and motivated. PD also supports the development of Communities of Practice (CoP) where valuable knowledge and skills can be imparted or shared. Teachers in Irish schools appear to have varying needs for personal and professional development. They should be supported to enable them to adapt to changes in curricula and society. This can be particularly important if the teacher assumes a new role which will require a different skill set. PD policy and practice should cater for these needs while also supporting the requirements of the education system as a whole; a highly complex and difficult task.

1.2.1   Personal Need for PD

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today" (Malcolm X).

Teachers and school leaders face many challenges — new curricula, assessment approaches and technologies — while also catering for the diverse learning needs of students (Forlin and Chambers, 2017; Timperley, 2011). School leavers are expected to have more complex and analytical skills to be prepared for the workforce of the 21st century (Darling-Hammond *et al.,* 2019, Shaked and Schechter, 2017). Saavedra and Opfer (2012) explored the needs of 21st century learners which subsequently creates a need for 21st century teachers. They argue that the traditional model of transition is not preparing students for a more complex world, but they acknowledge that assessing these skills is more difficult than assessing traditional rote learning. Implementing this change is likely to have implications for many elements of the education system, in particular teacher training and PD. Teaching 21st century skills requires a new kind of teaching by

> teachers who understand learning as well as teaching, who can address students' needs as well as the demands of their disciplines, and who can create bridges between students' experiences and curriculum goals. (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p.5)

As a teacher with 23 years of classroom experience, I have engaged in many forms of PD: whole school PD, online courses, face to face courses in education centres, a Master's in Educational Leadership and Management and currently a Professional Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Evaluation. The content of these courses has varied from changes in curriculum to first aid, health and safety, suicide prevention, mental health, classroom management, special educational needs, information technology, and educational leadership and management. Engaging in my own personal and professional learning has been the key to keeping me motivated and effective in the classroom and was essential to 'rust proof' (Berdie, 1971, p.45) me as an educator. Some of these courses were mandatory school and curriculum focused courses. Others were sought out to meet a professional or personal, self-identified need.

Individual teachers have different strengths and weaknesses and varying subjects, responsibilities and extra-curricular involvement. This would indicate that each teacher has a unique set of PD needs. When determining these, Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015) advocate for a teacher needs analysis and more teacher involvement in the planning process. PD needs can also vary throughout a teacher's

career. Therefore, differentiated models for career-long PD are suggested to transform schools for the 21st century (Collinson *et al.*, 2009).

1.2.2   Perceived Need for PD in Middle Leaders

PD opportunities can offer support at all stages of a teachers' career and its importance and provision has been the focus of recent policy and practice in Irish education. This focus begins at student teacher stage where practice and policy endeavour to achieve a "more coherent and consistent approach" to school placement (Hall *et al.*, 2018, p.16). It subsequently moves to newly appointed teachers (NQTs) and the structured development required by the Droichead initiative. Following initial and induction stages, the development of the National framework for Teachers Learning (Cosán) by The Teaching Council (TC), aims to formalise teacher's PD. This focus on a more strategic approach to the PD of teachers in the system indicates a gap in the provision for the specific PD needs of MLs, whose needs transcend that of a classroom teacher.

The current provision of PD following induction is general and is not bespoke to the teacher's career stage. Those who are at the mid-stage (7-30 years) do not appear to have a formal process which provides specific PD to cater for their needs. I was fortunate to be able to engage in PD opportunities to meet these needs at that stage of my career but a concern is that these opportunities are not accessible to all teachers. The research suggests that if this stage is not nourished it can lead to teachers disengaging and becoming unmotivated at a time when they have a wealth of craft knowledge that they can share with colleagues. During this stage teachers often take on more responsibility in their school. This responsibility can take the form of informal leadership roles or formal appointed roles which are part of the management and leadership structure of the school.

A system of in-school management has existed in the Irish education system since the Ryan Tribunal on teachers' salaries in 1968 (Ryng, 2000). Formal middle leadership roles in second level schools are currently appointed at the AP1 and AP2 level. These AP1 and AP2 levels, replace the A post and B post (special duties) terms that were used up to 2018. The first level of AP2 post involves a salary increase of €3,769 with no reduction of class contact time. AP1 post holders get a salary increase of €8,520. In the ETB and the Community and Comprehensive

sectors AP1 post holders also get a reduction in their class contact timetable of four hours. Reductions in other sectors (e.g. voluntary secondary schools) are not mandated and are at the discretion of each individual school management. Appointments to this in school management system were adversely affected by the post 2008 Irish economic downturn.

In 2009 a moratorium was placed on appointments to posts of responsibility other than principal and deputy principal positions. A limited alleviation of this position was introduced in 2014 for "schools that are acutely affected at Assistant Principal level by the impact of the moratorium" (DES, 2014, p.1). This alleviation did not allow for appointing of B post (AP2) positions. In 2018 the Department of Education and Skills (DES) issued a circular on leadership and management in post-primary schools. It highlights the importance of school management structures aligning with best practice as set out in the 'Looking at our Schools 2016' document (DES, 2016). The 2018 circular states that the responsibilities of senior and middle leadership should reflect the identified needs and priorities of the school (DES, 2018). This circular also acknowledges that all teachers have leadership roles, but middle leaders are identified as those with formally appointed leadership roles — post holders with AP1 and AP2 positions. When teachers take on new roles, they require support to develop a new set of skills to fulfil their leadership responsibilities.

This study examines the PD needs of Middle Leaders (MLs) who have a post of responsibility at AP1 level. AP1 post holders are part of the leadership structure in second level schools and "occupy positions of strategic importance in the leadership, management and administration of the school" (DES, 2018). Despite the investment and importance placed on the role there appears to be a lack of specific PD opportunities to support this management and leadership position.

When I obtained an AP1 position and sought out specific opportunities for PD I found that there was no formal specific professional development available. There were no compulsory courses provided for middle leaders in the post primary school or in her ETB. Following a search on the internet, one two-hour course for the role of year head was found. This was delivered through some of the education centres but was not scheduled to run in that academic year. In practice, the lack of specific PD for MLs was mitigated by the support she received from management and other AP1

post holders when advice or assistance was sought. The lack of available formal opportunities experienced, highlights a gap in the provision of specific PD for MLs.

1.2.3 Provision for Middle Leaders in Ireland

The growing interest and focus on leadership in Irish schools was a factor in the establishment of The Centre for School Leadership (CSL). This commenced in 2015 on a partnership basis between the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN), the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) and the DES. Their vision is for "a community of school leaders, who feel supported and valued as professionals and who have access to high quality continuous professional development" (CSL, 2018). CSL provides PD and mentoring for established SLs. To inform their work CSL looked at leadership in other jurisdictions and produced a consultation paper — "A Professional Learning Continuum for School Leadership in the Irish Context" (2015). This paper notes an absence of a continuum for school leadership which indicates that induction for principals needs to be more extensive than in other jurisdictions.

The current supports for appointed post primary school leaders are outlined below:

Table 1:   Post Primary Leader Support

	CSL	NAPD	PDST
Newly Appointed Principals	1 year of formal Mentoring		Misneach: 5 x 2-day residential PL meetings.
Principals	Coaching Service (400 places available in 2020). 6 meetings over 1 year.	Group mentoring from year 2	Forbairt: School Leadership Teams (Principal, Deputy + 1 ML (but not essential). 2 planning sessions + 2 in-school support interactions.
Experienced Principals			Meitheal: Group coaching and 1-day seminars.
Deputy Principals		Group Mentoring if registered for Tánaiste.	Tánaiste: 6 seminars over 1 year. Followed by Líonraí support (4 locations)

		Middle Leaders aspiring to Principalship and Deputy Principalship	Newly Appointed Senior Leaders (Principal and Deputy Principal)	Established Senior Leaders (Principal and Deputy Principal)
School Leadership Team	4 x 2 hours of team coaching for 6 people (Principal must have completed 4 individual coaching sessions)			
Middle Leaders			Comhar: 6 x 2-hour, cross sectoral workshops for AP1 and AP11's	

Further supports are provided by school governing bodies and individual ETBs.

The CSL consultation paper looks at the leadership continuum in other countries and reports that Singapore provides a 17-week full time middle leader programme; Scotland provides Professional Learning (PL) activities for those who wish to be effective MLs and as a preparation for headship and Ontario provides a wide -ranging suite of programmes for teachers and MLs which are linked to the Ontario Leadership Framework. They proposed a continuum of school leadership which categorised leaders into 5 groups.

Table 2:   Continuum of School Leadership

Teachers	Middle Leaders	Middle Leaders aspiring to Principalship and Deputy Principalship	Newly Appointed Senior Leaders (Principal and Deputy Principal)	Established Senior Leaders (Principal and Deputy Principal)
Short, focused courses to support and challenge teachers to lead classroom practice in their own context	Short, focused courses e.g. curriculum and pastoral leadership, subject and programme co-ordination	Aspiring Senior Leaders' Programme focusing on the Quality Framework for Schools (Leadership and Management)	Induction Programme building on previous learning and supporting principals and deputies in the first two years of their role	Established Senior Leaders Co-ordinated menu of professional learning for established leaders System Leaders Identification and development of system leaders

(CSL, 2015, p.8)

The continuum identified two types of MLs. Those in ML positions and those who are in an ML role but are aspiring to principal and deputy principal roles. Despite the identification of MLs in the continuum and the recognition and support of MLs in other jurisdictions, the majority of the language in this paper refers to building capacity of the senior leaders of the future and does not focus on the role of the ML. Particularly for those MLs who do not see this position as a stepping stone to a higher level, but a role which is important and influential and one that keeps them as a teacher in the classroom. The ML is mentioned by CSL and PD is recommended for them by means of "short focused courses, e.g. curriculum and pastoral leadership, subject and programme coordination" (p.8). They propose that for MLs, PD could entail a number of face-to-face sessions, online collaborative learning and shared learning with mentoring/coaching being an integral part of all sections of the continuum. Their observations on middle leaders in Ireland are that:

> There is a need for a co-ordinated approach to providing professional learning opportunities, both face-to face and online, for teachers who wish to lead, or are currently leading initiatives or projects outside of their classroom. This provision should address the variety of understandings of middle leadership, as it is commonly believed that middle leadership is primarily task-oriented and does not involve management or leadership of colleagues". Again, this cultural attitude requires change over time. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on what constitutes a middle leadership role, from both task and leadership points of view. This is particularly critical now due to current proposals to increase the number of appointments to middle leadership positions in our primary and post-primary schools. (CSL, 2015, p.10)

Despite the importance placed on middle leaders in the paper and the acknowledged need for PD, few opportunities have been provided for these MLs in Ireland.

The layer of MLs who are aspiring to senior leadership positions were catered for in the roll-out of the new DES Diploma course. This joint DES and CSL project, culminated in a new post graduate Diploma in School Leadership (PDSL). This is an 18-month, part-time blended learning diploma available to 240 teachers annually.

In November 2018 the CSL initiated a programme for MLs through the network of education centres. The 'Excellence through Collaborative Leadership and Management' scheme was designed to support projects that involve innovative approaches to school leadership and management. This initiative sought 2 clusters from each education centre with three to six schools in each cluster. The clusters could comprise schools which are Primary only, Post Primary only or a combination

of both with priority being given to clusters with a DEIS school. Schools were asked to collaborate on the design, implementation and dissemination of an innovative project using a combination of supports from their education centre; DES support services; third level institutions and business/industry. The successful clusters were appointed a CSL facilitator to act as a mentor to help them progress their project and develop the leadership skills of those involved. The aims of this scheme included a wish to strengthen the impact of effective leadership on teaching, learning and assessment practices; build the leadership capacity of teams and to enable schools to engage with the community and foster external partnerships. As an Education Centre Director, I have experience of overseeing four of these clusters. Initial evaluations of the scheme show that in many of the clusters the project rather than the process became the focus. The scheme was introduced and rolled out quickly and sufficient time was not given to explicitly explore the notion of leadership and its place in the projects. Despite the challenges, some clusters were successful in prioritising leadership development. This development was championed by their appointed facilitators. As this scheme did not require that appointed MLs take part, I envisage this as a scheme to develop TL skills rather than appointed ML skills. This demonstrates a gap in the provision of PD for appointed ML who are content with their position in the school.

September 2019 saw further interest in and provision for MLs in Ireland. The PDST developed a ML programme 'Comhar' which aims to "develop the leadership skills of Assistant Principals to enhance their efficacy so they can effectively occupy positions of strategic importance in their schools" (PDST, 2019). The workshops focus on

- Vision and values
- Role and culture
- Communication and motivation
- Change
- Self-management and self-care
- Leading teaching and learning

These cross-sectoral courses were oversubscribed (900 applicants for 300 places) and catered for both AP1s and AP2s.

MLs were also the focus of a new Graduate Certificate in Middle Leadership and Mentoring in Primary and Post-Primary Settings. This course was developed and offered by MIC Thurles and it commenced in 2019. It is a one-year, part-time

programme providing an academic qualification for teachers interested in middle leadership. It also provides the option of progressing to a master's qualification. This programme is

> designed to provide participants with incrementally greater knowledge, skills and insights into Middle Leadership in schools. It aims to challenge and support participants to interrogate what Middle Leadership means and asks of them. It is conducted in a manner that is informed by good teaching, underpinned by theory, and applied in practice. (MIC,UL, 2019)

It is positive to see that MIC Thurles have recognised the role of the appointed middle leader who might not want to aspire to a role in senior management. It is supportive of "teachers who may wish to have a greater leadership role without leaving the classroom, as well as those aspiring to deputy principal or principal roles" (MIC.UL, 2019).

The evolution of the role of ML is evident in Irish policy and provision. Forde *et al.* (2019) identified three themes following an analysis of Irish policy which chart this evolution of MLs. These are

1. delegation to distributive leadership where the delegation of tasks is replaced by collaborative leadership across the school;
2. 'duties' to leading learning; lists of tasks for post holders are replaced by the responsibilities of middle leadership for learning; and
3. experience to leadership capabilities where seniority replaces leadership capabilities in selection criteria.

(p.302)

1.3   Personal Experience of PD

Dewey stated that there is "an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education" (1938, p.20). Personal experience teaches us many valuable lessons but it also shapes how we see and approach the world. I believe that it is important to acknowledge my experiences in line with the view of Wellington *et al.* (2005) who state that:

> It is impossible to take the researcher out of any type of research or of any stage of the research process. The biography of researchers, how and where they are socially positioned, the consequent perspectives they hold and the assumptions which inform the sense they make of the world, have implications for their research. (p.21)

Therefore, here follows a personal reflection on my experience of continuing professional development in my career to date.

My teacher training in Home Economics and Religious education was a four-year teacher training degree course which was intense, wide ranging, challenging and fulfilling. I feel this course equipped me well to enter the classroom and to begin my teaching career. My initial experience of teaching was good, but I found that I required more input on interpersonal skills (dealing with parent-teacher meetings, conflict with parents and communicating with colleagues in subject departments). I would have greatly benefited from an induction year and a mentor who would have had the time to help me to acclimatise to the workings of the school and advise me on dealing with the various adult populations.

My PD was non-existent in my first two schools, each of which I worked in for a 1-year period. Teachers starting in a new school at any stage of their career would benefit from receiving an orientation into their new situation. In both schools the vice-principals offered help if it was needed but this was something I avoided, trying not to show weakness in my new job. My colleagues, usually those in my subject department, were my source of information and those to whom I turned for advice and support.

I then worked in an ETB school for 21 years. I was fortunate that the principal had a philosophy of lifelong learning. He displayed a love of education — not just the education of the students in the school but that of the teaching staff. He encouraged initiative and when new ideas were brought to him, he took the time to make sure they were properly planned in order to ensure their success. He encouraged staff to engage with the state provided support service PD and to explore other opportunities. It must also be acknowledged here that my personal motivation to learn and develop was an important factor in my engagement with many types of PD.

In the first few years PD consisted of in-service days which provided knowledge related to a change in syllabi. They were informative and, in addition to delivering information, they allocated time for it to be digested and to clarify anything that was unclear. These in-service days provided a (sometimes), welcome relief from the pressure of the classroom and they also allowed for informal learning. Meeting teachers from other schools afforded me time to evaluate my personal practices, and conversations about 'how we did things in our school' highlighted techniques and

procedures that were successful in other settings. It was mostly the informal learning and time-out to reflect on my teaching that gave me a renewed energy going back to my classroom.

The principal requested that I attend a 2-day in-service on continuing professional development with the Second Level Support Service (SLSS). The course was interesting and I felt a sense of achievement that I had been picked to attend. The learning achieved from this, while positive for me personally, was not utilised in the school (due to time constraints and initiative overload). Time is a major factor in schools and many good initiatives and opportunities are lost while trying to keep up with all the latest courses, laws, syllabi, techniques and demands of a changing society.

With the introduction of school development planning came a new system of organising our practices which gave a degree of freedom to schools to provide for their professional needs. As the task of producing the school plan began, schools were allowed a number of planning days. During these days speakers or workshops were organised to benefit the entire staff. These included talks relating to the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), stress, positive behaviour techniques and teaching students with special educational needs. While many were interesting and informative, they were a small insight into a much wider body of knowledge. Each of these talks or courses received varying reactions from staff, as some thought it was irrelevant to them and others were looking for more. This practical experience indicates that further training should be tailored to individual teachers based on their needs and stages of their career.

Following the economic recession, the Croke Park Agreement was introduced in 2010. This was a series of measures to secure significant savings and efficiencies in the public service. One of these measures required teachers to work an additional 33 hours outside of normal school hours. These hours were intended to be used for planning and development.

These 33 mandated hours had the potential to be an ideal time to organise professional development courses or talks similar to those on the SDPI planning days. This was an opportunity for teachers to highlight areas of need from their classroom and a space where they could work on them throughout the year to ensure that new practices were embedded. Sugrue (2002) noted that an "absence of

support at school/classroom level means learning is not sustained as it lacks appropriate support and context sensitive feedback" (p.334). I believe that this was a missed opportunity to provide meaningful, sustained, context specific in school development. Instead it appeared at times to be an exercise in filling in hours to meet the requirements of the circular.

Another strand of my professional development arose when I took on the task of teaching Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in addition to my degree subjects. There was a significant overlap in content between my degree subjects (Home-Economics and Religion) and the new SPHE course. Each term, the SPHE Support Service sent a list of the available courses to the school, allowing teachers to indicate which area of practice they required. At the beginning of these PD days, they explored personal wellbeing before the topic of SPHE in the classroom was addressed. The structure and content of the in-service day always had an element of negotiation. This meant that the concerns and needs of the individual teachers were addressed and it allowed for context specific issues to be explored. I found these to be the most effective of my in-service days. This indicates that paying attention to the needs of the individuals participating in the course is a recipe for success. This is consistent with Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardiner who recommend that effective PD "requires responsiveness to the needs of educators and learners and to the contexts in which teaching and learning will take place" (2017, p.vi). This approach, which centred around focusing on the needs of the learners (the teachers) gave me a greater deal of competence to deal with the needs of students (my learners) in SPHE and with student needs in general.

I obtained a B post (currently AP2) position in 2000 and the duties assigned to me changed over the years (year head, pastoral care, uniform, SPHE co-ordinator, first aid, detention and fire safety). Training for first aid and for the role of SPHE co-ordinator were provided by the school.

After having children, I felt a need to further my learning and I decided to undertake a Master's in Educational Management and Leadership, with a view towards pursuing a management position in the future. The Master's was very accessible as it could be completed part time, over 3 years and in an education centre close to me. This facilitated me engaging with this course without it compromising family life too much. A motivating factor was that it was a personal decision to partake in this study and

not something that was imposed on me. The modules allowed for in-depth research into an area of interest, which made the assignments relevant and interesting. This course provided me with relevant, research-based knowledge and had a very positive impact on my motivation levels as a teacher. This echoes one of the findings of the OECD which reports that the most effective forms of PD have on average lower rates of participation, with those participating devoting more time to them and being more likely to pay for them (2009, p.48). The topic of my thesis was 'An examination of the knowledge and training of post-primary teachers regarding their roles and responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to prevent physical injury'. Following this I was asked to support the schools in my VEC (currently ETB) in implementing their health and safety responsibilities.

In 2013 I applied for and was chosen to be a lead facilitator in the Mental Health Awareness Initiative (MHAI) for my local education centre. This initiative was led by the network of education centres (ATECI now ESCI) in collaboration with Headstrong (now Jigsaw (the national centre for youth mental health)). Following the training, the role involved promoting and delivering the youth mental health awareness programme (two sessions of three hours each). This was initially a Cascade model that involved training teachers to deliver the programme to their school staff. There was also a requirement that a member of senior management attend the training. Following feedback and a review of the programme this was adapted to a one-hour session where the programme was delivered to individual teachers. A one-hour parents programme was also developed and delivered in the education centres.

In 2015 I was successful in obtaining an A post (currently AP1) position. The responsibilities associated with the role were; Year Head for 140 students, Health and Safety management in the school and SPHE Co-ordinator. The support provided by management was forthcoming but the induction to this new role was informal and there was no formal system of feedback/appraisal in place. Despite having the theory of leadership and management from my studies, I experienced that there was a lack of specific PD to support applying that in a practical setting. Every school setting is unique and the role of an A post holder would benefit by being developed in the context of the vision, mission and ethos of the school or the VEC (now ETB).

Despite being sure that I was finished with academic study after the Master's, I missed the challenge involved, the professional conversations, as well as the

learning and started to explore PHD/Doctoral opportunities. This study is the culmination of a four-year professional doctorate in DCU. Similar to the Master's, I have found that the engagement with fellow students, the challenge of assignments and the learning gained by exploring new concepts/ideas have been motivating, energising and an experience that has improved my practice. My studies in the area of leadership and PD were also a factor in achieving a new position (five-year secondment) as Director of Kildare Education Centre (2018) where one of the responsibilities involves the provision of PD to meet the needs of local primary and post-primary school communities.

My experience affirms the importance of PD for motivation, improved classroom practice and career development and indicates the need for a more structured approach to the development of opportunities for MLs. It also shows the importance of teachers' own personal responsibility to seek out PD opportunities. This would suggest that a co-operative effort from all sides (statutory, teacher organisations, schools and individual teachers) would assist to achieve a more structured and meaningful PD system for MLs.

1.4   Summary

PD has potential benefits to all partners in the Irish education system and in particular to meet the needs of teachers at different stages of their career. The reintroduction of the posts of responsibility in 2018, my personal experience of lack of ML PD and the current development of the Teaching Council's framework for teachers' learning (Cosán) shows that research into PD for MLs in second level schools is timely. The literature shows the importance of high-quality teachers and the central role of appropriate PD across the teaching career to motivate teachers and enhance teaching and learning. When teachers take on a post of responsibility, they become part of the leadership team in the school. This role requires a different skill set (Irvine and Brundrett, 2019) and post holders should be supported to acquire and develop these skills. This has raised my interest in the 'wicked problem' of PD for a specific group of people. Those appointed as middle leaders in second level ETB schools in Ireland and asks:

What are the Professional Development needs of appointed Middle Leaders in Education and Training Board post-primary schools?

This study aims to:

- listen to the voice of AP1s to ascertain their PD needs and
- explore their preferred types of PD.

1.5   Layout of the Thesis

Chapter one offers an introduction to the research topic, outlining the rationale for the study in the context of a professional doctorate. It outlines the requirement for specific PD for middle leaders from the perspective of the individual and the system and gives an insight into my experience of PD and motivation for this study. Chapter two explores the literature relevant to the study of PD and middle leaders in a post primary setting. Chapter three provides details of the methodology used to conduct the research. It describes the approach used, the research design, selection of participants, data collection and details of ethical considerations and guidelines followed. Chapter four presents the research findings. Chapter five discusses the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the provision of PD for MLs in ETB schools. The implications and limitations of the study will be highlighted. Suggestions will be made for further studies which might arise from this research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Review Process

A review of literature is important to get a clear understanding of any topic, to ascertain what has already been studied, to understand how it has been researched and to highlight the areas that need to be researched further (Hart, 2018). Examining the literature is important so that we can understand what we already know and what we do not know about a topic (Aveyard, Payne and Preston, 2016). A literature review can be divided into three broad sections: identify the relevant literature; understand and interpret this literature and then write a review creating a new perspective (O'Neill, Booth and Lamb, 2018). The first part of this literature review outlines leadership in education, then narrows the focus to leadership in the middle and subsequently middle leadership in Irish post primary schools. The second part explores PD; its importance, the predominant models; the features of effective PD and then examines policy and practice in the Irish context.

2.1.1 Rationale for Choice of Literature

The research question asks What are the professional development needs of appointed middle leaders in ETB schools. Articles relating to teachers' PD, Leadership and MLs were searched for. These were mainly confined to articles that were published in the past ten years but included seminal work in the field. Using the DCU library database and Google Scholar, I started with peer-reviewed Irish journals and then widened the search to international journals. Within these she concentrated on research pertaining to MLs and PD in a second-level education setting. Relevant articles were then read and analysed.

2.1.2 Analytical Approach

In line with the recommendation of O'Neill, Booth and Lamb (2018), I used NVivo to organise relevant literature chosen for review. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis programme that "supports visualization of emerging themes in the literature and enables creation of a snapshot of each theme" (p.23). I read the articles and identified the main themes that emerged from the literature. Relevant sections of each article that reflected these themes were selected. These were moved to containers called nodes. In this software the use of the word node is synonymous

with the word code, as referred to when outlining coding in qualitative research (Richards, 2015). Di Gregorio (2000) explains that "coding can be used as a tool to collect information about a particular theme" (p.9). The nodes were named according to the emergent themes. Following the exploration of the literature, the nodes then contained all the relevant information from a variety of sources which related to that particular theme. This ultimately allowed easy access to the information from chosen documents, on a particular theme, making the process of writing each section more manageable. Di Gregorio (2000) also recommends the use of NVivo as you then have "a literature archive, which you will be able to dip into and add to for future reference" (p.12). This research required insights into Educational Leadership, MLs, PD practice and the professional needs of MLs in post primary settings.

2.2   Introduction

The literature expounds that teaching has become a very pressurised and scrutinised profession and that there has been a "relentless focus on teaching and learning in recent years" (Allison, 2014, p.iii). In Ireland, the dynamic requirements of the student population have resulted in the introduction of a new Junior Cycle curriculum. This curriculum focuses on developing key skills in students and new approaches to assessment and reporting. Equipping students with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes is important to prepare students for an information era and a knowledge society which requires people to have sufficient formal education and "a habit of continuous learning" (Drucker, 1994, p.62). Curriculum changes are only one aspect of the complex and interdependent factors that should align to ensure student achievement. The literature indicates that high quality teachers and their leadership are essential for a highly educated society (Scotland and Scottish Government, 2011). Therefore, it is important to place a focus on leadership and the development of leaders who can support teachers to create a quality education system. A system that continuously improves to meet the needs of a diverse society and one that can satisfy the scrutiny that society impresses on it.

Darling-Hammond (2008) explains that schools face many challenges in response to an ever-changing and increasingly complex society where they are expected to educate a diverse range of students to high standards. This requires skilful teaching and schools that support teachers' continuous learning (p.91). As the most important

asset in the school, teachers should be "professionally developed and nurtured in a way that interests and inspires them" (Allison, 2014, p.6). In addition to the pedagogical skills required, when teachers take on leadership roles in their schools they require "a range of knowledge, skills and personal abilities that are appropriate to the tasks that they may face" (Irvine and Brundrett, 2019, p.76). If a new ML has no prior experience of leading, this would suggest that they need to learn a new set of skills (Irvine and Brundrett, 2019, p.78). This would require PD which is supported and encouraged at government and local level. Larusdottir and O'Connor (2017) report that at the micro level of the school, the two main influencing factors on PD are leadership and culture.

2.3   Leadership

The review of the research shows that leadership is an important factor in making a school successful (OECD, 2008, Harris, 2014; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Fuller, Young and Baker, 2011) and is second only to classroom teaching as a factor in student outcomes (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). The potential effect of leadership practice tends to vary greatly depending on the type of leadership in place (Robinson, 2010). Leadership is a commonly used term yet there is no consensus on its meaning. Northouse (2016) explored the increase in interest in leadership in recent times and the ongoing question of what makes a good leader. He articulates that the process of leading people involves a person influencing "a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2016, p.5). He acknowledges that there are numerous styles of leadership, "as soon as we try to define leadership, we discover that leadership has many different meanings" (p.2). Many attempts have been made over the last century to define leadership but the term regularly evolves and is likely to continue to mean different things in different settings. Attempts to define leadership have been approached from many angles (a) a trait or characteristic personality perspective, (b) a focus of group processes, (c) an act or behaviour, (d) a skills perspective or (e) in the power relationships that exist. More recent research emphasises that leadership is a process and positions it's understanding as an approach.

The following leadership approaches are frequently found in current educational discourse.

Table 3:   Leadership Approaches

Authentic Self-awareness, Relational transparency, Internalised moral perspective, Balanced processing. (Humphrey and Qian, 2018)	"a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008, p.94 as cited by Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2018). "Authentic leadership, which is considered as one of the positive leadership styles, contributes to the formation of a positive organizational culture" (Karadag and Oztekin-Bayir, 2018, p.42).
Instructional Define the School's Mission, Manage the Instructional Program, Promote a Positive School Learning Climate. (Gurley *et al.*, 2016)	Instructional leadership is an educational leadership that focuses on the core responsibility of a school, namely teaching and learning, by defining the school vision, mission and goals, managing the instructional programme and promoting the school climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). "Instructional leadership refers to those sets of leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning" (Robinson, 2010, p.2).
Laissez-Faire Passive, Avoids making decisions, Turns the power over to followers. (Carswell, Sasso and Ross, 2017)	The Laissez Faire or non-leadership style is described by Northouse (2016, p.186) as a leader who "abdicates responsibilities, delays decisions, gives no feedback, and makes little effort to help followers to satisfy their needs." The leader has no exchange with followers or interest in their development.

Transactional Contingent Reward Management by Exception (Northouse, 2016)	Transactional Leadership concentrates on the exchange between the leader and the followers. Transactional leaders reward or discipline their followers depending on their performance (Bass and Riggio, 2006)
Transformational Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration. (Bass and Riggio, 2006)	leaders who are "individually considerate, but they intellectually stimulate and challenge followers. They are attentive and supportive, but they also inspire and serve as leadership exemplars." (Bass and Riggio, 2006, p.225). "they have a clear vision of the future, they are social architects, they create a shape or form for the vision of their institution, they create trust by making their position known and sticking by it. Finally, leaders know their own strengths and weaknesses and they emphasise their strengths rather than concentrating on their weaknesses" (Northouse, 2016, p.187)

The leadership approach used by school leaders will vary according to their personal style, their particular context and the situations facing them. Leadership approaches have been prioritised by many researchers but Robinson (2010 as cited by Timperley, 2011) questions this focus. She argues that in a school setting we should be focusing more on the capabilities of the leader to engage in these approaches (Robinson, 2010).

The majority of educational literature places leadership as a critical factor in creating an effective school and fostering a positive climate which is centred on teaching and learning. Schools have a necessity for capable leaders who are visionary, challenging, motivating and empowering to maintain and increase standards. Senior Leaders (SLs) have the potential to inspire all staff and in-particular other school leaders who should share in and contribute to the leader's vision and plan for the school. Principals as the senior leaders in schools, strive to ensure that their complex organisations continuously improve. A leadership style that can navigate change and embed that change in a sustainable way is a prerequisite of this role. Schools require

a leader who can motivate both teachers and students to learn and the education system requires a leader who can meet the requirements and needs of all stakeholders. This is a significant undertaking for one individual.

We must question whether placing this level of responsibility on one person is sustainable. The role and remit of the principal is overwhelming (Drysdale, Gurr and Goode, 2016); has grown exponentially (O'Donovan, 2015) and it is "unrealistic to think that any one person can discharge the role without the assistance of a considerable number of colleagues" (Martin, 2006). The literature acknowledges that principals require support and that the distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities is essential to relieve this burden and improve teaching and learning (OECD, 2008, and LDS, 2007). Despite this, Harris (2013) explains that many schools are reluctant to change from the conventional style of leadership with the all-powerful individual in charge who is a charismatic leader. Instead of waiting for this leader, who might not materialise, Harris advocates for tapping into and realising the leadership potential within the school and subsequently distributing that leadership. Irish educational policy (DES, 2018) advocates for the utilisation of a DL model in schools, therefore this is the model that will be explored in this research.

2.4   Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership (DL) has been the subject of considerable educational research and discourse in recent years and internationally it is the most frequently adopted style of leadership. Irish educational policy on leadership in schools (DES, 2018) acknowledges the key role that leadership plays in creating a positive school climate and motivating teachers and students. It highlights the crucial role that leadership plays (second only to classroom practice) in student learning and advocates for the use of a DL model. When discussing leadership, many writers use the terms style, approach, type and model. Spillane states that the DL model is not a leadership type but a framework or lens for thinking about leadership which exists on a spectrum (Spillane, 2006). The Irish adoption of a DL model appears to be in line with international views on its effectiveness. Torres (2018) agrees that if DL is practised effectively in schools it is associated with an increase in teachers' work and professional satisfaction (Torres 2018) and has a significant positive relationship to teachers' organisational commitment (Hulpia and Devos, 2010). Harris (2009, p.12),

also agrees that there is a positive relationship between this type of leadership and positive change and improvement in schools. This sentiment is also echoed by Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss (2009) who report that high performing schools widely and wisely distribute leadership. Humphreys (2010) summarises Spillane's extensive work on DL and presents the key features of this leadership model:

- leadership is enacted by multiple leaders, not just the principal;
- it is not a top-down approach; it occurs through people interacting with each other and co-leading in different ways;
- there is interdependence between leaders, followers and the situation;
- leaders influence followers and shape their practice, particularly in relation to the main work of the school — teaching and learning.

Harris (2013) includes some additional features; capacity building, it is inclusive, it recognises expertise and experience, is context specific and requires high levels of trust.

Spillane and Healey (2010) explain that looking at leadership from a distributed perspective encompasses the 'leader plus' aspect and the 'practice aspect'. The leader plus aspect recognises that leadership involves more than just the principal and can include multiple individuals who may or may not have formal leadership roles. They clarify that despite some portrayals of DL they do not assume that everyone is or should be a leader.

The leader plus aspect is concerned with the identification and appointment of additional leaders to support the principal in their role. Then DL moves beyond the recruitment process of leaders to leadership practice. The practice aspect frames practice as the result of the interactions of leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane, Hunt and Healey, 2009). This encompasses how these leaders are arranged, how they interact with colleagues, how they make decisions, how they support change and improvement and their interdependence as they carry out their roles in their unique school setting. This ideal integrated and harmonious approach would require careful planning and investment. This indicates that a strategic and co-ordinated approach to how the leaders go about their daily business is needed. To be successful this approach would require that the practice of all leaders was underpinned by a shared understanding of the vision and mission of the school.

2.4.1   Challenges to DL

Harris (2013) cautions that DL will not just happen. It should be carefully planned and consciously orchestrated and that those in formal senior leadership roles have a responsibility to create the conditions necessary for its success. They must be willing to 'let go' (European Commission, 2010) and place their trust in teachers. Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss (2009, p.4) indicate that the outcome and evidence on DL is not all positive and caution that this can increase the burden and responsibility on teachers without increasing their power. There is also a question as to the level of genuine agency that teachers are given as there is a concern that agency could be encouraged only if it is required to "serve managerially determined and imposed targets" (King and Stevenson, 2017, p.664). Harris (2009, p.13) also notes some practical difficulties which can arise such as: conflicting priorities, targets and timescales; boundary management issues and competing leadership styles. Preedy (2016) explains that if DL is to be successful it requires a shift in power. This release of a traditional hierarchical power structure is likely to be difficult in an era of accountability. A shift in power is possible if SLs have the skills and willingness to authentically distribute leadership. A research report by Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2018, p.46) validates this concern as it reported that school leaders had a critical need for further PL in developing leadership capacity and distributing roles and responsibilities. This indicates that principals need to be supported in the development of an appropriate and effective DL model.

2.4.2   Evolution of DL in Schools

The support for a change to the power dynamic in the system is evident in an increasing number of schools who are creating Senior Management Teams (SMTs). These SMTs consist of senior school personnel (Bush and Glover, 2012; Benoliel and Somech, 2016). These teams are in potentially powerful positions and are important in the decision-making process in many jurisdictions (Barnatt and McCormick, 2012). Assembling the SMT is only the first step to creating a cohesive and effective team that can lead change and improvement in the school. Wheelan (2016) explains that the complexity of the modern work environment requires a collaborative effort. An underlying requirement is that a group of people become an effective team. Teams are developed when a group establish shared goals and implement effective methods to accomplish these goals. She also outlines that

effective teams are very powerful, they can increase productivity and motivate employees. The complexity of modern workplaces demands a greater emphasis on and investment in collaborative and team practices.

SMTs in Irish second level schools include the Principal, deputy principal(s) and those appointed to formal leadership positions (AP1s). AP1 post holders, the MLs within the school system, are usually those to whom leadership is distributed (Larusdottir and O'Connor, 2017). Effective schools require a team of leaders, that utilise their collective intelligences to transform the school into a learning community. One of the concerns associated with creating groups of people in schools who are given a label of team is that time is not being invested to design and develop these teams (West-Burnham, 1997, p.134). Sallis (1996) also has concerns over the creation of school teams and cautions that "being part of a team is not a natural human function; it is learned" (p.82). An investment in the development of these teams is recommended to ensure that senior and MLs have the necessary skills to work well together. When leadership is formally distributed, it is distributed to the appointed MLs in the school (AP1 and AP11 post holders) and these MLs are important in the success or failure of a DL model in schools.

2.5   Middle Leaders

Middle leaders (MLs) are important for the successful functioning of schools (Turner and Sykes, 2007, Thorpe and Bennett-Powell, 2014). They have formal responsibilities which generally involve subject areas, year group pastoral care, cross-curricular coordination e.g. special educational needs (SEN) or information and communications technology (ICT) (Bryant, 2018). Their role gives them a unique position which comes with a responsibility to enact change, while still being closely connected to and involved in teaching. This unique position gives them a sphere of influence which is not available to the principal. Despite their important role and strategic position in the school, MLs have received little attention in literature and research (Harris and Jones, 2017).

In the context of school improvement in the UK, Leask and Terrell (2013) also agree that the role of the middle manager is a pivotal one. If successfully implemented, it is a role that ensures that school policy and procedures can be implemented and applied. They caution though that this role requires different skills to that of a

classroom teacher and they acknowledge that at that time in the UK, middle leaders received little or no training. They note that good classroom teachers do not always make good managers of adults and that MLs will require support to fulfil this role effectively. Changing from leading students to having a formal role in leading adults requires a different set of skills/capabilities. Irvine and Brundett (2016) agree that teaching and leading are different roles that require different capabilities. Their study of new MLs looked at the role that experience plays on the leader's capabilities and the acquisition of capabilities over time. They found that the biggest challenge for MLs was in their interaction with other teachers as this relationship requires a different set of skills. The study also recommended that MLs should have mentoring or coaching support to assist them to self-reflect. This reflection would help them to draw on and subsequently build on their own skills and capabilities, which they have developed through prior experiences. Previous experience may have afforded a ML to acquire these skills. Even if the ML possesses these, they still need to be nurtured and developed in the context of the school culture and climate.

Conventional thinking on MLs focuses mainly on managerial responsibilities and curriculum administration. In contradiction to this, a study of MLs in secondary schools in Hong Kong (Bryant, 2018) found that MLs were engaging in "capacity building, defining strategies for distributing leadership within their departments, and negotiating education system policies with school stakeholders and government officials" (p.16). This paradigm shift in the role of MLs was possible through an investment in the MLs. This support came from senior leaders through rich PD and by providing MLs with autonomy in their work. This supports Bryant's (2016) earlier recommendations that principals should define and communicate ML roles, with regard to the school's mission and to properly resource their work as an important element of school planning. MLs who were given this support "flourished" (p.17).

The literature also reflects the evolution of this role with a change from the use of 'Middle Manager' to 'Middle Leader' (ML). The change in role titles elevates the position from a more administrative one to a position involving strategy and staff development (De Nobile, 2018). Despite the potential and noted important role they have, MLs have received little attention in literature (Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman, 2015; Bryant, 2018; Harris *et al.*, 2019; Forde *et al.*, 2019) and are under-theorised compared to those in senior leadership roles (De Nobile, 2018).

Research on MLs remains mainly in the qualitative sphere and there is a need for a range of methods to be used to further explore this role (Harris *et al.*, 2019). The gap in research on MLs has further complications as MLs in the literature are defined and categorised differently depending on the educational structure and systems in which they work. For clarification purposes in this research the definition of MLs is in line with Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2015), who describe MLs as "those with an acknowledged position of leadership but also a significant teaching role" (p.508), those who sit between the principal and the teaching staff.

Another term; Teacher Leader (TL), exists in the literature, which describes a teacher with influence beyond their classroom, a teacher who helps to build capacity and supports school improvement but who may not have an appointed leadership position. I am distinguishing between TLs and MLs: MLs have an appointed role within the school as part of the overall formal management and leadership structure.

When exploring the 'total role concept' and the challenge of balancing the scales between management and leadership, Drysdale, Gurr and Goode, (2016) propose that leadership requires people to "step up and be counted – head in a new direction; expand their zone of influence; challenge the status quo; implement a new innovation; create a new social order." (Drysdale, Gurr and Goode, 2016, p.3). They explain that cognitive dissonance is inhibiting leaders from stretching themselves and meeting this challenge. Cognitive dissonance is a term that describes an uncomfortable tension between conflicting thoughts and can manifest itself in the workplace when people have conflicting roles. While this report explored a principal's role it can give insight into the similar challenges that MLs face. Their positions as classroom teacher, colleague and member of the leadership team can expose job dissonance. This gap and discord between what a leader would like to do and what they have to do can result in leaders focusing on their managerial roles and eluding their leadership potential.

Gurr and Drysdale (2013) explain that the success of MLs is dependent on how their roles are constructed coupled with their capacities, abilities and attitudes. This construction requires a package of support which would typically include "induction, coaching, mentoring, teaming, learning communities, formal and informal training, short and long-term professional learning opportunities, and a supportive

performance management programme" (p.66). They concurrently note that SLs require leadership development to facilitate this provision.

De Nobile (2018) also raised concern over the position of MLs, stating that their role was not clearly defined (compared to the role of senior leaders). He noted that they had limited authority and they lacked a theoretical model. He developed a Middle Leadership in Schools (MLiS) model from an extensive review of 250 journal articles, reports, conference papers and books, to get a greater understanding of the role and to guide future research in this area. The findings of this review are summarised in the figure below:

Figure 1:   MLiS Model

Inputs	Roles	How	Outputs
• Principal Support • School Culture • Professional Development • Knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy & assessment • Enthusiasm/ Drive	• Student focused role • Administrative Role • Organisational Role • Supervisory Role • Staff Development Role • Strategic Role	• Managing Relationships • Leading Teams • Communicating Effectively • Managing Time • Managing Self	• Teaching Quality • Teacher Attitudes • Student Outcomes

(De Nobile, 2018)

This model starts with inputs, which are the personal, organisational and other factors that will either make MLs successful or limit their success. These start with the organisational factors of principal support and school culture and move to personal factors which are knowledge of curriculum pedagogy and assessment and enthusiasm/drive. The position of PD in the middle of these is not noted by De Nobile as being significant but would suggest that there is both an organisational and personal responsibility towards PD. The model then looks at the various roles of MLs. The list is intentionally ordered from managerial to leadership activities. It starts with managerial roles and moves into the roles that have a greater focus on leading. The how of the model explains that MLs carry out their various roles by managing relationships, leading teams, communicating effectively, managing time and managing self. This evidence would suggest that these are the skills that MLs require to effectively perform their role. This finding is consistent with the ML needs identified

in a 2014 study in the UK (following a major middle leadership programme). Participants in this study expressed the need for team leadership skills, time management skills and individual leadership development to reflect the complexity of the role and the different needs of each leader (Thorpe and Bennett-Powell, 2014).

2.5.1   Middle Leaders in Ireland

A thematic review of research in the area of leadership in Ireland from 2008-2018 (Murphy, 2019) raised a body of work on TLs, MLs and DL (most saturated from 2015 onwards) but different definitions of each exist. TLs and MLs have a pivotal role to play in the operation and improvement of schools. The focus of this thesis is on MLs, those with an appointed leadership role in the school. Leadership structures in schools vary considerably according to their jurisdiction. Subsequently the roles, responsibilities and influence of the middle leader varies between countries. O'Connor (2008) explains that the management structure in Irish post-primary schools involves the principal and deputy principal(s) (senior management) supported by the middle managers (currently AP1 and AP2s). She explains that the middle management structure has two tiers with the second tier (AP2, previously special duties post) having a role which "is less onerous in terms of responsibility, accountability and time commitment and consists in the main of repetitive administrative or practical duties" (p.22).

Figure 2:   Leadership and Management Structure in Second Level Schools

41
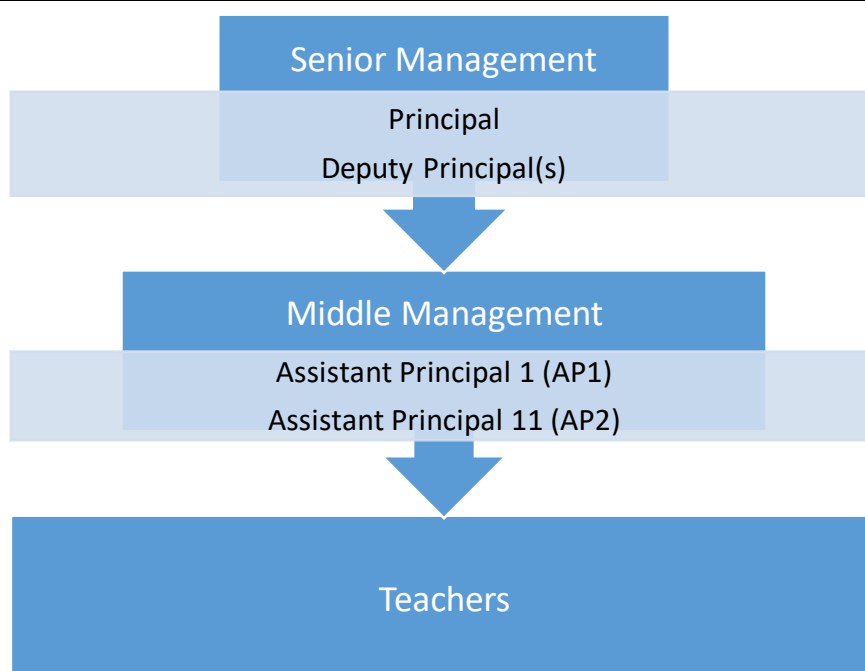
When exploring leadership in Irish second level schools, O'Donovan (2015) explains that school leaders need to enact post-hierarchical systems as they "restructure and re-define themselves" (p.244) as organisations that practice distributed leadership. Her study found that the issues with devolving power to MLs involved more than just the school staff. She found that parents and student councils' understanding of leadership was hierarchical and they discern that leadership resides primarily in the school principal. This perception would have to be addressed if MLs are to enact authentic leadership roles that are respected by colleagues, students and parents.

A search of the literature relating to Ireland found two studies relating specifically to MLs. The experiences of 21 APs were sought by O'Connor (2008) on their professional learning experiences and learning needs in their role as MLs in Irish post-primary schools. The findings highlight that APs' professional learning is complex, emotionally charged, haphazard, time-poor and neglected both by themselves and the system (p.117). It found that APs lacked a "knowledge base about middle leadership and the specific technical knowledge and information needed to effectively carry out tasks assigned to them" (p.118). APs were time and energy poor; they felt isolated, neglected and controlled by in-school power and political issues. The study also highlighted that there was a lack of PD specific to the role of a middle leader meaning that

> learning on-the-job is an important and powerful feature of APs' learning. They learn by doing and by being there over time, by observing, by trial and error, by reflecting and persevering. Their learning is mostly informal, accidental, unstructured and unique to each individual's circumstances, motivation and agency. (O'Connor, 2008, p.115)

A key finding of this study showed almost 50% of respondents were "unprepared and lacked confidence for their work ahead" (p.115) and it noted a lack of formal support, induction and mentoring to support them in their role. The findings of this research do not prescribe a one size fits all training programme, as the variety of experiences and roles of post holders mitigates this. The respondents highlighted a need for the acquisition of skills rather than theory, with facilitation and the sharing of wisdom of other post holders as their preferred method of delivery. Respondents all reported that a key issue in their role is "how to deal with people - students, parents and colleagues in a different way" (p.125). They highlighted the need for training in relationships, communication, conflict management and people skills. The study also

found that there was a "lack of personal and professional responsibility with regard to their learning" (p.116) particularly when it came to formal learning and PD out of school time. The study called for an immediate and appropriate response by the individual, the school and the system to cater for the needs of MLs.

Following her 2007 study, O'Connor continued to look at the role of MLs when she collaborated on a study of MLs in Ireland and Iceland (Larusdottir and O'Connor, 2017). The Irish research consisted of semi-structured focus group interviews with 15 primary and post-primary MLs to explore how MLs perceive their role and how leadership culture impacts on practice. The purpose of this was to give a voice to MLs regarding their lived experiences. Larusdottir and O'Connor (2017) explain that the current in-school management system in Ireland dates back to 1998 with the introduction of positions referred to as Assistant Principals (A posts) and Special Duties (B posts), roles which involved responsibility for certain areas of school management outside of classroom duties. The majority of roles were for curriculum leaders, subject leaders, department heads, year heads or project leaders. In 2009, the government introduced a moratorium on the filling of all promotional posts in the public sector. In schools, this involved the suspension of appointments of assistant principals and special duties posts. There was a limited alleviation of this in the 2011/2012 school year. Posts of responsibility are a promotion for teachers in the school system as they carry extra responsibilities and increased pay. The loss of these posts removed formal recognition of the extra work, qualifications and leadership abilities of teachers.

The 2017 study by Larusdottir and O'Connor found that MLs' workload had significantly increased and that management tasks took up most of their time leaving little time for leading. An overload of managerial work and lack of time for leading is also a feature of MLs in other jurisdictions (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013). This theme of MLs as functionalist, task-orientated positions was continued when the majority of respondents felt that they lacked power or influence, seeing their role as "more positional than influential" (p.436). The findings demonstrate "an eagerness and a motivation among MLs who would welcome greater autonomy, responsibility and decision-making powers in their day to day practice than currently exists in the schools in which they work" (p.437). This indicates that any PD required to meet the needs of the ML must be coupled with PD for Principals to support them to delegate

appropriately and acquire the skills necessary to build the capacity of their MLs. Their position in the middle — still a member of the teaching staff yet also a member of the management structure — places MLs in a challenging situation balancing the needs of the school and their own professional needs, while also supporting and leading colleagues.

Leadership in schools in Ireland features prominently in written policy. The Looking at Our Schools (LAOS) (DES, 2016) publication pays particular attention to creating a quality framework to develop and sustain teachers and leaders. It acknowledges that leaders may or may not have formal leadership roles in schools and it seeks "to assist all teachers in gaining a perspective on their own leadership roles and how they can develop and expand their leadership skills over time" (p.7). The Action Plan for Education 2018 also prioritises leadership and aims to build leadership practice in school (DES, 2018) and to develop initiatives to promote innovation and excellence in leadership. The Department of Education and Skills circulars 63/17 (DES, 2017) and 03/18 (DES, 2018) provided a structure and catalyst for schools to meet their individual leadership needs. Under the DES circular 0003/2018, the posts of responsibility were mostly reinstated. These posts were renamed Assistant Principal 1 (AP1, previously Assistant Principal) and Assistant Principal 2 (AP2 previously special duties). The number of posts available in the school is determined by the number of teaching posts in that school in the previous academic year. The circular outlines that Assistant Principals "occupy positions of strategic importance in the leadership, management and administration of the school" (p.7). MacRuairc and Harford (2011) explain that traditionally posts in Irish schools were allocated mainly on seniority which resulted in a system which rewarded longevity of service rather than the ability of the candidate to fulfil the role. The 0003/2018 circular phased out the seniority/length of service criterion of the selection process. It also introduced an annual report which consequently informs an annual review by the principal / deputy principal. This review includes a review of progress in the areas of responsibility; a review of the role in the context of the changing needs of the school and a review of the professional development of the post holder. This would indicate that prior to performing this review, certain features should be in place. Firstly, SLs and MLs should establish a clear understanding of the exact roles and responsibilities of the post. Secondly, a list of prioritised needs of the school should be available and

regularly updated. Ideally, these should also be accompanied by a commitment to supporting and encouraging the PD of MLs that complements the enactment of a DL model in schools.

2.5.3   Summary

The notion of a ML has evolved from one of a manager who carries out tasks to one of a leader who is an essential part of the leadership structure in a school. MLs play an important role in the effectiveness of a school and have a central role to play both inside and outside the classroom to bring about improvement (Harris and Jones, 2017; Fullan, 2015). The importance of the role of MLs has been neglected in the literature (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013), yet their role is a complex one requiring them to have a range of skills to deal with pressures from senior management above them and colleagues in the classroom below them (Irvine and Brundrett, 2016).

Policy and practice in Irish second level schools requires a system of DL with senior and MLs having a shared vision and approach to guiding teaching and learning. When teachers take on an appointed ML role, they have the potential to influence both policy and practice and are central to the implementation of new practices (Shaked and Schechter, 2017). Teachers who have been appointed to ML positions require an additional skill-set than that needed by a classroom teacher, yet many do not receive appropriate training or guidance (Irvine and Brundrett, 2016). If MLs are to reach their potential then specific development and support are required (Fleming, 2013). The provision of PD for MLs is an important factor but consideration must also be made of teacher's specific school context and the leadership they experience there, as these have a mediating influence on their learning (Day, Gu and Sammons, 2016).

Internationally and in Ireland there is a necessity to improve and expand the provision of leadership preparation and development (LPD) (Murphy, 2019). Currently Irish provision focuses more on the preparation of those who aspire to a senior leadership role and appears not to prioritise the position of ML as an important role in its own right. Both literature and practice demonstrate that the responsibility, position, role and potential capabilities of MLs have been neglected. Appropriate PD and support should be provided to help MLs acquire and develop the skills necessary for this multi-faceted, imperative role.

2.6   Professional Development

The importance of PD has been underlined in the Irish Education Act 1998. The act states that one of the functions of a school is to "establish and maintain systems whereby the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations can be assessed, including the quality and effectiveness of teaching" (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec.9) and bestows the principal with a responsibility to "promote the professional development of the teachers" (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec.23). Fullan (1991) highlighted the ongoing need for professional development stating that "as long as there is the need for improvement, namely, forever, there will be need for professional development" (p.344). Despite its importance, engagement in PD is not mandatory for teachers in Ireland outside of that provided in school time. A report on continuous PD among primary teachers in Ireland which was commissioned by the Teaching Council explains that in the last two decades PD has become a topic of interest and discussion in many educational policies worldwide and in Ireland. The aim of this provision is to improve the PD of teachers throughout their careers (Banks and Smyth, 2011).

It is widely accepted that PD is essential to foster improvements in teaching and learning (Kennedy, 2016). A report from UNESCO (2014) agrees that education is the way forward and that governments must support teachers and their continued growth as PD is essential for sustainable inclusive global development. The nature of the job demands that teachers engage in professional development (Day, 1999) and it is considered as one of the key factors in enhancing teacher quality (OECD, 2005,). Gaumer Erickson (2016) states that "high-quality, evidence-based professional development is essential to ensuring that teachers obtain the knowledge, strategies and skills necessary to positively impact student learning". PD is a widely used term but as a concept it can include various different formal and informal opportunities for learning.

2.6.1   Defining Professional Development

The OECD (2009) defines professional development very briefly as "activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher." Day develops this further and gives us a more extensive definition when he says that PD:

consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which constitute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives. (1999, p.4)

These definitions agree that any activities undertaken by teachers to develop themselves and improve quality in the classroom are elements of PD. Day's definition goes much deeper and places much greater responsibility on teachers. He goes beyond the traditional role of the teacher who delivers information. The use of the terms change agent, moral purpose and professional indicate that teachers have a greater remit. This definition also includes a responsibility towards colleagues and acknowledges that teachers go through different phases of their teaching career. It is reflective of the complex role that teachers play in a modern classroom. In Ireland the Teaching Council is the body responsible for promoting and regulating the professional standards of teachers (Teaching Council, 2018). They define PD as:

life-long teacher learning and comprises the full range of educational experiences designed to enrich teachers' professional knowledge, understanding and capabilities throughout their careers. (The Teaching Council 2011, p.19)

Harris and Ramos (2013) define it as "a stock of knowledge, skills and learning for use in work and potential career progression" (p.621). The idea of PD as an element of career progression has not been specifically addressed by the other definitions yet engaging in PD would provide teachers with skills and tools to support them if they wish to progress their careers.

Banks and Smyth (2011) explain that during the 80's PD provision was based on the deficit mastery model where 'one shot' approaches to learning were used and PD was something that was done to teachers. The above definitions demand more than one shot delivered courses. They require a process which is inspired by adult learning theory, "an active and constructive process that is problem-oriented, grounded in social settings and circumstances and takes place throughout teachers' lives" (Banks and Smyth, 2011, p.5). These definitions link professional development

more closely with professional learning that encompasses all activities that lead to enhanced knowledge, understanding and improved classroom practices.

2.6.2   Professional Learning / Development

The terms 'professional learning' and 'professional development' are often used interchangeably but the term 'professional learning' reflects experiences that are associated with teachers being seriously engaged in their own learning (Timperley, 2011). Hattie (2009) also looks at the importance of the teacher becoming the learner and reports that it is an essential element of student achievement. Day (1999) agrees that teachers learn naturally over their career but cautions that learning from experience alone will limit their development. This highlights a need for more structured learning opportunities that complement and support teachers learning through experience. Effective learning opportunities challenge teachers to transform their practice but these opportunities must also address how teachers (adults) learn (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). Bruner (1996) proposes that human learning is best when it is "participatory, proactive, communal, collaborative and given to constructing meanings rather than receiving them" (p.84). Learning designed for teachers should consider and consult teachers and bring them into "the debate and into the shaping of change" (Bruner, 1996, p.84). This places a responsibility on education stakeholders to provide appropriate learning opportunities for teachers. These opportunities are fundamental to support teachers on a journey that leads to improved student outcomes. Acknowledging and utilising teachers prior learning and experiences and using this as the foundation to develop improved classroom practices is a prerequisite of effective PL. When teachers take time from their busy professional and personal lives to engage in PL opportunities there is an onus on providers to deliver an experience which enhances teaching and learning. Teachers are time poor and can suffer from 'professional indigestion', when learning gained during PD is not afforded sufficient time to be properly developed and embedded in the classroom (Gardiner *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, discussions on teacher learning should start with a commitment to understanding the science and theory of how adults learn.

2.6.3 Adult Learning

Knowles (1984) is renowned for the use of the term andragogy, which is the art and science of adult learning. Knowles made five assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from child learners (pedagogy):

1. Self-concept
   As a person matures his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.

2. Adult Learner Experience
   As a person matures, he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.

3. Readiness to Learn
   As a person matures his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.

4. Orientation to Learning
   As a person matures his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.

5. Motivation to Learn
   As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal.

(Knowles, 1984, p.12)

These characteristics are used as the basis of many adult learning methods. Trivette *et al.* (2009) conducted an analysis of four adult learning methods: Accelerated Learning; Coaching; Guided Design and Just-in-Time Training. They looked at the extent to which the methods were associated with improved learner outcomes and found that the following promote cognitive processing:

- Introduction of the PD topic through learning activities that occur prior to the training and through warm-up exercises, such as quizzes related to the training topic.
- Illustration of the use of new knowledge and practices through role-plays or simulations related to the topic.
- Participant practice of their application of new knowledge and practices through problem-solving tasks and participant role-plays.
- Participants' self-assessment of strengths and areas for improvement in the application of practice and their solutions to problems.
- Participants' reflections on their new learning, on instructor and peer feedback, and next steps for performance improvement.
- Participants' self-assessment of their mastery of new learning, preferably compared with some standard or set of criteria.

(Lauer *et al.*, 2014).

These findings show the importance of focusing on the experiences, abilities and reflections of teachers. Feelings and motivation play an important role in the teaching profession and teachers' thinking, feelings and wanting must be taken into account to promote learning (Korthagen, 2017). This contrasts with the growing trend of competency-based approaches to teacher improvement where the accomplishment of a list of important competencies produces a good teacher. Korthagen (2017) critiques the competency-based approach and states that it ignores the core qualities of the teacher (creativity, trust, care, courage, sensitivity, decisiveness, spontaneity, commitment and flexibility). Positive psychologists also advocate enhancing core qualities as an effective alternative to deficit-based models of development (Liu, Li and Zou, 2019). Teacher learning and enacting change are dependent on "an interwoven mix of factors, including teacher, school and policy-level contexts and characteristics" (Murchan, Loxley and Johnson, 2009, p.455). All of these factors are paramount considerations when planning and providing appropriate and effective PD/PL opportunities for teachers.

2.6.4   Importance of Professional Learning / Development

Schools are reliant on effective PD to motivate teachers and to equip them with the skills required to prepare students for the 21st century. Teacher PL is widely accepted as an important factor for improving student achievement (King, 2016) and is a feature of educational policy worldwide. A McKinsey report which studied school systems that had gone from great to excellent found that these schools had placed their focus mainly on PL (78%) (Mourshed, Chinezi and Barber, 2010). In Ireland The White Paper on Education (GOI, 1995) "sets out a framework for the development of education into the next century, against the background of a rapidly changing and evolving society" (p.1). It recognises the importance of PL and states that the aims of professional development programmes are

> to equip teachers with the capacity to respond effectively to major changes in the education system, including changes in curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment, school organisation and management, and to provide for teachers' personal and professional development needs. (GOI, 1995, p.133)

The impetus for providing quality PD for teachers is to create effective schools that can change and adapt to system and societal changes. An underlying belief of the school effectiveness movement is that all children can learn (Murphy, 1992). An

effective school can be defined as one "in which pupils progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake" (Mortimore, 1991, P.9) and refers to the value added by the school. On average a school can account for 5-18% of the achievement of their students (Stoll and Fink, 1996; Smyth, 1999; Sammons and Bakkum, 2011). School effects are complex and multi-layered and the overall effect can comprise an average of the good and bad practice occurring within. If the lens is focused in, then more significant effects can be found at department and classroom level (Macbeath and Mortimore, 2001). Timperley (2011) outlines that an improvement in student achievement can have a dual effect. This achievement benefits the student but also the teacher, as experiencing this is linked to increased teacher motivation, even if the student improvements are small.

Measured increases in student learning can be linked to effective PD. Cordingley, Bell and Rundell (2003) reviewed collaborative and sustained PD initiatives in the UK (Cordingley, Bell and Rundell, 2003) and reported a positive link to students' achievement. The review reported the benefits of this type of PD:

- Enhanced teacher confidence and a stronger belief in their power to make a difference.
- Increased enthusiasm for professional development through collaborative working.
- An increase in teachers' willingness to take risks and trying things previously thought to be too difficult.
- Collaboration was important in sustaining change.
- Development of teachers' ability to support student self-evaluation.

(Cordingley, Bell and Rundell, 2003)

Collaborative forms of PD have the potential to empower teachers to experiment, take risks and embrace a growth mindset. They can foster a culture that supports a shift away from isolated teaching practices. Teaching has traditionally been viewed as an isolated job and the autonomy of Irish teachers or pedagogical solitude (Conway *et al.,* 2009) is described by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1991) as legendary. Collaborative forms of PD can counteract the isolation and open up the classroom door to colleagues who want to learn from and with each other. In light of the growing concerns over many teachers leaving the profession (Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014; Darling Hammond 2010; Ryan *et al.*, 2017), a more collaborative culture has the potential to enhance support for teachers and improve job satisfaction, as it builds both teacher and school

capacity (Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Teacher's professional needs are not static throughout their career and opportunities should be cognisant of the needs of the individual teacher in their particular context. Teacher's motivational beliefs and their engagement with collaborative forms of PD are influenced by their career stage (Durksen, Klassen and Daniels, 2017) and this should be considered when designing and delivering PD opportunities.

2.6.5   Career Stage and Professional Development

Teacher's working lives can be affected by many personal, professional and school context factors. These in turn can affect their participation in and engagement with PD. In particular, teachers' career stage is an important factor in their participation in PD (Banks and Smyth, 2011). When exploring teachers working lives, various authors have attributed characteristics to the different stages of their careers. While these are often based on a particular number of years in the job, Day *et al.* (2006) caution that putting exact numbers of years on career stages is not accurate. They explain that rigidly defining the stages according to a particular number of years, fails to take into account other complex factors (personal, professional and situated) that affect teachers professional life development. They see them as progressive stages that teachers will move through at different rates. Huberman's (1989) earlier study on the lives of teachers suggests that their careers are not linear, predictable or identical. This inconsistency of progression makes it difficult for school authorities to support teachers' needs and to positively guide them through the various stages.

Table 4:   Teacher Career Stages

Huberman (1989)		
1. *Novice* Career Entry (0-3yrs): Survival and Discovery Beginnings, feeling one's way.	*2.* *Mid-Career* 4-6yrs Stabilisation Consolidation of a pedagogical repertoire 7-25yrs Diversification Reassessment activism 26-31yrs Serenity, Conservatism affective distance	*3.* *Late Career* 31-40yrs Disengagement Serene Bitter
Steffy and Wolfe (2001)		
1. *Novice phase* Preservice	*2.* *Apprentice Phase* 0-3 yrs Induction period	*3.* *Professional Phase* Self-confidence grows Student feedback is critical
4. *Expert Phase* Achievement of high standards	*5.* *Distinguished Phase* Exceed expectations and impact decisions beyond their schools	*6.* *Emeritus Phase* Marks a lifetime of achievement in education. Often continue to serve the education community after retirement.
Day *et al*. (2012) With Subgroups		
1. *Commitment: Support and Challenge (0-3yrs)* Developing sense of efficacy or Reduced sense of efficacy	*2.* *Identity and Efficacy in classroom (4-7yrs)* Sustaining a strong sense of identity, self-efficacy and effectiveness or Sustaining identity, efficacy and effectiveness or Identity, efficacy and effectiveness at risk.	*3.* *Managing Changes in Role and Identity (8-15yrs)* Sustained engagement or Detachment/loss of motivation.
4. *Work-life Tensions (16-23yrs)* Further career advancement and good pupil results have led to increased motivation/commitment; or Sustained motivation, commitment and effectiveness; or Workload/managing competing tensions/career stagnation have led to decreased motivation, commitment and effectiveness	*5.* *Challenges to Sustaining Motivation (24-30yrs)* Sustained a strong sense of motivation and commitment; or Holding on but losing motivation	*6.* *Sustaining/Declining Motivation (31+yrs)* Maintaining commitment; or Tired and trapped

Huberman (1989) highlights that teachers have different learning needs throughout their careers while Steffy and Wolfe (2001) discuss the importance of PD to assist teachers to propel them through the phases. The literature shows that it is important to provide professional development appropriate to the career stage of teachers to keep them engaged (Halton, 2004). School leaders wishing to sustain teacher development must consider teachers' career stage in order to address their unique needs (Steffy *et al.,* 2000).

Huberman (1989) explains that the mid-career is an important stage that contains multiple paths and outcomes. Louws *et al.* (2018) also investigated the PD needs of teachers at different career stages and found that "mid- and late-career teachers seem more occupied with remaining challenged and motivated in their job and/or adapting their teaching to current school innovations" (p.74). The final stage of a teacher's career will be influenced by their particular journey through the mid-career and will determine whether the final phase is experienced with "tranquilly or with rancour" (p.12). This suggests that school leaders should be carefully guiding mid-career teachers along a positive path to create a competent, committed and motivated staff. The Mid-career stage is also the time when teachers become eligible to apply for positions of responsibility in the school. This further complicates these teacher's PD needs as they require development of their classroom and pedagogical skills in addition to the skills required to meet the demands of a leadership position.

Mooney Simmie (2007, p.164), when discussing teacher design teams, identifies the following need within experienced teachers: teachers who have become competent with their subject matter and management of their classrooms have a desire and a drive to further develop themselves in a process of self-actualisation. When teachers are mid-career, they reach Huberman's (1989) stage three, the diversification, activism and reassessment stage. Teachers at this stage wish to increase their instructional impact and they may experiment with new materials and instructional strategies, making this an important stage for engaging in PD to maximise their desire to improve with the experience they have. Mid-career teachers range from an expert or master teacher, self-actualised and self-controlled to a withdrawn teacher who is critical, unresponsive and obstructionist (Steffy, 1989 as cited by Cothern, 1999). Middle and late career teachers seek "empowerment and collaboration with their leaders" (Weiss, 1999 as cited by Leithwood and Beatty, 2008, p.26). If the

needs of teachers at this stage are acknowledged and developed, then it could lessen the potential negative elements of the next two stages. Stage four, serenity and conservatism, when teachers can experience a loss of engagement, a decline in career ambitions and a greater sense of self-acceptance. Conservative teachers can be sceptical of innovations and critical of education policy. In the final stage (five), disengagement: teachers can either have a serene or bitter disengagement. I have experienced that engagement in PD is both rewarding and motivating and it has been an important factor in ensuring that I did not become disengaged and conservative. Therefore, there is merit in providing adequate in-service throughout a teacher's life cycle that is appropriate to their career stage to "rust proof a teacher" (Berdie, 1971, p45) and to avoid teachers disengaging with new practices and improvements.

It is important therefore to consider the career stage of a teacher when planning for and implementing appropriate PD. The OECD's Review of Irish Education in 1991, recommended that investment should be made in a nationwide induction and in-service system which would use the idea of the teaching career as its basis (Coolahan, 2007, p.7). Aligning PD needs and career stage is also recognised internationally. An American study on teachers' perspective of the career-stage appropriateness of their formal PL programmes report that PD programmes were appropriate when participants were able to choose the content, when it was delivered by an experienced educator and if it used active engagement as the primary delivery method (Rinaldi, 2007). The structuring of PD in line with career stage is evident in the TC's policy approach to teacher's development.

In Ireland, four key stages have emerged in teachers' professional development: initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and late career support (Teaching Council, 2011). The beginning stage of a teacher's career was addressed in 2013 with the implementation of the Droichead process. This is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) introduced by the Teaching Council with the aim of addressing the needs of teachers as they begin their careers. This process included an in-school peer evaluation element to support the NQT during this critical transition period. This indicates that PD policy should also address the remaining stages of a teacher's career. While there is a variety of provisions for PD in Ireland, the subsequent stages lack a formal structure. They require attention to maximise teaching and learning in

the classroom and to provide for the personal and professional development of the individual teacher. This is particularly important for all mid-career teachers and especially for those who are appointed to middle leadership positions (AP1 posts). These teachers' roles and responsibilities have increased and subsequently their skillset must also increase to meet the demands of the new role. Appropriate PD opportunities can enhance existing teaching skills and develop the required management and leadership skills required in modern school settings.

2.7   Types of Professional Development

The literature emphasises the importance of providing effective PD that meets the specific needs of the teacher while also serving school and policy needs. As noted in chapter one, the provision of appropriate and effective PD which meets all stakeholder's needs is a complex and 'wicked' problem. The aim of PD is to build the required skills to meet the demands of a specific professional role. This can happen in different contexts and by the use of various approaches / methods. Eraut (1994) identifies three major contexts in which professional knowledge is acquired – the academic context, institutional discussion of policy and practice and practice itself (p.20). While Trivette *el al.* (2009) explains that "Professional development as currently practiced falls along a continuum from one-time didactic workshops to discovery and experiential learning" (p.11). Consequently, there are many forms of PD however "not all PD is effective or productive for the teacher, the school or the education system as a whole" (Brown *et al.,* 2017, p.14).

When Halton (2004, p.69) outlines professional development, he explains it as an umbrella term which includes, "in-service training, teacher training, teacher education, staff development, school development and indeed many other courses and activities designed for teachers." He outlines that the opportunities given to teachers to develop are often provider driven. They support a change in a curriculum, implementation of new management or administrative processes or new policies. In contrast, demand-led development opportunities are those which are created from a need identified by teachers, which Halton (2004, p.69) refers to as "participant-led opportunities". The person taking part in this type of development has assisted in creating its aims. A shift to participant-led opportunities is recommended if "professional development for teachers is to become congruent with the values and

vision of the learning society" (Halton, 2004, p.69). Kennedy (2014) acknowledges the range of provision and outlines that PD can be structured and organised in various different ways and for various different reasons. She explains that there are many forms of PD which have been categorised into nine models:

1. Training;
2. Award-bearing;
3. Deficit;
4. Cascade;
5. Standards-based;
6. Coaching/mentoring;
7. Community of practice;
8. Action research;
9. Transformative.

(Kennedy, 2014, p.337)

Table 5 places these nine models into three broad categories with the capacity for teacher autonomy increasing from transmission to transitional then to transformative.

Table 5:   Spectrum of CPD Models

Model of CPD	Purpose of Model	
The training model	Transmission	
The award bearing model		
The deficit model		
The cascade model		
The standards based model	Transitional	Increasing capacity for professional autonomy
The coaching/mentoring model		
The community of practice model		
	Transformative	
The action research model		
The transformative model		

(Kennedy, 2014, p.349)

Kennedy (2014) also cautions that while the capacity for autonomy is increased in transformative models, this does not guarantee that this capacity will be fulfilled. Kennedy's (2006) analysis and categorisation of PD requires teachers "to be able to articulate their own conceptions of teaching and to be able to select and justify

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appropriate modes of practice" (p.50). The various types are analysed below starting with the transmission models, moving to transitional and into transformative form of PD.

2.7.1   Training Model

Kennedy (2014) explains that the training model has been a prevalent feature of PD in recent times which supports a skills-based view of teaching where information is delivered to teachers by an expert and is provider driven with the participant having a passive role. This model has deficiencies (Owens, Pogodzinski and Hill, 2016) and fails to impact on the manner in which the information delivered is used in practice (Kennedy, 2014), but is effective as a means to introduce new knowledge (Hoban, 2002).

2.7.2   Award-bearing Model

The award-bearing model involves completing a programme of study which leads to achieving a postgraduate qualification at diploma, masters or doctoral level. Literature highlights the need for academic rigour and the inclusion of research and evidence-based practice in the professional development of teachers (Broad and Evans, 2006; Donaldson, 2011). This was also a feature of the TALIS report (OECD, 2009) which noted that teachers who took part in university level PD found it had a greater impact on their practice. Teachers who engage in accredited programmes report that this engagement provides the most impact yet Pedder and Opfer (2011) found that 75% of teachers in their large-scale study said that accreditation of PD was not important or of limited importance when choosing PD.

2.7.3   Deficit Model

In contrast to the self-selected engagement in academic studies the deficit model is designed to address a deficit in teacher performance. This deficit needs to be identified and whether management, inspectors or the individual identifies those needs varies from region to region. Scott and Armstrong (2018) critique this model as it "can erode people power and the sense of community, reinforce hierarchy, and encourage a sense of self-enfeeblement" (p.5). This model discourages teachers from engaging in critical reflection. The concern is that this model further pushes teachers into isolation in their classrooms instead of nurturing an open-door culture

where teachers learn in a collegial manner and develop the school as a progressive learning environment. Tuli Gemeda, Fiorucci and Catarci, (2014) advocate abandoning the deficit model and encourage teachers to be active participants in their own professional growth.

2.7.4 Cascade Model

The cascade model involves teachers attending PD and then passing on the information to their colleagues (Kennedy, 2014). This model has the benefits of reaching a large number of teachers quickly and is cost effective (Bett, 2016) yet research has shown that the

> Experience of cascades in in-service development has tended to show, however, that the cascade is more often reduced to a trickle by the time it reaches the classroom teacher, on whom the success of curricular change depends. (Hayes, 2000, p.135)

Hayes suggests that there are five criteria that should be present if the cascade approach is to be successful:

1. The method of conducting the training must be experiential and reflective rather than transmissive;
2. The training must be open to reinterpretation; rigid adherence to prescribed ways of working should not be expected;
3. Expertise must be diffused through the system as widely as possible, not concentrated at the top;
4. A cross-section of stakeholders must be involved in the preparation of training materials;
5. Decentralization of responsibilities within the cascade structure is desirable.

(Hayes, 2000, p.138)

The cascade model fails to address the attitudes and values element of PD as the knowledge and skills acquired are shared (Kennedy, 2014) and is often carried out in settings away from the school which can limit its transmission to school settings (Bett, 2016). This model requires teachers to have facilitation skills and confidence in their ability to transmit the knowledge. It concurrently requires the school culture to be open to peer instruction. Despite some challenges it keeps the learning in a context specific setting and close to classroom practice and consequently warrants further attention in literature and in practice.

2.7.5   Standards-based Model

The standards-based model has gained traction in many jurisdictions in recent years. Standards are

> exemplars of 'good' or 'quality' teaching practice. As such, they ultimately rest on a professional consensus about what counts as quality learning and what that implies for what teachers should know, believe, and be able to do. (Kleinhenz and Ingvarson, 2007, p.5)

This model works on the premise that there is a system of efficient teaching which can be replicated in the classroom (Uí Chonduibh, 2018). Kennedy (2005) explains that despite many critiques of this model (limiting, lack of respect for teachers' reflection), policy documents in many jurisdictions present justifications for their use (engagement, common language, scaffold for PD). Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2007) explain that in the 1980s, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) was one of the first to develop teaching standards, with the United States and Australia following suit. They outline that standards are a useful strategy to provide a pathway for research into the classroom. If this model is practised in isolation of other approaches it potentially disregards the complex nature of teaching and reduces the craft of teaching to following a set of rules. The complex nature of classrooms requires teachers to constantly reflect and adapt to meet the social, emotional and intellectual needs of their students.

2.7.6   Mentoring / Coaching Model

The previous models approach learning as an individual endeavour that fails to utilise the knowledge that can be gained from working with experienced colleagues. The mentoring/coaching model harnesses this knowledge to provide job embedded support. The term mentor has its origins in Greek mythology and has come to mean an "experienced, trusted advisor or counsellor" (Collinson *et al.*, 2009, p.6). The terms mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably but a clear distinction exists. The General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS, 2018) distinguishes: Coaching is non-directive and involves helping the person find their own solutions to problems while Mentoring is directive and can involve offering guidance and giving advice to assist in solving problems. Mentoring has been a feature in schools in an informal manner for decades and recently has been formalised in Ireland with the Droichead process. Droichead is an integrated induction framework, based on a

whole school approach which supports newly qualified teachers' PL. It involves school-based induction that is underpinned by reflective practice, mentoring and professional conversations and additional professional learning activities (Teaching Council, 2017).

The popularity of mentoring / coaching has increased in the past 20 years and is an important element of PL (Cordingley, 2005). "It has a key role to play in education: in the classroom, in the professional development of key actors in the educational system, and in the creation of learning cultures" (Devine, Meyers and Houssemand, 2013). Gardiner and Weisling (2016) explain that mentoring practices can be 'inside' when the mentoring occurs when teachers are working with students or 'outside' when mentoring happens before or after teaching occurs. Their study of 6 experienced induction coaches in the United States found that coaches believed that 'inside' practices could accelerate teacher learning but issues of authority, credibility and climate prevented them from implementing it fully. They report that mentoring outcomes vary in quality and in high-need settings can translate to emotional support and socialisation instead of PL.

There are several approaches to coaching (solution-focused coaching, cognitive and cognitive-behavioural coaching, instructional coaching, executive coaching, peer coaching and positive organizational scholarship) which are often combined to make a blended approach (Devine, Meyers and Houssemand, 2013).

> If used effectively, there is abundant evidence that coaching and mentoring empowers individuals, builds teams, enhances collegiality and improves morale across the team or establishment. As a result of feeling more in control individuals are more likely to accept responsibility both for their own learning and behaviour and for the aims of the organisation (in this context the school/ education establishment) as a whole. (GTCS, 2018)

Currently in Ireland, mentoring/coaching is available for NQT's and school leaders. NQT's are provided with support from trained mentors in their school through the Droichead process. This is supported by additional learning opportunities facilitated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). The Centre for School Leadership (CSL) provides mentoring for newly qualified principals and a one to one personal coaching service for established senior leaders. They aim to impact on both the person and the practice of the leader. Following on from the one to one sessions, they are also offering team

coaching for school leadership teams. This requires that the principal has undergone at least 4 of their 6 one to one sessions. They can then avail of coaching for their school leadership team. This programme facilitates a team of 6 (including the principal) which is sufficient for a small school but would not cater for principal, deputy principals and post holders in a large school.

2.7.7 Community of Practice Model

The need for schools to become learning communities was emphasised in the OECD study — Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers (2005). Establishing what exactly a learning community is and understanding how to construct and support one is a complex matter. Educational systems and contexts vary greatly across and within countries. Similarly, the phenomenon of learning communities can vary across the world and even from one neighbouring school to the next. There is no agreement in the literature on an exact definition of or title for a group of educators who work collaboratively, share expertise and work to improve their practice and outcomes for students. A variety of terms to describe these groups are present in educational discourse. Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) explain that the labels placed on these groups include; 'teacher's collaboration with colleagues'; 'professional community'; 'professional learning communities'; 'communities of practice'; 'collegial inquiry communities'; and 'purposeful communities'. Despite the various terms used to describe them there is agreement that teachers working together to improve their knowledge and skills and in turn improve student outcomes is desirable, effective and essential for schools in a modern world.

For clarity purposes I make a distinction between the following terms. 1. The Community of practice model is an approach that a school or a PD provider adopts to encourage collaborative practices. 2. A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people brought together by a learning need that they share, in an effort to improve their practice and similarly 3. A PLC is a group of professionals coming together to learn. Despite the common use of both CoP and PLC in Irish educational discourse, for the purposes of this thesis I will use the term PLC.

The literature describes the community of practice model as an effective, job-embedded, collaborative strategy which is present in many schools in the form of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Margolis, Durbin and Doring, 2016;

Darling-Hammond and Richardson; 2009, Stoll and Louis, 2007; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1996). PLCs are collaborative groups of teachers who work together to improve practice and student performance. Barber and Mourshed (2007) acknowledge their value in schools when they note that high-performing systems use the PLC process to support powerful professional development through teacher collaboration. PLCs are also recommended for the potential they have to build capacity and to deliver sustainable improvement (Stoll *et al.,* 2006).

 A report on the Creating and Sustaining Effective Professional Learning Communities project, states that:

> An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning. (Bolam *et al.*, 2005, p.145)

Bolam *et al.* (2005) report that an effective PLC exhibits eight key characteristics: "shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; collaboration focused on learning; individual and collective professional learning; reflective professional enquiry; openness, networks and partnerships; inclusive membership; mutual trust, respect and support" (p.i). Kennedy (2014) describes this as more an orientation to PL as opposed to a specific model of PD which, if created in the right conditions, "can also act as powerful sites of transformation, where the sum total of individual knowledge and experience is enhanced significantly through collective endeavour" (Kennedy, 2006, p.245).

Bush (2016) notes that collegiality is an important feature of PLC's and one of the most important concepts in educational leadership history. He cautions that it has been overly optimistic and that it overestimated teachers' willingness to commit to working with colleagues. Similarly, Gray, Kruse and Tarter (2016) link collegiality to PLCs and advise that while they can contribute to improved student achievement, the correct school structures, collegial trust and academic emphasis are prerequisites to its success.

Setting up a PLC is a complex undertaking and not just a matter of getting teachers to meet (O'Sullivan, McConnell and McMillan, 2014). Recent concerns suggest that PLCs have not reached their full potential and can be hindered by school culture and resistance to change and end up as another meeting rather than a meeting designed to transform practice (Margolis*,* Durbin and Doring, 2016). Kennedy (2016) looks

beyond the set-up of these groups and advocates for a move past the PLC per se and to instead focus on the content that the groups discuss and the nature of the work that they are involved in. Concern about the effectiveness of PLC's was also raised in a study of Irish teachers, which found that "unless teachers, and those that are leading PLCs, have a deep understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of PLCs then it is unlikely that they will lead to deep professional learning" (O'Sullivan, McConnell and McMillan, 2014, p.52). The success of a PLC is dependent on a number of factors. To ensure its success there must be an investment of time and skills to set it up properly and subsequently participants must fully commit to collaborative work.

2.7.8   Action Research Model

There has been a move in recent years to use research and evidenced based practice to inform improvement in schools. Action research involves a practitioner doing research within a particular setting and using the results to make changes to the way they work. Action Research is "an inquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change, in order to improve some educational practice" (Bassey, 1998, p.93). Bassey (1998) explains that action research can be carried out by an individual or with colleagues but requires an investment of time and an acceptance that outcomes might not always be positive. When outcomes are positive it can be a powerful method of change. It involves addressing three questions: What is happening in this educational situation? What changes are we going to introduce? What happens when we make the changes? The Action Research Model follows eight distinct stages: 1. Define the enquiry; 2. Describe the educational situation; 3. Collect evaluative data and analyse it; 4. Review the data and look for contradictions; 5. Tackle a contradiction by introducing change; 6. Monitor the change; 7. Analyse evaluative data about the change; and 8. Review the change and decide what to do next. (pp.94-95). Action research is a key feature of the Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century (TL21) model which is led by Maynooth University in collaboration with the DES and five education centres. In a review of developments of the programme, Hogan and Malone (2014, p.45) outline seven priorities that defined the active phase of the programme:

1. Teachers as the authors of their own work
2. Students as active learners

3. Teachers as a strategic national resource
4. School leadership and the demands of administration
5. Providing for different categories of need in continuing professional development
6. CPD as integral as distinct from an 'add-on'
7. Accreditation for CPD

This model incorporates much more than just an Action research-based project. It includes compulsory senior management engagement, context specific Action research, TL's and an option for voluntary further accreditation. As I experienced as a participant and a facilitator of the programme, this is a transformative model of PD which will be outlined further below.

2.7.9   Transformative Model

Some researchers advocate approaches that combine more than one of the above models (Grierson and Woloshyn, 2013) and they emphasise that the approaches need to be intensive and time must be given for changes to be embedded (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). The transformative model "involves the combination of a number of processes and conditions – aspects of which are drawn from other models…. that support a transformative agenda" (Kennedy, 2005, p.246). O'Sullivan, McConnell and McMillan (2014) advocate that PD should be school-based and as close to the classroom as possible. It is important to engage teachers in real-life learning situations (Margolis, Durbin and Doring, 2016) and taking PD directly into the classroom with student's present is emerging as the new PD model. Cajkler *et al.* (2014) explain that lesson study is emerging as an effective collaborative method of PL that originated in Japan. This model, which is focused in the classroom, is a collaborative student focused approach. It involves teachers collaboratively researching, planning and teaching a series of lessons. One member teaches the lesson while the other members observe the learning and participation of certain students. The observations are then used to evaluate the lesson and revise it. Ming Cheung and Yee Wong (2014) report that it is a "powerful tool to help teachers examine their practices and enhance student learning" (p.137). Lesson study has been explored in an Irish cross border study. Two schools looked at the use of lesson study in Home Economics and teachers reported that the focus on students was the factor that distinguished it from other PD methods (Gardiner *et al.*, 2012). Improved

student outcomes should always be the desired end result of PD but student presence and student voice have been lacking in research and practice and is possibly "the most critical piece" (Margolis, Durbin and Doring, 2016) to make it authentic, job-embedded and effective.

The combination of various elements of PD can also be seen in the TL21 programme which was developed by Maynooth University. It combines action research, PLCs and the option of an award bearing element. This programme is research-led and it aims to "strengthen teachers' capabilities as authors of their own work and to encourage students as active and responsible participants in learning" (Granville, 2019, p.2). This programme was independently reviewed after 16 years in operation and the report found that "the conceptual and organisational frame of TL21 was seen to be very successful in meeting the needs of participants" (p.2). The report confirms the findings in the literature above as participants identified the following as critical to the success of the programme:

> the voluntary participation of each school team;
>
> the process of identifying a school-based theme for extended engagement; the continuity and progression over two years;
>
> the opportunity for teachers to talk to school colleagues about their own school, in extended professional conversations and the opportunity to share experiences with other schools
>
> the required presence and engagement of school leaders was also noted as an essential element of the programme. (p.2)

This report noted in particular the quality of engagement of the participating teachers who give up a significant amount of time with no financial or other compensation. This voluntary engagement with a transformative model that values and supports the use of research for school-based improvement shows the value of "a carefully designed and highly sophisticated programme" (p.5). These two transformative PD models utilise research and collaboration as powerful tools to improve classroom and school practice.

2.8   Features of Effective Professional Development for Teachers

The literature is clear that a culture of lifelong learning that is underpinned by collaboration is desirable and essential in 21st century schools. Collaborative forms of PD have the potential to create a synergy among staff who are working to improve outcomes for students and to professionally and personally develop. PD is not a one

size fits all process and it includes opportunities that can range from informal professional conversations in the staffroom to formal university level courses. The literature also tells us that not all forms of PD are effective.

Guskey (2002) suggests that there are three areas of change expected from Teachers PD: "change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students" (p.381). An extensive review of literature (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardiner, 2017) over the past 30 years shows a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes. This begs the questions as to what is effective PD. Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardiner, (2017, p.4) report that effective PD includes most or all the following elements:

1. Is content focused
2. Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
3. Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
4. Uses models and modelling of effective practice
5. Provides coaching and expert support
6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
7. Is of sustained duration

They highlight that PLCs incorporate several of these features and they support improvement within and beyond the school. They make several recommendations for policy and practice which include adopting standards for professional development which will be used to design, evaluate and fund PD for teachers. The structure of the school day has not changed much since our current system of education began. Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardiner (2017) recommend that the use of time and school schedules should be redesigned to increase PL and collaboration and to increase opportunities for PD. They advocate for undertaking needs assessments to ascertain the needs and desires of teachers in relation to PL. They recommend that schools should identify and utilise the experiences and skills of expert teachers as mentors and coaches in the PD process.

Despite the potential for success not all PD leads to improvement. Busher and Harris (2000, p.138) highlight the failure of some in-service training to facilitate a change in classroom practice. The failure is not always at the level of input. They explain that conditions in classrooms, the department and the school must adapt to facilitate the

change of practice being encouraged through in-service. In many schools, there is no accommodation made to allow teachers to implement their training. Therefore, the training received has little impact on what happens on a daily basis in classrooms.

> Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms. (Fullan, 1991, p.315)

Fullan (1991) explores the reasons for failure of most professional development. One-shot workshops are widespread in education systems but are not effective. Follow-up support for ideas and practices introduced in these in-service programmes occurs in only a small number of cases. The topics chosen are not selected by the participants and consequently the in-service programs rarely address their individual needs and concerns. The majority of programs involve teachers from many different schools but there is a lack of recognition of the different circumstances facing teachers when they return to their individual settings. There is also a lack of any conceptual basis in the planning and implementing of in-service programs that would ensure their effectiveness and follow-up evaluation does not occur frequently (Fullan, 1991, p.3).

Kennedy (2014, p.348) suggests five key questions for the analysis of models of CPD:

- What types of knowledge acquisition does the CPD support, i.e. procedural or propositional?
- Is the principal focus on individual or collective development?
- To what extent is the CPD used as a form of accountability?
- What capacity does the CPD allow for supporting professional autonomy?
- Is the fundamental purpose of the CPD to provide a means of transmission or to facilitate transformative practice?

Pedder and Opfer (2011) found that there were few mechanisms used in the evaluation of PD and "overall, evaluation of CPD appeared instinctive, pragmatic and without explicit reference to clearly defined learning outcomes for teachers or students" (p.749).

When teachers return to the classroom following PD, they must adapt their practices to incorporate new information/techniques. Fullan (1991, p.318) outlines that issues can arise for teachers at this stage as they begin to implement new techniques. An investment of time and energy are required which can significantly add to their

workload. As the teacher initially attempts to implement the changes their competence is likely to decrease. This can cause them to change back to their previous practices. Teachers can be reluctant to change when they are not fully confident with new techniques as they fear it may affect their students' results.

Researchers have recently been advocating for the use of student data to inform school improvement and teacher's PD. Dam, Janssen and van Driel (2018) explain that data can be used for accountability purposes or to support teachers' learning. They argue that the use of data in schools has been under-utilised despite its potential to give an insight into teacher's actions on student learning. Their research involved providing frames and support for teachers to interpret student data and propose change. Their small-scale study reports a positive outcome to the use of the frames and the context specific changes that teachers made.

Similar to most jurisdictions, Irish teachers are working in an accountable environment. The expectations of students, parents, society and the media in Ireland are centred on the Leaving Certificate results. These results are in the most part, the sole determining factor for college placement and school league tables. On a policy level, school development planning also requires that teachers compare their result averages to those of the national averages. This accountable environment could inhibit teachers from experimenting with and implementing new practices. If teachers do not have the time and space to become proficient with new practices then they may be reluctant to implement them. Unless the system changes from the top down, the status quo will remain and the impact of in-service on new techniques will fade from memory as the reality of covering the syllabus and completing projects takes over. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on providing effective PD that meets the needs of teachers. This should be coupled with a quality assurance process which ensures that the learning outcomes have been achieved and that teachers have adequate time and space to implement and develop the new skills acquired.

2.9   PD Internationally

Collinson *et al.* (2009) describe three global trends in PD that have emerged in response to a need to develop a knowledge society. These trends are intended to "broaden teachers' learning and enhance their practices through continuous professional development" (p.1). The trends are glocalisation, mentoring, and re-

thinking teacher evaluation. Glocalisation is the blending of global and local, adapting global trends and putting a local twist on it to meet the contextual and cultural needs of the setting. What is happening globally in the field of education is having an influence on what happens and emerges in Irish education but it will be adapted to suit the context of the country and again further to suit the context of the school.

The main themes evident in the literature globally are regulation of the teaching profession, teaching as a continuum, teaching standards and increasing collaborative methods of PD with teachers taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development.

Over the past 20 years various countries have introduced mandatory professional standards for teachers (Fraser *et al.*, 2007). Since 2011, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) requires teachers to hold professional registration and expects that teachers will engage in PL that focuses on improving practice and student outcomes. (Lloyd and Davis, 2018). APST consists of seven standards that teachers must meet at different stages depending on the stage of their career. There are four stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The standards for PD require teachers to identify and plan professional learning needs; engage in PL and improve practice; engage with colleagues and improve practice and apply PL and improve student learning. To maintain registration teachers must have engaged in 100 hours of PD in the previous five years (AITSL, 2014b).

A European Commission (2018) report, which gives an overview of national policies on teacher careers across 43 European education systems provides an analysis of different aspects of the teaching profession. The report focuses on primary and general secondary education. The main themes include: forward planning and main challenges in teacher supply and demand; entry to the teaching profession and teacher mobility; continuing professional development and support; career development and teacher appraisal. It explains that, in the broad sense, PD in Europe can be regarded as mandatory as there is a minimum amount of PD that all teachers must do that relates to statutory duties. More specifically PD is mandatory in 21 education systems where there is a minimum number of hours, days or credits that must be undertaken within a specified time frame. PD is required for promotion in nine countries and it is a condition to progress on the salary scale. In another 14 systems PD is a professional duty of the teacher but there is no specified mandatory

number of hours. Three of these countries require PD for promotion opportunities and in Spain it is required for salary progression. The other seven have no requirement to engage in PD.

22 countries have PD planning as part of the school development plan. In most countries, schools play an important part in deciding the needs and priorities for PD with a conflicting approach in Greece, Croatia, Latvia and Turkey where the national education authority solely decides PD provision.

Career and salary progression are common incentives to encourage teachers to partake in PD. 14 countries require PD for promotion, three require it to stay at a certain career level and in two, PD is one of the elements considered for promotion. In 17 of the countries, PD is necessary to take up positions with additional responsibility (management, subject coordination, mentoring, career guidance and advisory roles).

In all countries, PD was available free of charge. In Finland, universities and private companies can apply for grants to cover PD costs for educational priorities. PD is provided during working hours in 36 systems and 10 of these get funding to replace these teachers while attending. Most countries also provide further supports e.g. travel costs, study leave, grants etc.

33 of the education systems require that teacher appraisal is carried out. In four countries the school or local authorities decide if teachers should be appraised and they also decide the method of appraisal. Ireland (second level), Iceland and Turkey are the only countries that do not have appraisal regulations (not including appraisal connected with newly qualified teachers). Teacher appraisal makes a clear contribution to defining the PD needs of teachers. Training for appraisers is an important accompaniment to that and can be embedded in programmes for aspiring leaders or given as a separate programme. A deficiency in the appraisal systems is highlighted in the report as in 17 countries leaders are not trained in appraisal.

The Scottish educational system is somewhat more advanced in terms of development of a teaching council and establishment of PD practices than Ireland is, and due to their close proximity and size have a lot in common with Ireland. Their current position could be an indicator of the direction in which Ireland is heading. The Scottish system involves standards for: registration; career long PL (which replaces

the Standard for Chartered Teacher) and leadership and management. Their key areas for career-long PL are: pedagogy, learning and subject knowledge; curriculum and assessment; enquiry and research; educational contexts and current debates in policy, education and practice; sustaining and developing professional learning and learning for sustainability (GTSC, 2012a, p.2). The McCrone enquiry in 2001 recognised PD as an entitlement for Scottish teachers and 35 hours of PD was incorporated into their contracts (Fraser *et al.*, 2007).

2.10   PD in the Republic of Ireland

2.10.1   PD Providers

PD in the Irish educational system is provided by various statutory bodies as well as many private companies who offer in-service or support to schools for a fee. The main statutory PD providers in Ireland are:

- Department of Education and Skills (DES)
    - The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)
    - National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)
    - Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT)
    - National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
    - National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
    - Education Support Centres of Ireland (ESCI)
    - Centre for School Leadership (CSL)
- Third Level Institutions

In 1992 the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) was tasked with the coordination of teacher professional development. This was renamed the Teacher Education Section (TES) in 2004 and entrusted the responsibilities of the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) with an extra responsibility for initial teacher education. The TES was created out of the belief that teacher education is "a continuum from initial teacher education, to induction and continuing professional development (CPD)" (DES, 2012). The TES provides support for: school development planning; school leadership and management; the introduction of new and revised curriculums and particular projects and initiatives, including those related to priority areas of education provision such as disadvantage and inclusion; education for students with special educational needs; positive behaviour management; and language support for newcomer students (DES, 2012). The main focus of the ICDU/TES initially was on curricular support, development planning support, school attendance and behaviour management. The

provision of CPD prior to 1998 was voluntary and unsystematic (Anglin-Lawlor, 2014). From 1999 on, various national in-service programmes were designed and delivered by teachers who were seconded from their classroom teaching jobs, this became the norm for PD in Irish education (O'Sullivan, 2010). In response to public finance issues many of the support service staff were reduced and responsibility was given to the Professional Development Service for Teachers. (PDST).

The PDST was established in 2010 as a cross sectoral support service for teachers. PDST (2018) aims to "provide high quality professional development and support that empowers teachers and schools to provide the best possible education for all pupils/students". PDST is funded by DES, provides programme and subject-specific curricular support, and support for teaching and learning generally in post-primary schools on a regional basis and delivers its courses through the nationwide network of Education Centres (ESCI).

The network of education support centres (ESCI previously ATECI) facilitates and supports the delivery of national PD programmes (PDST, JCT, NCSE, NEPS). The network has 21 full time and nine part time centres across the country. Courses provided by the support services during school time are generally mandatory for teachers and support changes in curricula and pedagogical approaches. Support services also provide a range of optional evening courses for teachers. In addition to hosting the national programmes, education centres have capacity to cater for the specific local identified needs of the school communities in their catchment areas (ESCI, 2020). This is funded by a local course grant allocated to each centre by the TES of the DES. They also facilitate and support many regional, national and international programmes e.g., TL21, Beacons and Erasmus projects and host post graduate programmes in partnership with third level institutions.

Third level institutions provide a range of post graduate courses which are awarded at certificate, diploma, master's and doctoral level. Course topics can address curricular topics, management and leadership, special education, behaviour management and ethical education. Shorter courses are offered during school holidays and/or online to address specific needs of teachers, e.g. reflective practice, mentoring. These courses are optional and they generally afford teachers the opportunity to gain expertise in a particular area of education.

PD is also offered by many private individuals and companies in areas such as wellbeing, study skills, ICT and internet safety. These tend to be one-off information sessions designed to address an identified need within the school. This provision does not have to undergo a quality assurance process and usually comes with a significant cost to schools. Surprisingly many of the courses paid for by schools are available free from the department funded support services. I have observed there are two issues with the state provision. Firstly, some schools are not aware of the full extent of the supports available to them. Secondly when they are aware and seek these supports, they can be limited due to time and funding restrictions.

PD in Ireland is informed by various policies and educational priorities e.g., LAOS, the Digital Strategy, SSE, wellbeing etc. but the provision can be fragmented. There are many bodies involved with no one overarching coherent strategy or approach. I posit that this is both a strength and a weakness of the system. The strength is that there is a wide variety of PD opportunities available to schools that have diverse and context specific needs. The weakness is that there are gaps in the provision and schools can be confused and unaware of all the support available to them. Despite the wide range of providers and PD opportunities, there is no requirement for teachers at post primary level to engage in professional development outside of that provided in school time. The exception to that is Droichead (the professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)). This programme requires an NQT to engage in school-based supports and a range of PD cluster meetings and workshops in their local education centre. Following this induction phase, the voluntary nature of engagement in PD leads to large differences in the upskilling of individual teachers. Many teachers frequently and earnestly engage in PD opportunities outside of school time. However, there is a cohort who rarely if ever engage in voluntary PD opportunities. Teachers need to allocate time, money and effort into undertaking courses. Therefore, the personal circumstances, commitment and motivation of the individual can greatly influence their engagement with PD. Policy makers and PD providers should consider these factors when planning and facilitating PD opportunities to ensure that all teachers are willing and able to engage.

2.10.2 Relevant Irish Educational Policy

The White Paper on Education (GOI, 1995) was developed after a consultative process and took stock of the achievements and trends in the provision of education.

Its aim was to provide a policy framework for the development of the Irish Education system into the 21st century. It acknowledged some failings of the PD system at the time, failings which continue to be an issue today. The report describes the provision of PD as fragmented and states that the voluntary nature of participation was an issue for concern. The White Paper (GOI, 1995) also highlighted the need for teachers to take personal responsibility for their own professional development and that they should be given opportunities to take part in in-career training. Moran (1998, p.88) agrees that teacher development is essentially, though not exclusively, a process of personal development: "unless individuals are committed to their own personal and professional development, no significant learning will occur" (Moran, 1998, p88). The report recognised that the focus of PD should encompass the professional and personal development of teachers and will require a number of providers and approaches.

The Education Act of 1998 was introduced to make provision for the education of everyone in the state, including those with disabilities and special needs. It provides for primary, post-primary, adult, continuing education and vocational education and training. It aims to ensure that schools are accountable to students, parents and the state for the education they provide. Schools must be considerate of the range of values, beliefs, languages and traditions currently present in Irish society. The business of the school must be carried out in a spirit of partnership with all the stakeholders (patrons, students, parents, teachers, staff, the community and the state). The act also makes provision for a system of inspection in schools and the establishment of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (GOI, 1998). With the introduction of the 1998 Education Act "the Inspectorate has a statutory quality assurance obligation in relation to education provision" (Stack, 2002). In line with this act, the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) was rolled out in 1999. The document introducing this system from the Department of Education and Science states that schools "want to provide a quality education that meets the demands of a constantly changing environment" (DES, 1999, p.8). The role of the SDPI was "to stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting school improvement and effectiveness." (SDPI, 2011). The SDPI offered a range of supports for schools (workshops, seminars, courses) to help implement these changes. In 2010 the

support for school development planning became the remit of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (SDPI, 2011). The name of this new service for teachers highlights a change in the terms used to describe teachers in educational discourse. The notion of teaching being a vocation changed to one of a profession. This was in line with the development of a body which was responsible for the professional standards of teachers in Ireland.

2.10.3 The Teaching Council

The Teaching Council was established in 2006 as the professional body for teaching in Ireland with the following objectives:

- Promote the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers
- Conduct research into the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers
- Promote awareness among the teaching profession and the public of the benefits of continuing education and training and professional development
- Review and accredit programmes relating to the continuing education and training of teachers
- Perform such other functions in relation to the continuing education and training and continuing professional development of teachers as may be assigned to the Council by the Minister.

(The Teaching Council, 2006)

The Teaching Council recognised the need for a nationwide coherent approach to PD, developed in line with research, which caters for the teacher, the school and the system. One of the Council's initial aims was to investigate enforcing mandatory PD to renew yearly registration. Gleeson (2012) discusses the need for sustainable and ongoing PD for teachers and noted that the recession has had a serious effect on its provision. He recognises the Teaching Council as a valuable advocate for teachers' professional development.

The Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education was published by The Teaching Council in June 2011. The process for this policy started in 2007. Two pieces of research were commissioned to inform the process: 'A review paper on Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland' by Coolahan (2007) and a study 'Learning to Teach: A Nine Country National Study' (2009) by researchers from University College Cork (UCC). In conjunction with these, the council undertook a consultation process. The consultation process started in February 2008 with a

meeting of partners in education to discuss the continuum of teacher education which informed the development of the policy paper. The second stage in October 2008 involved 11 sectoral meetings where the outline document was discussed. A sub-group of the education committee prepared the final policy after considering over 200 submissions from individuals and organisations. The Teaching Council (2011, P.4) describes this policy as "the framework for the reconceptualization of teacher education across the continuum".

The continuum of teacher education has been referred to as the '3 Is' of initial teacher education, induction and in-career development with the Teaching Council adding the 3 Is of innovation, integration and improvement (The Teaching Council, 2011, p.8).

The Council has outlined specific principles for CPD:

- CPD is a right for all registered teachers. In that context, an allocation of time for individual and/or staff group CPD should be built into teachers' scheduled non-teaching time. The allocation of time should be significant and should reflect the importance of CPD for effective professional practice.
- CPD should be based on teachers' identified needs within the school as a learning community.
- CPD is a responsibility of all registered teachers. In that context, a registered teacher should take reasonable steps to maintain, develop and broaden the professional knowledge, skill and capabilities appropriate to his or her teaching.

(The Teaching Council, 2011, p.19)

In 2012 The Teaching Council published its Code of Professional Conduct which "makes explicit the values and standards that have long been experienced by students through their participation in education" (p.3). This suggests that they are planning to follow the trends in other countries to have a standards-based approach (Anglin-Lawlor, 2014) to teacher development.

Following on from the publication of the Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education in 2011, The Teaching Council initiated a consultative process in 2014 to develop a new and comprehensive CPD policy for the Irish education system. They involved stakeholders which included teachers, unions, NCCA, DES and management bodies. The process involved a number of phases to "ensure that the framework is grounded in the realities of teachers' professional lives, and of the Irish education system" (The Teaching Council, 2016b, p.2). In March 2016, The Teaching

Council published Cosán: The National Framework for Teachers' Learning. The framework is now in a four-year development process which aims to involve the stakeholders in shaping its implementation.

During phase one of the consultation process, 3,349 teachers voiced their opinions and raised concerns over autonomy, access, use of Croke Park hours, mandatory CPD, accreditation, incentives (The Teaching Council, 2016). It also highlighted that teachers are deeply interested in PL and in opportunities to engage in high -quality CPD. These opportunities include collaborative learning and conversations that take place in schools on both a formal and informal level. Teachers involved in the process require choice in relation to how they engage in CPD and are opposed to mandatory CPD as it will undermine real engagement with it. Teachers also felt that CPD should be accredited and that mentoring was a valuable form of CPD. The cost of engaging in formal academic studies was an issue that would limit their engagement. Suggestions to solve this included tax incentives and sabbatical leave to help teachers engage in research and study.

All respondents had concerns over accessing CPD: cost of travel, childcare, intrusion on personal time and geographical considerations all preclude teachers from engaging in some forms of CPD. The extra hours required under the Croke Park agreement were also a significant concern of many respondents with some seeing that these hours had a role to play in the solution (The Teaching Council, 2016b).

The Cosán framework outlines The Teaching Council's vision for the future of CPD in the Irish Education system. It is concerning that the document is very broad and contains only general aspirations and no concrete pathway. It is commendable that the process is so consultative but as yet no clear outcome is evident. The Teaching Council recognises the complexity of the issue and the question arises as to whether the Council is engaging in this extensive consultation process to explore all possible solutions and to get 'buy in' from those involved. The concern with Cosán is that those involved in the consultation process are teachers who are already committed to lifelong learning and PD and are willing to give of their time freely to engage in the various stages. Teachers who have not engaged will have to be convinced of the merits of Cosán and either encouraged to accept it or mandated to do so. Broderick (2019) looked at likely future developments of Cosán and noted that it had potential to enhance teachers PL. Despite its potential she also advised that certain factors

need to be addressed. The policy requires evidence of PL and could become a tool for public accountability. The issues of time, funding and evaluation of PL were also areas that she recommends need to addressed if the potential benefits are to be realised. Cosán is currently in a pilot stage in some schools. This involves teachers/schools opting into trial Cosán which includes teacher reflection at its core.

There are many issues that abound with PD in its current state in Ireland. There are many parties involved and teachers have different, ongoing and ever-changing needs within a constantly changing educational environment. Therefore, developing and implementing a structured policy for PD in Ireland is a complex undertaking, 'a wicked problem' as mentioned in the introduction. The Teaching Council recognise that "the issues are far from simple and the development of a national framework for teachers' learning must take account of many deeply embedded factors in Ireland's education system" (The Teaching Council, 2016b, p.13). The Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education (2011) and the subsequent development of Cosán was a positive move towards a process of formalisation and support for PD. However, taking these principles from the page and turning them into actionable policy presents a number of complex problems involving multiple parties tugging the same lead in different directions.

2.10.4 Participation in PD

The focus of interest in PD has been on "its impact on classroom practices and methodologies and student performance and attainment" (Banks and Smyth, 2011, p.v) and has not adequately addressed the reasons that teachers have for participating in PD or what motivates them to take part in this form of training. The research tells us that in-service providers should design courses tailored to meet teachers' needs to enhance skills, alleviate stress, motivate and provide personal development. To improve PD provision the literature suggests a move from provider-led to participant -led courses (GOI, 1995) and to consider the unique individual characteristics of the participants (Noonan, 2019). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) agree that the focus of PD courses has been unsuitable "Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them" (p.27).

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report in 2009, based on data from over 70,000 teachers and school principals who represent lower secondary teachers in 23 countries, found that 90% of Irish teachers had taken part in some formal form of professional development in the 18 months prior. Ireland had the lowest average at 5.6 days. Over 50% of Irish teachers expressed a desire to participate in more professional development than they had received and over one third of teachers highlighted a need for extra training in teaching special learning needs students. The study also reports that over 40% of participants stated that the lack of suitable professional development was a reason for not taking part in more PD. Two forms of development which were reported as having the highest impact were individual and collaborative research and qualification programmes (OECD, 2009). These two forms of development entail a significant financial and time commitment from teachers.

The OECD (2009) recommended that there should be an expansion of post graduate courses and the supports given to in-service teachers who participate in them. Despite this, in February 2012 the Irish government removed the salary increase awarded to teachers who complete their master's or doctorate. Achieving further qualifications is both time-consuming and costly, leaving little or no extrinsic incentive to teachers to pursue this path. The Department of Education offers some remuneration towards fees in the form of the teacher fee refund scheme awards. The amount refunded is dependent on the number of people applying in that particular year. A 20% tax refund is available from the revenue commissioners on course costs, excluding the first €1,500 (2018).

The literature tells us that one of the key motivating factors which influences teachers' professional behaviours is teachers' self-efficacy. Durksen, Klasses and Daniels (2017) report that teachers self-efficacy tends to increase with experience and peaks during the mid-career phase at 23 years. Their study highlights that collaboration with other teachers is the most "influential type of professional learning on teachers' self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and sources of efficacy (p.58). They also found that in particular, mid-career teachers considered that 'time and space to think' is a significant reason for engaging in teacher PL. They recommend that providers of PL should focus on the "professional capital and building capacity of

mid-career teachers" (p.60) and noted that this career stage is generally neglected by interventions.

There are many opportunities for knowledge to be delivered to teachers and since the implementation of the Croke Park Agreement in 2011, schools must undertake an additional 33 hours of activity per year outside of school teaching hours. This can provide additional opportunities for teachers to be educated or upskilled. The agreement was signed on 6 June 2010 by the ICTU against a background of layoffs and pay cuts in the private sector, where the government agreed not to impose public sector layoffs or further public sector pay cuts. In return, the public-sector unions agreed to call no industrial action and to co-operate on wide-scale reforms of the public sector. These were aimed at increasing efficiency, flexibility and redeployment and at reducing cost and headcount. For teachers, it included working an extra 33 hours per year outside of class time. A survey undertaken by the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) in 2015 showed that 96.73% of teachers said that their workload had increased significantly in recent years. It also showed that teachers are frustrated and disillusioned by the extra hours required under the Croke Park and subsequent Haddington Road agreements and their current usage. The value of the imposition of these extra hours must be questioned in our current climate where teachers are being encouraged to voluntarily engage in life-long learning.

The possibility of obtaining a post of responsibility was an incentive for some teachers to engage in extra-curricular activities and PD. In March 2009, the government introduced a moratorium on the filling of all promotional posts in the public sector. In schools, this meant that assistant principals and special duties posts could not be filled. This reduced the potential for teachers to develop further in their career and improve their income. There was a limited alleviation of this from the 2011/2012 school year followed by a lifting of the moratorium in the DES circular 0003/2018 (Leadership and Management in Post Primary Schools). This circular renamed A and B posts as Assistant Principal 1 (AP1) and Assistant Principal 2 (AP2) respectively and phased out the recognition given for teaching service. Posts of responsibility are a promotion for teachers in the school system as they carry extra responsibilities and increased pay. It is unclear yet what the long-term impact of this change in policy to promotion will be and whether it will impact on teachers' engagement in general or specific types of PD.

More research is required to ascertain the reasons why teachers engage in PD, their motivation to seek out and engage in opportunities and the factors which hinder it.

2.10.5 Irish Research

Global trends in education have an influence on what happens in the provision and designing of PD in Ireland. Opportunities for teachers must consider these trends and adapt them to the specific context of the Irish education system. The search of the literature found a higher number of studies in Ireland that focused on PD in the primary sector. Studies in the post primary sector were reflective of the international findings which show that motivation has a key role to play in teacher's participation in PD (McMillan, McConnell and O'Sullivan, 2014).

A mixed-methods, cross border study of teachers in Ireland explored the perceptions, experiences and motivational dimensions of PD for those who were undertaking university level master's programmes in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (RoI) (O'Sullivan, McConnell and McMillan, 2014). The research participants in the study were qualified teachers (nursery, primary and post-primary) undertaking master's level postgraduate courses in two universities: 120 in Trinity College Dublin and 100 in Stranmillis University College, Belfast. The study also noted that more research needs to be undertaken on the reasons why teachers do not engage in PD rather than why they partake. In the study, responsibility for seeking out PD was attributed to (in ranking order) the teacher, the Department of Education, the school and lastly to the Teaching Council. It must be noted here that this study was of teachers already engaged in a master's level programme which indicates that this group are particularly motivated and might not be representative of the whole teaching population. Career advancement, potential growth and achievement were the chief intrinsic motivators for teachers to engage in PD. The school-related factors that supported teachers' motivation were the interpersonal relations and school policy. Teachers were more likely to engage where there was a culture of engagement in PD among colleagues. The main message of the study highlights a need for both jurisdictions to develop a system of PD that gives teachers' personal choice, encourages schools to provide empowering communities of practice and develops a system with compulsory professional development.

2.11   Summary

The literature is clear that PD is essential to assist teachers in meeting the demands of an ever-changing environment. Policy level approaches to PD are too frequently concerned with accountability, standards and assessment (McMillan, McConnell and O'Sullivan, 2016). Quality PD is required to support teachers as they face this growing accountability and increased pressure for improved student achievement (Margolis, Durbin and Doring, 2016). If planned and executed properly it can improve performance and build 'professional capital' (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012). Unfortunately, the impact of this growing accountability can create cultures which are competitive, lack trust and are not conducive to encouraging professional responsibility (Sugrue and Mertkan, 2017).

PD as a response to accountability has a narrow focus and does not take the holistic nature of a teacher or teaching into account. Treating the teacher as a passive technician (which is associated with delivering policy reform) places the teacher in an uncritical role and it is not appropriate for creating effective teachers (Dadds, 2014; Day, 1999). To make significant progress, teachers need to have autonomy and the space to exert agency (Kennedy, 2014). The motivations for and barriers to participation in PD also need to be addressed to ensure that all teachers are enabled to improve.

Irish educational policy values PD and encourages a culture of life-long learning but is still on a journey to a comprehensive and implementable system wide approach. Teachers individual PD needs are diverse. They have needs relating to their specific subjects, pedagogy, fulfilling legal and policy requirements and additional needs in respect of areas of responsibility they have in the school. To cater for this, it is important to encourage teachers to take ownership of their professional development (Loxley *et al.*, 2007; Tuli Gemeda, Fiorucci and Catarci, 2014) and personalise it within their own professional and cultural contexts (Cordingley, 2005). Professionally, teachers at mid-career stage have been identified as being neglected and under-utilised in the realm of PD.

Research advocates for PD that is collaborative and supports teacher agency (Swennen, 2013) and teachers need to be central in the whole process of PD. Current provision of PD is fragmented and focuses more on system wide needs rather than on the needs of the people it serves. Teachers feelings, beliefs, needs,

contexts, motivations and barriers (to PD) must become the foundations of an integrated system if authentic and effective development is to occur.

2.12   Conclusion

The PD of teachers is a complex phenomenon with many contributing and limiting factors. It is a 'Wicked problem' which in this study is further complicated by the specific needs of appointed MLs. The role of MLs is developing internationally and in Ireland. It has the potential to be a significant conduit and support to overburdened SLs. This evolution is transforming the role from one of a manager who completes tasks to that of a strategic and influential leader who occupies a pivotal role at the heart of school structures. Provision for MLs is emerging through DES, CSL, PDST and MIC but appointed MLs in schools are not formally inducted, trained or supported.

The enhancement of a DL model in Irish schools (DES, 2018) will require an investment in the individual leaders and in the development of a supportive culture in the whole school community. Without this, there is a danger that MLs will receive increased burden without an increase in power. Schools are tasked with changing from a traditional hierarchical structure to developing SM teams that utilise their collective intelligences. This requires an investment in rich PD (for MLs and SLs) and giving autonomy to MLs. PD must address the complexities of working collaboratively in teams and the clear defining of the role and remit of the ML. This will support the evolution of the role in Irish Post Primary schools to one which is both positional and influential. There are both system and individual responsibilities for the provision of and engagement with PD.

Currently, there is a significant opportunity in Irish schools to adequately develop this role and capitalise on its potential for the benefit of both the individual and the school system.
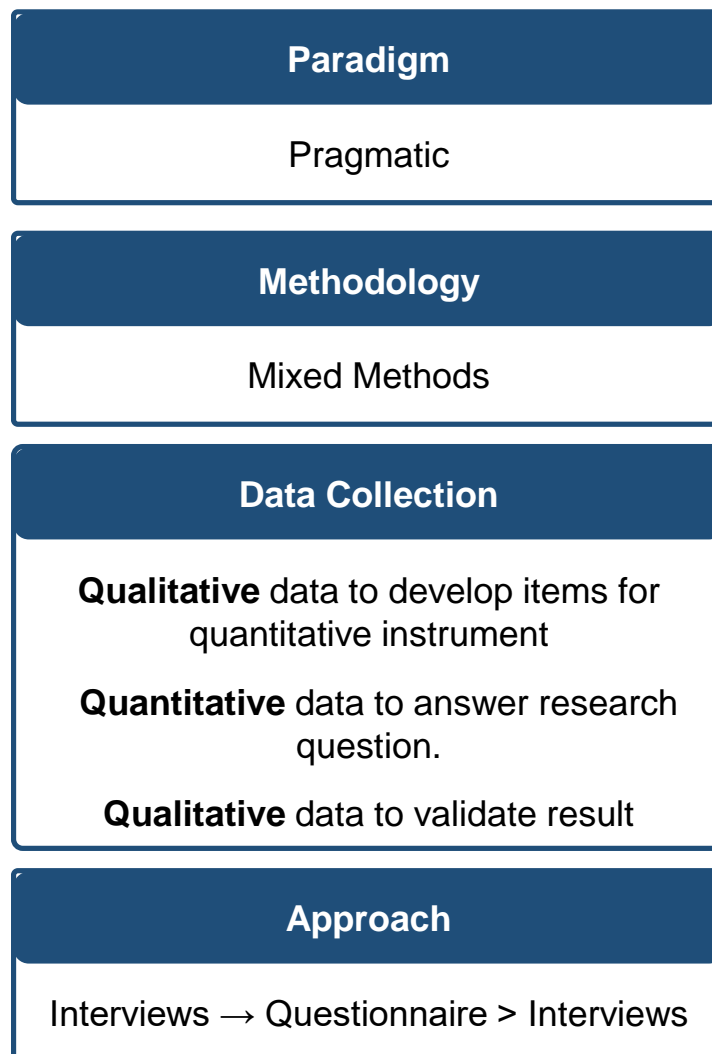
3.   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Chapter three outlines the paradigm, methodology and approach used to conduct this research into the PD needs of AP1 post-holders in ETB schools. PD within the teaching profession is a topic that surfaces frequently and one whose importance has been underlined in the Irish Education Act 1998. The Teaching Council, which is the professional standards body for the teaching profession, recognises the need for a nationwide coherent approach to PD. They aim to have an approach which is developed in line with research and which caters for the teacher, the school and the system. Gleeson (The Teaching Council, 2012) discusses the need for sustainable and ongoing PD for teachers and notes that the recession had a serious effect on its provision. This raises a question as to whether this reduced provision has left our teachers and our leaders with a gap in their knowledge, training and skills? This study will give a voice to AP1 post holders with regards to their PD needs in an ETB context.

The mixed methods exploratory sequential quantitative > qualitative study will be described in this chapter. Stage one involved a set of five semi structures interviews with AP1 post holders. These were used as an instrument development for the online surveys. Stage two involved quantitative research. Surveys were distributed to all ETB schools in the republic of Ireland. In stage three the findings of the survey were shared with ten AP1s who were subsequently interviewed to ascertain their views and to gain further insights. This qualitative research was performed for triangulation and to ensure the validity of the data. This chapter gives details of the selection criteria, the data collection method and how the data was analysed. The ethical considerations for the study are presented at the end of the chapter.

The research design of this study is summarised below:

Figure 3:   Research Design

Paradigm
Pragmatic

Methodology
Mixed Methods

Data Collection
Qualitative data to develop items for quantitative instrument
Quantitative data to answer research question.
Qualitative data to validate result

Approach
Interviews → Questionnaire > Interviews

The first stage involved five semi-structured interviews, the finding of which served as the basis for the design of a SurveyMonkey questionnaire. In stage two the questionnaire was distributed to the entire sample of AP1 post holders in ETB schools. Following the analysis of the survey data, I collated the main findings in a booklet. In stage three this booklet (appendix F) was distributed to the original five interviewees and an additional five post holders. Short interviews were then conducted to interrogate the findings; ascertain their views on the findings; identify needs that were omitted and to gain further insight.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Assumptions and views about how research should be carried out influence the research process (Bryman, 2016) therefore it is important to outline the research philosophy that informs the study. The method of research chosen is closely linked to an individual's vision of how reality should be studied. The following are essential elements of a well-constructed research philosophy.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge in the social sciences. A central question is whether the social world can be researched in the same way as the natural world (Bryman, 2016).

Positivism advocates applying natural science methods to the study of social science.

Interpretivism contrasts with this, arguing that the social world requires a strategy which grasps the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016).

Ontology relates to our assumptions about how the world is made up and the nature of things. Ontological positions generally fall into two groups: objectivism and constructionism. Bryman (2016) explains that objectivism implies that social phenomena exist independently from actors whereas constructionism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by actors. Choosing one polarised approach to research can involve intrinsic bias. I believe that the research question is the key to choosing the methodology needed. Good social research "will almost inevitably require the use of both quantitative and qualitative research to provide an adequate answer" (Denscombe, 2008, p.274).

3.3 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is "the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed" (Kuhn, 1962) or "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.105). According to Guba (1990), research paradigms can be characterised through their: ontology – what is reality?; epistemology – how do you know something?; and methodology – how do you go about finding it out? Traditionally this fell into two distinct paradigms; quantitative and qualitative.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) explain that the last century has seen strong debate and divide between purists of each research approach. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.21) describe the paradigm wars between the quantitative and qualitative camps as polarised and non-productive. The use of one method over the other is cautioned by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) when they state that "Mono-method research is the biggest threat to the advancement of the social sciences".

The quantitative verses qualitative wars gave rise to a third paradigm for social research, a pragmatic mixed methods approach which endeavours to better understand the phenomenon being researched. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) posit that the research question should be the main focus of decisions about which method or combination of methods to use. This is aligned with a pragmatic approach which ascribes "to the philosophy that the research question should drive the method(s) used" (p.376). With the pragmatic paradigm the researcher is not committed to one method or approach. Instead they use the method(s) that addresses the problem in a real-world situation (Duemer and Zebidi, 2009). Pragmatism adopts a pluralist approach to research which draws on positivism and interpretive epistemologies and regards reality as both objective and socially constructed (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Pragmatism is "an attractive philosophical partner for mixed methods research" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14). Morgan (2007) when advocating for a pragmatic approach explains that it relies on abductive reasoning, that moves between induction and deduction.

Table 6:   Approaches to Research

	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach	Pragmatic Approach
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Relationship to research process	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

(Morgan, 2007, p.71)

Morgan (2007) convincingly argues for an approach which, rather than choosing between the poles of quantitative and qualitative research, goes "back and forth

between the two extremes" (p.73). His approach relies on a version of abductive reasoning which has been utilised by researchers who combine sequential qualitative and quantitative methods where results from a qualitative approach can serve as inputs to a quantitative approach and vice-versa (p.71). This is the approach being adopted in this study.

3.4   Methodology

As already outlined, there is a significant debate over quantitative and qualitative research, which Bryman (2016) considers as two distinct clusters of research strategy. As in many areas of social research, opinion is at least divided, if not polarised, as some believe that a distinction is no longer useful and has at least blurred significantly at the edges (Layder, 1993, p.110). On the surface at least, the significant difference lies in the fact that quantitative researchers employ measurement, whereas qualitative researchers do not appear to do so. Qualitative research is considered to deal with singular type studies, verbal accounts, has difficulties with generalisability, has depth, is naturalistic, is exploratory and is open or grounded.

 Kumar (2011) explains that research is more than just a set of skills but rather it is "a way of thinking: examining critically the various aspects of your day-to-day professional work" (2011, p.1). Burns (2000) explains that an analysis of our working life must be an "objective, systematic investigation with analysis of data" (p.4) before it can be considered scientific research. Burns (2000) warns against the dangers of professionals making decisions and implementing policies based on their everyday observations and opinions. He explains that, in order to properly understand these observations and opinions and find valid evidence, "traditional social science research holds that only a systematic, quantitative approach to generating and testing ideas is adequate" (Burns, 2000, p.4).

Quantitative research involves the collecting of numerical data with a broadly deductive approach. The main preoccupations of a quantitative approach are measurement, causality, generalisation and replication. Quantitative methods are critiqued for failing to distinguish the social world from the natural world. There is also a concern that measurement tools can be flawed and that results create a picture of a static social world which is separate from its complex inhabitants (Bryman, 2016).

In contrast, qualitative research emphasises words rather than numbers and is inductive in nature when theory emerges from data collected. It sees the issues through the eyes of those involved in the research, gives greater description and explanation, has an emphasis on process and is flexible. Qualitative methods have been criticised for being too subjective, difficult to replicate and have problems with generalisability (Bryman, 2016).

As an alternative to the polarity of these two paradigms, mixed methods is a pragmatic approach which uses appropriate research tools (whether quantitative or qualitative) to answer the question in hand. "The goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14).

When discussing the purposes of mixed methods research, Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989 as cited by Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005) outline five purposes: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. According to Creswell and Plano Clark, to carry out mixed methods the researcher:

- Collects and analyses persuasively and rigorously both quantitative and qualitative data (based on research questions);
- Mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them (or merging them), sequentially by having one build on the other;
- Gives priority to one or both forms of data (in terms of what the research emphasises);
- Uses these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study;
- Frames these procedures within philosophical worldviews and theoretical lenses; and
- Combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study.

(Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.5)

Despite the positive aspects outlined, findings on mixed methods are not all positive. Creswell (2014) notes some challenges to using this approach: there is a need for extensive data collection; analysing both sets of data is time intensive and the researcher must be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative methods. Despite the challenges I have decided that a mixed methods approach will best serve the research question and subsequently will result in a deeper understanding of the PD needs of appointed middle leaders in ETB post primary schools.

The approach chosen for this research combines sequential quantitative (instrument developed with qualitative research) and qualitative research with the quantitative method having dominant status. Creswell (2014) describes the explanatory sequential, mixed methods design as a study which begins with the quantitative strand and subsequently engages in a qualitative phase to help explain the quantitative results. The strength of this design is that the phases build on each other although it is challenging to conduct as additional time is required to conduct each phase.

3.5   The Researcher in the Study

Personal and professional experience has prompted this study and at the outset, I was immersed in the role of an AP1 post holder in an ETB school. Sikes (2004) informs us that it is important to understand "where the researcher is coming from" (p.18) as their biography has implications for their research approach and practice. My experience of PD prior to and in my time as an AP1 post holder has been outlined in chapter one, to provide clarity on where the researcher is coming from. Sikes (2004) explains that the researcher must be aware of their positioning and the fundamental assumptions they hold, which might influence their research.

> This is about being a reflexive and reflective and, therefore, a rigorous researcher who is able to present their findings and interpretations in the confidence that they have thought about, acknowledged and been honest and explicit about their stance and the influence it has on their work. (p.19)

It is important to acknowledge here the issue of 'situatedness' (Vygotsky, 1962). Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2010) explain that, "Situatedness arises from the interplay between agent (the researcher), situation (the particular set of circumstances and your position within it) and context (where, when and background) (p.1) and these will affect the way research is approached and carried out. Despite concerns in the literature, the role of the insider researcher is not all negative. An insider is in a unique position that allows them conduct in-depth research on an issue that they have special knowledge about. They are in a "prime position to investigate and make changes to a practice situation" (p.3) and subsequently "make challenges to the status quo from an informed perspective" (p.3). Insider researchers have access to people and information that can enhance the research. Lambert (2012) also has concerns about the influences at play on the researcher and cautions that "it is

doubtful that research can ever be fully objective or free from bias" (p.134) but the task of the researcher is to be conscious of difficulties and influences and subsequently reduce or mitigate their effect. I availed of a secondment opportunity (taking her out of the school environment) before the process of data collection started. I postulate that this gives me both the benefit of being an insider (an understanding of the topic and access to those whose needs will be studied) with a degree of separation which avoids role confusion and allows me to look at the data from a more objective position.

3.6   Methods

3.6.1   Instrument Development

In the initial stage of this study I conducted five semi-structured interviews with AP1 post holders. The data from this stage was analysed to inform the questions for the online quantitative stage. I chose to involve the voice of AP1s at this stage to explore their PD needs. This approach is advocated by Bryman (2016) when he states that "qualitative research can be used to inform the design of survey questions" (p.651) as it gives an in-depth knowledge of the social setting. I have experience as an AP1 post holder in an ETB school. I chose to conduct these interviews to ensure that the questions posed in the online survey were based on the identified needs of AP1 post holders and not overly influenced by my personal understanding. I held an AP1 post in the initial stage of this study but have since accepted a secondment position.

Stage one involved interviewing five AP1 post holders, with various levels of time in the role. This was to ensure that the questions developed reflected the PD needs of a range of AP1 post holders at different stages of their leadership journey. PD is a phenomenon often imposed on teachers (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p.27) and a topic of much discussion in staff rooms across the country. Hence, it was considered of utmost importance to include this qualitative element. To gain insight from opinions that have been influenced by the discussions in staff rooms, which would not emerge from a purely quantitative study and to give a voice to the AP1 post holders.

Interviews and questioning form an important part of many aspects of everyday life e.g. job interviews, media interviews. Cohen, Manion and Morrison describe the interview method as one that allows the interviewees to "discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live" (2011, p.409), a method which is much more than an

informal everyday conversation. Therefore, the interview must be planned and must abide by a set of rules. Research interviews are widely used for data collection in both the quantitative and qualitative fields. Researchers use several different types of interviews to collect data. The structured interview is used mainly in quantitative research as each interviewee receives the same questioning, typically closed questions, the results of which can be aggregated.

In qualitative research, the interview is widely used as a method to gather data on how the interviewee interprets the world. The two main types of interview in qualitative research are the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2016).

Table 7:   Interviews in Qualitative Research

Qualitative

Semi-structured interview	The researcher has a list of questions or specific topics to be covered. The sequence of the questions can be varied. The interviewee has leeway in how to reply. The interviewer can ask further questions in response to replies.
Unstructured interview	The interviewer has a list of topics or issues to be covered. Questioning is informal and the phrasing and sequence of questions will vary from one interview to the next.
Focus group	This involves open ended questions about a specific situation or event which are discussed among the group.
Oral history interview	This is an unstructured or semi-structured interview where interviewees are asked to recall events from their past and to reflect on them.
Life history interview	This is an unstructured interview to gather information on the entire life of the interviewee.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.415) sets out Kvale's (2007) seven stages of an interview investigation as: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting. I will explain my field work in this context.

Thematising: This is the preliminary stage where the purpose of the research is decided. This stage was informed by the literature review and the themes and issues

which arose from the discourse. Additionally, it was influenced by the my experience as an AP1 post holder and the needs identified by me in that position.

Designing: This involves translating the research objectives into the questions for the semi-structured interview. The questions should adequately reflect the information and insight expected from the interviewee. The questions were designed to allow for unstructured responses, allowing the interviewee to answer as they choose and to permit new information, which I had not considered. This was to ensure that my own preconceived ideas and bias would not predominate the survey question design. The information gathered from the interviewees and the literature review was the focus of the question design.

Interviewing: I undertook semi-structured interviews with five AP1 post holders who were at different stages of their AP1 career. This supported the exploration of the needs of post holders at different stages of their career. Their input was reflected in the questions asked in the online questionnaire.

Transcribing: I transcribed the interviews and stored the information on a stand-alone PC which is password protected in my home.

Analysing: I open-coded the transcripts to ascertain the main areas of concern and skills required by post holders.

Verifying: Themes which arose from the interviews were verified with the PD needs of MLs identified in the literature review. This was carried out to avoid omitting critical needs.

Reporting: The combination of interview data and the literature review aided the design of the online 'SurveyMonkey' questionnaire (Appendix D). This survey was distributed to all ETB second level schools in Ireland. Principals were requested to forward the email containing the survey link to their AP1 post holders. This appeared to be the sole way to access the cohort of AP1 post holders as there is no database available. I was dependent on the goodwill of the principal to pass on the surveys. As the survey was specific to the ETB sector, I regarded that this would be an incentive to the principal to support the data collection.

3.6.2   Samples

The needs of teachers vary depending on the stage of their career. Therefore, I chose teachers who were at various stages of their AP1 career. The interviewees had 16, 5, 3 and 2 years' experience and one was newly appointed.

They are identified as I (Interviewee) following by 1.1 (first round interviews and first interviewee) or 1.2 (first round interview, second interviewee):

I-1.1 — 16 years, I-1.2 — 5 years, I-1.3 — 3 years, I-1.4 — 2 years and I-1.5- newly appointed.

Due to the significant number of recent retirements it was difficult to locate someone with longer service in the AP1 role than 16 years. I used convenience sampling; choosing those that I had easy access to for the semi-structured interviews.

3.6.3   Data Collection

The interviews took place out of the school environment and at a time that suited the participants. These were recorded on a dictaphone and on my phone so that there was a back-up in the event that one device failed. These were transcribed as soon as possible after the session. Prior to the interviews, permission was sought from their principal. At the beginning of the interviews, I thanked the participants, outlined the goals of the research and explained that the interview would be recorded. The plain language statement (Appendix A) and consent form (Appendix B) were given to interviewees who were requested to read it carefully and sign it if satisfied to continue.

3.6.4   Questions

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were informed by the literature review and my personal experience.

1. Can you describe your career path briefly up to the point of taking on the role of AP1?
2. What are your current roles / responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?
3. Have these roles / responsibilities changed over the years?
4. Did you do any professional development courses to prepare for the AP1 post?
5. If yes, did they prepare you for the role?
6. Did you receive any formal induction after taking up the post?

7. Did you receive any training after taking up the AP1 post?

8. If yes, did it support you in the role?

9. Who / what supported you the most since taking up this role?

10. Was the role different than what you expected?

11. What challenges did you face in your AP1 position?

12. How did you overcome those challenges?

13. What do you like best about the AP1 post?

14. What do you like least about the AP1 post?

15. What tasks / aspects of your role do you feel most comfortable with?

16. What tasks / aspects of your role do you need training in?

17. Has this post changed your relationship with your colleagues?

18. Have you had regular reviews of your performance as an AP1 post holder?

19. Do you feel part of the management and leadership structure of the school?

20. What advice would you give to a colleague just starting in an AP1 post?

3.6.5 Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed and stored on my home computer which is a stand-alone PC. NVivo was utilised to analyse the qualitative data by open coding (Cohen Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.561) the data. "Codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p.71). Elliot (2018) explains that coding involves a decision-making process, where the researcher breaks down the data to make something new. During this process, decisions must be made, based on the context of the particular piece of research. I made decisions regarding the names of these codes/nodes, which Elliot (2018) advises should be clear so that they convey meaning to the reader. I also noted the count on the nodes, a practice that Harding (2019) recommends, as larger counts can show the importance of a node. The nodes with the higher counts indicated a greater need for support or PD in that area (see Figure 4). Lower number counts were not discounted as the needs of post holders can vary greatly across their careers. Additionally, the number of interviews in this stage (five) was small and it was important to address each need identified. The nodes emerged as I analysed each transcript. These nodes were then used to develop the online SurveyMonkey questions to distribute to the entire sample.

Figure 4:   NVIVO Nodes

Name	Files	References
Colleagues	3	4
Communication	1	1
Discipline	2	3
Expectations	2	2
Experience	1	1
Induction	5	10
Informal Learning	2	2
Job description	4	9
Mentoring	4	10
Middle Leader	3	5
Parents	4	4
Pastoral care	3	7
Reviews	4	4
School based support	2	3
Self Management	3	5
Senior Management	4	9
Time Management	4	4
Work Load	3	4

3.7   Quantitative

The chosen method of quantitative data collection was a web survey. Web surveys involve the respondents being directed to a website to answer a questionnaire. Web surveys have become increasingly used due to the growing availability of platforms that allow users to design surveys and analyse data (Bryman, 2016) and are the predominate mode of survey data collection (Callegaro, Manfreda and Vehovar, 2015).

Web surveys have distinct benefits over the traditional pen and paper surveys; they are cheap; data is collected quickly; they are easy to design; can reach a wide audience and can be completed at a time and pace suitable to the respondent (Callegaro, Manfreda and Vehovar, 2015). Bryman (2016) explains that web surveys can utilise an online platform to design a survey which has a good appearance. Further, it has the benefit of being able to contain filter questions which skip to the

next relevant question for respondents and can control the number of questions that are visible on the screen. I perceive benefit in the fact that answers to the questions can be automatically collated into a database which eliminates the coding of responses (with the exception of open-ended questions). There is potential for the design to contain colour, multi-media and many other features. Despite the variety of features and tools available to the user, Dillman (2007) advices that plain versions of surveys are easier to download and have a greater response rate that fancier versions. Schonlau and Couper (2017) also highlight the benefits of web surveys but caution on the generalisability of the data as surveys are frequently conducted with non-probability samples. I was mindful of the advice on survey design which recommends that the choice of samples should be compatible with the purpose of the study. This supports my decision to conduct interviews which subsequently informed the survey design. Bryman (2016, p.222) explains that self-completed questionnaires have fewer open questions, have easy-to-follow designs and are relatively short. The design of the survey was cognisant of Bryman (2016) advice that questionnaires should not be cramped in style, should have a clear presentation and should give clear instructions about how to respond.

Disadvantages of self-completed questionnaires include; there is no opportunity to clarify issues (Kumar, 2011, p.149); you cannot prompt or probe; it is difficult to ask a lot of questions and there is a risk of missing data (Bryman, 2016). These possible concerns were mitigated by presenting the findings to post holders in stage three. This served to interrogate the findings; to audit and validate the findings in addition to ascertaining if any needs had been overlooked. Due account again was taken of the ethical considerations, including formal consent and the my guarantee of anonymity. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) caution that a questionnaire is always an intrusion into the respondent's life and due regard must be taken in this invasion. Ethical issues are outlined at the end of this chapter.

3.7.1 Samples

An email with a link to the questionnaire was distributed to all ETB schools in the country. Principals were requested to forward the email to their AP1 post holders. I chose to access AP1 Post holders in this manner as individual contacts for post holders are not available. The Key Statistics for 2018/2019 from DES report that there is a total of 715 post primary schools that are aided by the state — 374

secondary, 245 vocational and 96 community and comprehensive. This study is confined to exploring the needs of AP1 post holders in ETB schools. Therefore, the study encompassed 245 schools. The total number of AP1s in the ETB sector are not available in the public sphere, therefore the total number was estimated. Potentially, if all principals (245) forwarded the email and there was an average of 5 post holders per school this delivers a total population of 1,225 (245 schools x 5 post holders = 1,225). Consequently, if the email was forwarded as requested, this was a census of AP1 post holders in ETB post primary schools.

3.7.2   Data Collection

Rattray and Jones (2007) outline why questionnaires are used:

> We use questionnaires to enable the collection of information in a standardized manner which, when gathered from a representative sample of a defined population, allows the inference of results to the wider population. (Rattray and Jones, 2007, p.234)

In general, the advice in the literature in designing a questionnaire is to

- Limit the number of questions you ask (8-10 is sufficient)
- Ask the simplest questions at the start of the questionnaire.
- Keep the language of the questionnaire simple.
- Always do a pilot survey of your questionnaire.
- Decide on the target sample size.

This layout provided the structure for the questionnaire. The recommendation to limit the questions to 10 was not adhered to as this was insufficient to gather all required data. SurveyMonkey was chosen as the platform for the questionnaire. SurveyMonkey is a platform that people are familiar with and therefore I perceived that it would encourage people to engage with it. The decision was further supported by the company's commitment to ensuring the privacy and security of users and their GDPR compliance (SurveyMonkey, 2020). The questionnaire was piloted with a group of three AP1 post holders. This process aimed to identify any questions which were worded incorrectly, interpreted incorrectly and whether the questions were being interpreted in various way. The pilot involved emailing AP1 post holders that I knew (convenience sampling) and requesting feedback on the online survey. A link to the revised Survey (Appendix E) was emailed to the Principals of all ETB post primary schools.

This included a range of closed and open questions. Open questions will require further analysis but are included to reflect the range of PD opportunities available and differences in ETB and school provision. Closed questions would have limited the data gained and could possibility have excluded some options.

Questions 1 and 2 requested the post holders teaching experience and the number of years' experience as a post holder.

Questions 3 asked the post holder to list any further qualifications that they achieved after initial teacher training. This was left open to see the range of PD that post holders engaged in.

Question 4 asked if the post holder engaged in PD to prepare for the AP1 position. If the answer was yes, then question 5 asked for a list of this PD (open question). Again, this was an open question to see the range of PD opportunities that post holders had engaged in.

Question 6 asked if these courses prepared you for the AP1 role.

Question 7 requested participants to list their current roles and responsibilities as an AP1 post holder (open question).

Question 8 asked if the post holder had received any formal induction after they were appointed to the role. This was followed by an open question (question 9) which asked them to describe this induction. This was left open to gain an understanding of the range of induction practices in place across schools and ETBs. Question 10 asked if this induction supported you in your role? (open question).

Question 11 gave a yes or no option to ascertain if the post holder had received a job description in their role.

Question 12 was an open question that asked, who has supported you most since taking up the role? This will explore whether there is support from the ETB, school management and/or informal support from colleagues.

Question 13 asked what were the biggest challenges that you faced in this role. This will inform the skills required by post holders to adequately fulfil their role. Question 14 aims to ascertain the supports/skills that post holders used to overcome these challenges.

Question 15 asked post holder to list the aspects of their role that they feel most comfortable with. This will show the areas of strength within the role.

Question 16 asked if post holders have had regular reviews of their performance in the role (yes/no answer). Question 17 subsequently asked if these reviews were useful. This was left open to allow post holders to express their thoughts on the review process.

Question 18 used five-point Likert scales to see the degree to which post holders need training in the following areas: Time management; Self-management; Communication skills; Presentation skills; Dealing with Discipline; Pastoral care of students; Dealing with Parents; Managing Conflict; Working with other middle managers; Working with other colleagues and other.

Question 19 utilised five-point Likert scales again to explore the types of PD that post holders are interested in; Training model; Award Bearing model; Cascade model; Mentoring model; Community of practice model or Action research model.

Question 20 asked post holders if they prefer In school, Outside Venue or Online as a location for their PD.

3.7.3 Data Analysis

Due care was taken to preserve the integrity of the data and to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. The data was collected from a mixture of closed and open questions. The web survey produced descriptive statistics, "so that researchers can then analyse and interpret what these descriptions mean" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). I chose descriptive statistics which are displayed in charts and graphs as they are easy for the reader to engage with. Cross-tabulation, where one variable is presented in relation to another was also a feature of the analysis. Five-point Likert scales were used to determine post holders need for training in particular areas and the type of professional development they were interested in. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) advise using these scales as they "build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response while still generating numbers" (p.386).

The questionnaire also contained 10 open ended questions. These questions required further analysis than that provided by SurveyMonkey but were questions that had the potential to provide a deeper insight into the needs of post holders. These could provide "the 'gems' of information that might otherwise not be caught in the questionnaire" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.392). The open-ended questions were interpreted in the same manner as the information from the semi-structured interviews which involved open coding the responses in NVIVO.

3.8   Qualitative

Following the analysis of the online web survey, my chosen method of qualitative data collection was semi-structured interviews. I prepared a summary of the findings of the online questionnaires and distributed them to 10 AP1 post holders. Interviewees were asked to examine the findings prior to the interview so they could reflect on them and consider if they were in keeping with their needs and experiences as a post holder. They were requested to identify if any needs or information was missing.

3.8.1   Samples

To undertake the follow up interviews, I initially approached the original five interviewees from stage one of the study. These post holders have various years' experience as post holders (16, 5, 3, 2 years' experience and newly appointed). In addition to these I approached five other post holders. New interviewees were chosen by convenience sampling with consideration given to including a gender and geographical mix of candidates. The geographical spread was important to reflect the needs of post holders in different ETBs that have various practices and PD arrangements in place. It also provided a gender mix but not a gender balance. I found it more difficult to access males in Ap1 positions.

3.8.2   Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to verify and validate the findings from the online survey. I prepared a booklet (Appendix F) with the general findings, which was distributed to post holders in advance of the interview. Interviewees were asked if they agreed or disagreed with each of the findings listed. This process was important to ensure that the analysis of the survey data accurately reflected the PD needs of

post holders. It concurrently provided an opportunity to identify any important needs or issues that had been omitted.

The follow-up interviews comprised the following questions:

Do you agree or disagree with finding 1, then finding 2, through to finding 12.

Following the discussions on each finding, are there any additional needs or insights that have not been identified in this research? and is there anything you would like to add?

3.8.3   Data Analysis

The feedback from the interviews was used to validate the findings of the online survey.

3.9   Ethics

The ethical research code which informs and guides this study complies with that from Dublin City University — Guidelines on Best Practice in Research Ethics. This adopts a code of conduct, which provides consistent expectations regarding the action of researchers as well as protecting individual participants. This allows a meaningful engagement with the research process and the participants from start to finish of the study (Sarantakos, 2005).

Research codes of ethics concern the physical and mental well-being of the respondents, informed consent of participants, the protection of privacy, the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity, deception, plagiarism, covert or hidden research and the fabrication or concealment of findings (Bryman, 2016 and Sarantakos, 2005). Acknowledgement and due account is taken here of the spirit and thrust of the Data Protection Acts (Ireland) 1998 and 2003 with regard to the storage on computer of personal information.

In particular Bryman (2016) sees that there are four main ethical issues to consider when undertaking social research.

- Whether there is harm to participants;
- Whether there is lack of informed consent;
- Whether there is an invasion of privacy;
- Whether deception is involved.

Whether there is harm to participants: Post holders are free to decline partaking in the interviews or filling in the questionnaire. The outcome of the research will not have any negative impact on teachers.

Whether there is lack of informed consent: Prior to the commencement of the stages, participants were informed of the rationale for the study and were asked to consent to partake.

Whether there is an invasion of privacy: Post holders were asked to reveal information about their experience of requirement for PD. This information relates to their professional needs and not personal or sensitive information. The responses provided are anonymous and will not be linked back to an individual or school.

Whether deception is involved: The plain language statement and the first page of the questionnaire informs teachers that the results will be used in a doctoral dissertation. Therefore, teachers are fully informed as to where the results will be utilised.

3.11   Conclusion

The topic of PD for practicing teachers is of great interest at present in Ireland. The Teaching Council are currently in the pilot phase of the "Cosán: Framework for Teachers Learning" (The Teaching Council, 2016) which was compiled after consultation with stakeholders in education including teachers. It is noteworthy that the voice of teachers was fundamental in shaping this framework which informs the future of teachers' PL.

This chapter provided details on the research methodology. This research explored the PD needs of a specific group of the school community — AP1 post holders in ETB schools who have both a teaching and a leadership role. The introduction briefly outlined the mixed methods exploratory sequential quantitative > qualitative study which involved three stages (Interviews-Questionnaire>Interviews). I then discussed the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and the challenges to these polar approaches. These challenges supported me in my conclusion that a pragmatic mixed methods approach was appropriate for this study. This approach aimed to listen to the voice of the MLs to inform each stage of the study. It was envisaged that the use of quantitative and qualitative methods would increase the validity of the research and provide a deeper understanding of AP1 post holders' PD needs. The

researcher's position within the study was then discussed to acknowledge my position which gives me a deep understanding of the topic and a degree of separation to objectively interpret the data. Sampling, data collection and data analysis were described for each of the three stages. The ethical considerations for this study were then discussed to demonstrate the steps taken to follow best practice and protect participants. This mixed methods approach using abductive reasoning provides a foundation for the findings detailed in chapter four and discussions in chapter five.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

'Student Voice' is a term frequently found in educational discourse in recent years. The fundamental principal of which is that students have the right to have a say in shaping the education system and their schools. Similarly, when discussing and planning components that affect teachers, their voices should be heard. This study aimed to collect and analyse teacher voice and even more specifically the voice of AP1 post holders in ETB schools. What follows has been informed by the voice of these post holders regarding their professional needs in their ML positions. These voices were listened to in stage one of this study when data from the interviews was used to inform the questions for the online survey. Subsequently, AP1 post holders (in ETB schools) were given the opportunity for their voices to be heard in the online survey. Following analysis, these voices were once more listened to, to ensure the findings accurately reflected the PD needs of AP1s in ETB schools.

4.2 Interviews: Stage one

I conducted five semi-structured interviews with AP1 post holders. The aim of this was to get a better understanding of the needs of AP1 post holders which would then inform the design of a web survey. The survey would then quantify those needs. The participants ranged in experience as AP1 post holders; I-1.1 — 16 years, I-1.2 — 5 years, I-1.3 — 3 years, I-1.4 — 2 years and I-1.5 — newly appointed. The findings from the literature review and the topics which emerged from the coding of these interviews were used to design the web survey.

Two predominate concerns emerged from the stage one interviews. The first one was in the area of induction.

Four of the five interviewees said they had no formal induction.

> I-1.3 No there was no training provided by the school. No, there were no kind of guidelines given or no kind of guidebook given as to, these are the standard protocol procedures that we put in place in our school, that would have been very very helpful.

> I-1.4 I think if there had been proper induction to the role, I might not have struggled as much to try and balance that kind of dealing with the difficult student in the middle of a class.

The fifth stated that they sat down with senior management and chatted about the role when appointed. One post holder spoke about intending to stay in the school for the rest of their career and was eager to get the job I-1.3 "right from the beginning" rather than realising years later that they got it wrong.

Induction is closely related to the second concern raised, that of a job description.

> I-1.3 in a way, I thought it would be more formalised. I thought there'd be a very clear statement of this is your role as an AP1 post holder and this is what is expected from you.

All the interviewees had Year Head as one of their jobs as well as an additional role. They spoke mostly about the role of Year Head and the support they received from other AP1 post holders in the school to undertake this role. One person mentioned that their additional role I-1.3 "was very much left up to me to decide what that was" and that "there was no guidance at all given as to what the expectation was there." This lack of a clearly defined job description was described as being I-1.4 "frustrating" and "stressful" and one AP1 post holder I-1.5 was "worrying" about possibly not having all jobs completed as it was not clear what exactly all these jobs were.

When asked about the advice they would give to a colleague just starting out in the role one advised that they I-1.3 "go talk to senior management and get in writing what the roles and responsibilities are."

The circular (003/2018), pertinent to leadership and management in Irish schools, recommends that post holders have an annual review. None of the interviewees reported having reviews of their performance. One person (I-1.1) mentioned that they did get informal feedback after a positive outcome but felt that even though there was no formal review structure that senior management were reviewing their performance and would speak to them if a poor performance issue arose.

Once appointed to the position the main challenges identified were; lack of time; workload; self-management; lack of good communication systems and dealing with colleagues.

Interviewees were complementary of the open-door policy that senior management had if they had concerns or needed to run something by them. The dominant support identified was from other experienced AP1 post holders.

I-1.4 I was very lucky that there were two senior staff members, post holders who kind of took me under their wing and were able to guide me but without them I would have been at a loose end.

I-1.3 The support of already established AP1s who were very generous with their time and there was no question that was asked that was taken flippantly or that was taken too lightly. Everything was given time. By far that's where most of the learning came from.

The support of experienced colleagues was described as essential as they facilitated the process of converting theory into practice.

I-1.3 So, while the theory might be there… It's just a reference guide. For somebody who's been in the post for a long time to be able to sit with you and say look in this instance this is what we generally do and they have both the experience, the knowledge that they have, I suppose a sense of what the school is about, that is essential.

This mentoring support was identified as being important for the first couple of years in the role. It was reported as being I-1.3 "as valuable at this stage in your career as it is when you're a newly qualified teacher." AP1s recognised the on-the-job expertise of experienced post holders as I-1.5 "oftentimes they've tried and failed and learned from experience and it's great to get their views."

Apart from one identified issue (I-1.4) of when to deal with disruptive students who were sent to them during their own class teaching time, interviewees were comfortable dealing with students and discipline. A challenge was identified in the area of pastoral care (I-1.1) and dealing with the emotional needs of students and their parents especially when high stakes exams were involved.

When asked to identify areas for PD, interviewees identified self-management (I-1.1) but cautioned that a couple of days training cannot prepare you for the role and you require constant support from senior management.

The most experienced post holder (I-1.1) advised that; you must know your limitations; you can't fix everyone; constantly seek support; don't ever think you know it all; you must always be the professional and the voice of reason; show empathy and manage your own emotions. This advice was coupled with concern for teachers being awarded this role without adequate experience. This post holder advised that teachers should have at least 8 years' experience before taking on the role of year head in particular. This was echoed by another interviewee (I-1.2) who stated that her relationship with colleagues had not changed after appointment as she had years

of experience in the school and had gained respect of colleagues over time. The appointment had just been like a natural progression. Both interviewees expressed that they felt part of the leadership team in the school whereby newer appointees did not. The current eligibility requirements for an AP1 position is 3 years recognised teaching service.

I make note of the passion expressed by AP1s for their students and their commitment to them and to the school.

> I-1.3 it's lovely to get to know the students on a different level rather than just teaching them. You get to know them as an individual. You get to see the bigger picture with them and to see them as an individual more than just a student in your classroom who has to get a certain grade and it helps to build up that relationship at home as well.

> I-1.5 it's nice for the students to have somebody that they can go to without fear of judgment and that you can just say look you're getting on grand and just that little quiet word that will give affirmation.

Stage one involved semi structured interviews and the collecting and analysing of data from five Ap1 post holders. The interviews gave a voice to the post holders as to their PD needs in their ML role. The interviewees had a range years' experience as a post holder to reflect the needs of AP1s at different stages of their ML career. This coupled with the literature review informed the design of questions for the web survey. Stage two will seek the voice of all AP1 post holders in ETB post primary schools to quantify and further inform the needs identified in stage one.

4.3   Web Survey: Stage two

The online survey was designed using the data obtained from the interviews in stage one and the literature review. The survey had the potential to reach all AP1 post holders in ETB schools which supports the findings being generalised. The survey consisted of 20 questions. These were a combination of closed questions (requiring a tick the box answer) and open questions which would require further analysis.

The survey yielded 122 respondents out of an estimated total of 1,225 giving a response rate of 10%. I was aware that web surveys have a lower response rate than other survey modes (Fan and Yan, 2010) but chose this as it was the most efficient way to access all AP1 post holders in all 245 schools. The response rate was also dependant on principals forwarding the email with the survey link to their post

holders. The survey was timely as many ETBs had appointed new AP1 posts in the previous few months following the release of circular 003/2018 This circular permitted schools to fill post of responsibility vacancies at AP1 and AP2 levels. The topic of a survey can influence the response rate and I anticipated that the topic was salient which makes respondents more likely to respond to the survey (Dillman 2007). As an incentive to encourage post holders to complete the survey, I included in the email that I would give a donation to the Irish Cancer Society for each survey completed. This culminated in a donation of €250 (122 responses x €2 = €244; rounded up). Incentives are often used in mail and web surveys to increase response rates (Fan and Yan, 2010). In certain sectors of society e.g. public sector employees, offering charity donations has been shown to be just as effective as offering monetary incentives to increase response rates (Conn, Mo and Sellers, 2019). Offering incentives does not adversely affect the quality of response (Singer 2012). I deducted that this would encourage participation without having an influence on the responses to the questions. In excess of 100 responses occurred immediately on May 6th with the remaining ones completed by June 3rd (see Appendix 1).

4.3.1 Survey Question Responses

Responses from closed questions were collated by the SurveyMonkey platform. Open question responses were coded and results are outlined below.

**Question 1:** How many years teaching experience have you?

Figure 5:   No. of Years' Teaching Experience

Answered: 119   Skipped: 3
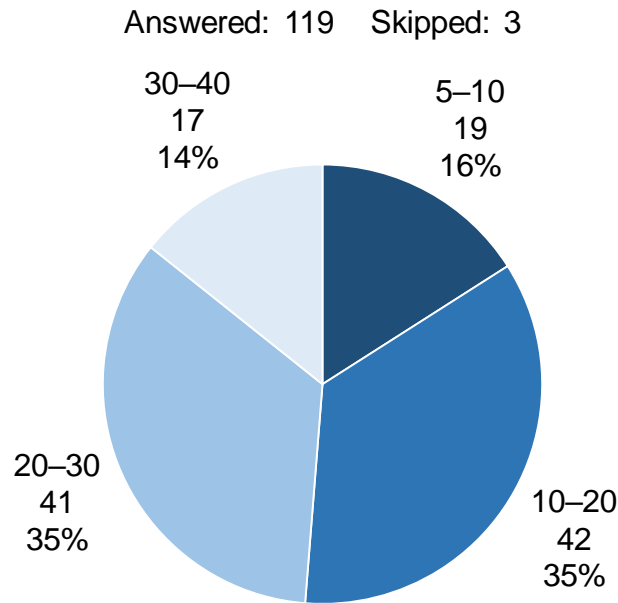
119 of the 122 respondents answered this question.19 respondents had 5-10 years teaching experience. The AP1 post has a requirement that applicants must have a minimum of three years recognised teaching service (DES, 2018). According to Huberman (1989) this places these teachers in a middle career category after transcending the survival and discovery stage (one-three years) and the stabilisation stage (four-six years). These 16% (19 teachers) along with the 35% (42 teachers) who have 10-20 years' experience are in the experimentation / activism and stock taking stage, teachers who wish to increase their instruction impact may experiment with new materials and instructional strategies (Huberman, 1989). 34% (41 teachers) are also mid-career but in the serenity and conservatism stage which includes teachers with 10-30 years' experience. These experienced teachers can have a loss of engagement, a decline in career ambitions and a greater sense of self-acceptance. Conservative teachers can be sceptical of innovations and critical of education policy (Huberman, 1989). It is possible that the loss of engagement and decline in career ambitions will not be the case with this set of teachers as they have progressed in their career with their appointment to the AP1 position. 14.29% (17) respondents have 30-40 years' experience and are classified by Huberman as being in the end career stage — disengaged — which is characterised by a withdrawal from the profession. Teachers tend to reduce their commitment and career ambition, instead of focusing on more personal goals.

Question 2: How many years' experience had you when you were appointed the AP1 position?

Figure 6:   No. of Years' Experience when Appointed

Answered: 120   Skipped: 2
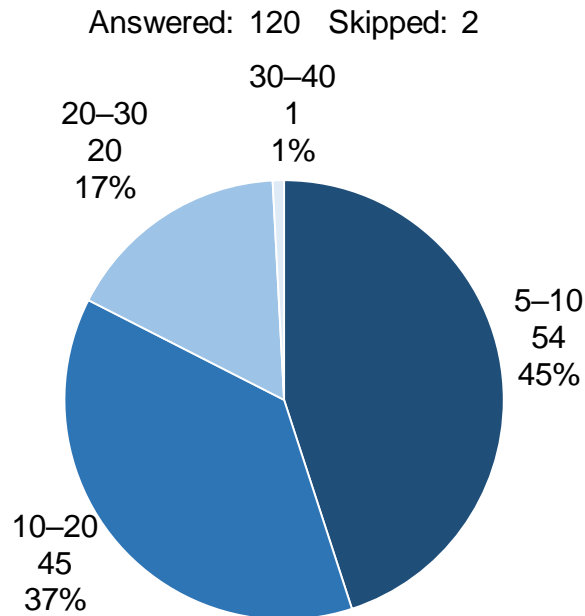
The largest number of post holders; 45% (54 teachers) were appointed when they had five – ten years' experience. This reflects the change in the points system used in the appointment of AP1 post holders. Prior to 2018 points were awarded for years' service, which in practice resulted in most of the posts being awarded to teachers who had more years of experience. Only one respondent had 30-40 years' experience when appointed to their AP1 position.

Question 3: Please list any further qualifications you achieved after initial teacher training.

94 of the respondents gave responses to this question. Of those, nine people stated that they had not gained any further qualifications. I left this as an open question to gain insight into the range of qualifications and topics being studied by respondents. This could account for the 28 people who skipped the question as it was more laboursome to answer than a tick the box question. It possibly indicates that those 28 did not have any further qualification and therefore left the question blank. In hindsight the question should have been preceded by a yes/no to extra qualifications and then a follow on for those answering yes.

68% (83 teachers) had gained further qualification after their initial teacher qualification. These qualifications ranged from certificates up to masters' level programmes.

25% had obtained a post graduate Diploma and

26% (31 teachers) had achieved a masters level qualification.

Of those who had studied at master's level, six specified that their master's is in leadership and management. In total

21% (25 respondents) had a qualification (ranging from diplomas- masters) in Educational Leadership and Management.
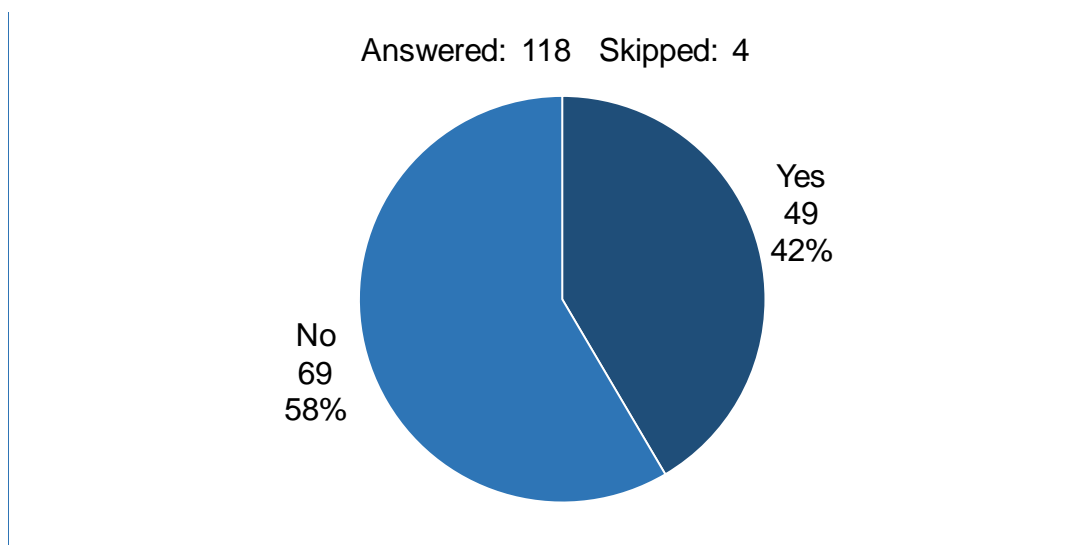
Qualifications in chaplaincy/guidance/counselling (8%),

SEN (12%) and

Teaching and Learning (4%) also featured.

Question 4: Did you engage in any professional development courses to prepare for the AP1 position?

Figure 7:   PD in Preparation for the AP1 Role

Answered: 118   Skipped: 4

42% of respondents stated that they did engage in courses specifically for the AP1 position. Many of the respondents had already obtained further qualifications as outlined in Q3 above which would have prepared them for the AP1 application process.

Question 5: Please list any professional development you engaged in for the AP1 position
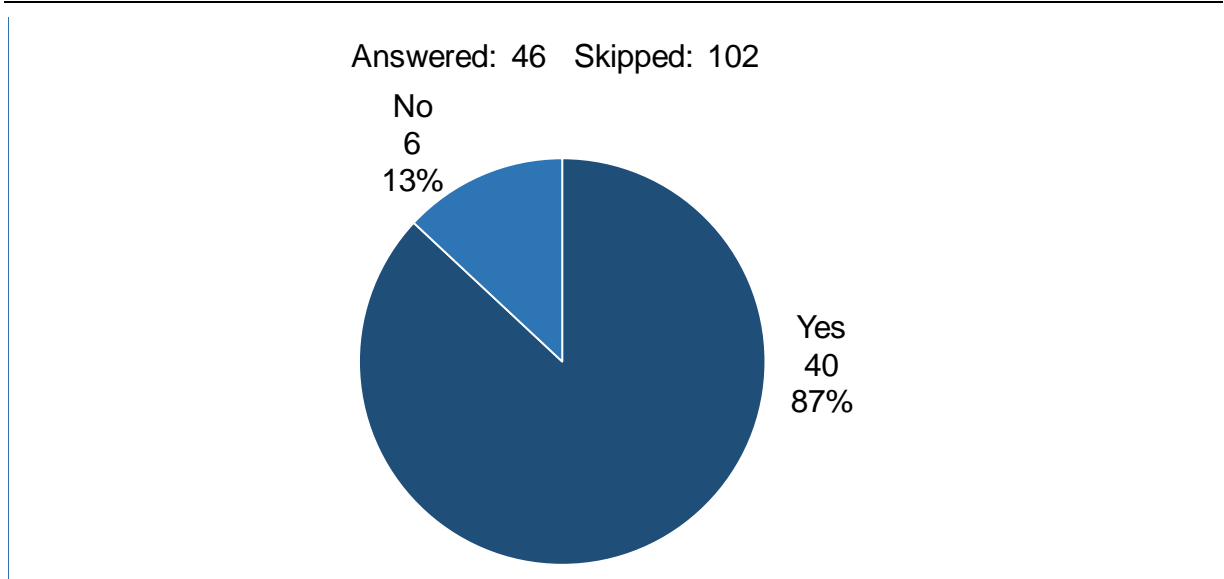
Of those that engaged in courses specifically for the post, 44 respondents listed the courses attended which included courses in

> Leadership and management (19),
> Middle Leaders (7),
> SEN (4),
> Leading Learning (4)
> the role of the Year head (3) and
> Timetabling software (3).

One respondent stated that they attended a specific workshop with Dublin Dun Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB) for newly appointed AP1 post holders. The DDLETB website mentions middle leadership training provision for teachers but did not have specific information on this course. Encouragement of PL and provision of PD was also a feature of their recruitment page indicating that they value PD and see it as a reason that teachers would choose DDLETB as a prospective employer (DDLETB, 2018). This focus on PD is not a feature of the website of all ETBs. There are 16 ETBs in the country yet only three ETBs were mentioned in the questionnaire as providing a workshop/course for middle leaders. This provision of support is positive but they appear to be one-off courses/inputs which do not include sustained support to ensure post holders are continuously supported in their work.

Question 6: Did this/these courses prepare you for the AP1 role?

Figure 8:   Did this/these Courses Prepare you for the AP1 Role?

Answered: 46   Skipped: 102

No
6
13%

Yes
40
87%

Of those that engaged in courses to prepare for the role, it is positive to see that 87% report that these courses helped to prepare them for the role which demonstrates that PD in this area is effective. It is important to note that 73% (29) of these had undertaken further qualifications after initial teacher training with 20 respondents having a qualification in leadership/management, which would also have contributed to their readiness for the role. When listing the courses undertaken in preparation for the role, some respondents (9) listed their qualification courses, other courses listed are outlined below.

Table 8:   Courses Undertaken in Preparation for the AP1 Role

Leadership	19	DEIS planning	2
Middle Leader/Management	7	Interview Preparation	2
SEN	4	TL21	2
Timetabling	3	Restorative Practice	1
Instructional Leadership	4	HSCL	1
Year head	3	Mindfulness	1
LCA co-ordination	1		

The main providers of the leadership, middle leader and year head courses mentioned were the ETB and the local education centre.

The 6 respondents who reported that their courses did not prepare them for the role, undertook the following: Middle Leader Course; QQI course in Team Leadership; Role of the Year head; ETB course for newly appointed post holders; TL21; Certificate in Leadership and Management (2) and SEN courses. Three of these respondents did not have further qualifications after their initial teaching qualification and one had a qualification in Leadership and Management.

Question 7: What are your current roles/responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?

Circular 003/2018 (DES, 2018) requires that each school undertakes a review process at least every two years to determine their needs and priorities in relation to leadership and management. These needs and priorities will be used to inform the assignment (or reassignment) of roles and responsibilities to each post holder. These roles and responsibilities are underpinned by the school's mission statement, the school profile and department and legal requirements. Therefore, the identified needs and priorities of each school can vary considerably. This question was left open to allow a range of diverse needs and priorities of schools to be listed.

65% of post holders listed year head as part of their remit with

26 of these (23% of the overall number) stating it as their only role.

7% (8) are Programme co-ordinators which involves the organisation of Transition year and LCVP.

In addition, the following post holders listed these responsibilities as their sole role:

3 ICT. This can include a range of responsibilities relating to the IT structures and provision in the school.

3 SEN co-ordinator. Responsibility for students with special educational needs.

1 Planning co-ordinator. This role supports the school to work through the process of self-evaluation and development planning.

1 PLC co-ordinator. Responsibility for the post leaving certificate programme.

1 Deis co-ordinator. Planning and implementing the plan to deliver equality of opportunities in schools.

1 Director of Irish medium stream in a school with an English and an Irish medium stream.

1 Teaching and Learning. Facilitating and encouraging improved pedagogical practices in the classroom.

1 Community Liaison. Liaising with parents and community groups.

1 Promotion of the arts and culture.

1 Exam Secretary. This can involve the co-ordination of in-house or state exams.

1 Attendance. Monitoring attendance and reporting non-attendance.

The remaining 13 listed a number of responsibilities for their AP1 post e.g. 'Assist with PR, Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Feedback, Book rental scheme and lockers, Assist with SSE'.

As many participants listed a variety of roles for their AP1 post it is difficult to show the range of responsibilities and combinations of those assigned to them. Therefore, the word cloud below shows the weighted range of responsibilities mentioned by post holders.

Figure 9:   Responsibilities of AP1 Post Holders

Question 8: Did you receive any formal induction after taking up the AP1 position?

Figure 10:   Formal Induction after Appointment to AP1 Position

Answered: 111   Skipped: 37

Yes
15
14%

No
96
86%
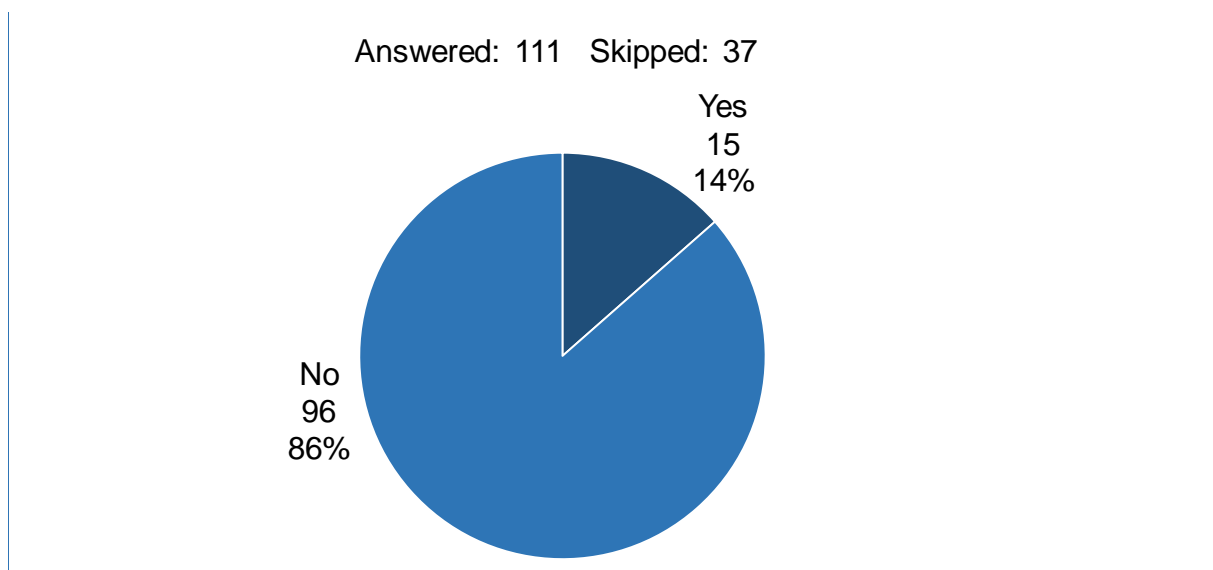
The role of AP1 is important for the management and leadership structure in schools. In the ETB sector this position brings with it a class contact timetable reduction of four hours. This is a significant financial investment for the ETB. Disappointingly, 87% of respondents did not receive a formal induction into the role. Two respondents reported that their induction had not taken place but was planned for the following week. One respondent attended LCA in-service for new co-ordinators as their induction but did not have a school-based or ETB induction.

Question 9: Please describe this induction.

16% of the respondents did receive an induction but the format and outline of this induction was varied. The inductions described varied from an in-school meeting with the principal:

My principal went through my role and what was expected.

or with the management team

#101   Handover from the previous year head, meeting with principal and deputy about the vision for the post.

#79   40-minute meeting with other AP1 post holders and senior management. Brief discussion about the role and responsibilities of a year head.

mentoring from other AP1 post holders:

#64 I was trained up by the current AP1 holders in the school.

Some inductions were carried out through the ETB:

#50 Going to in-service for AP1.

#103 Tipperary ETB provided two training days.

#69 Day long course covering time management conflict management.

or were a combination of school and ETB induction;

#29 Meeting held with senior management, ETB middle management training.

#39 Mentoring from AP1 holders. ETB training.

Question 10: Did this induction support you in your role?

87% (13) of the 15 people who received induction were positive in their response to this and found that the induction supported them in their role. Despite the varied types of induction received by the respondents, induction is an important first step in supporting an AP1 post holder in their job and ensuring that the needs of the school are met,

#94 it was very clear what was expected from me and how it would improve the teaching and learning in our school.

Question 11: Did you get a job description outlining your roles and responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?

Figure 11:   Did you Receive a Job Description?

Answered: 109   Skipped: 39

No
40
37%

Yes
69
63%
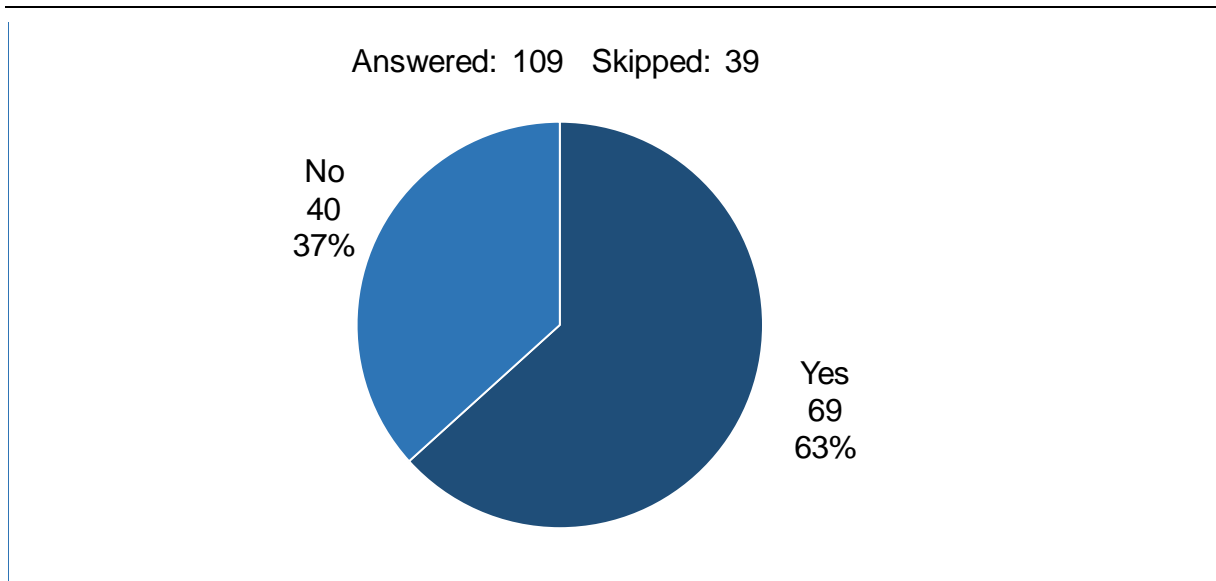
Receiving a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of a new job would help to ensure that the post holder was clear on the expectations of senior management and the ETB and would assist the ML in self evaluating.

 37% (40) of new post holders did not receive an outline of their role. This leaves them unclear as to what was expected of them and unable to adequately self-reflect and evaluate their performance.

Question 12: What/who has supported you most since taking up the AP1 position?

This question was also left open to allow for a wide variety of supports to be reported. The main supports reported were:

      other AP1 post holders (37),
      the Senior management team (Principal and Deputy principal) (35),
      Deputy Principal (23),
      Principal (20) and
      colleagues (9).

The findings demonstrate that the senior management team and the middle layer of AP1 post holders have provided support. This support can manifest in various ways;

#96 We have a leadership model in the school which supports post holders. All AP1s have a group discussion with school management once a week, then each individual AP1 meets one member of SMT once a week.

#18 Principal mentored in the first year. Shadowed his meeting and available for advice.

The reporting of support from the senior management team is very positive as it is an important factor in the success and effectiveness of MLs (Gurr and Drysdale; 2013 and De Nobile, 2018).

Unfortunately, in some instances the post holder did not feel that support was available to them: two people reported that they themselves were their support or they had just learned from experience and one person reported that #107 "no one" had given them support. In these instances, the ability of SLs to support their MLs or their ability to communicate their willingness to offer help must be questioned as "middle leaders largely depend on their principals for their effectiveness" (Farchi and Tubin, 2019 p.387).

Question 13: What were the biggest challenges that you faced in the AP1 position?

Each school is unique in its location, setting, resources, students etc and therefore again this question was left open to gauge the range of challenges that AP1 post holders face in their role. There were 106 responses to this question. Similar to other open questions which required a written response rather than a tick the box, the response rate was lower.

Figure 12:   Biggest Challenges Faced in AP1 Position
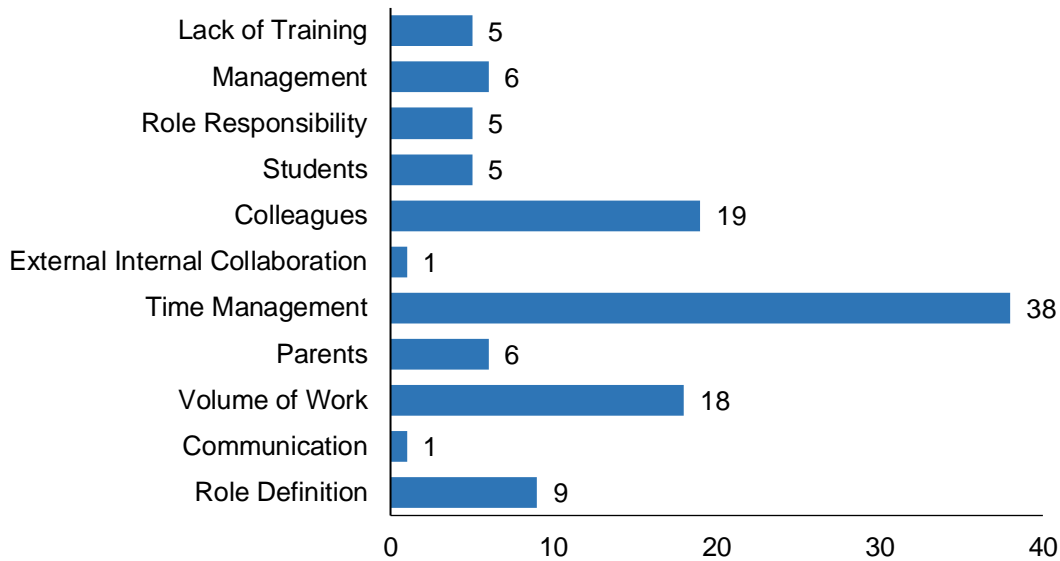
I grouped the challenges into three main themes:

Workload and Time;

Relationship Management and

Human Resource Management.

Workload and Time

Time was mentioned by 38 people as being a challenge of this role and 18 respondents spoke about the volume of work involved both from the work involved in the AP1 role and the role conflict they experienced while balancing this with the work required for their class contact hours.

> #80   Balancing the enormous workload of an AP1 with teaching a practical subject. No planning or school-work done in school.

> #41   Time management. Teaching and trying to manage issues when in class. Access to office to make phone calls, stationery etc. Expectations that you can do everything with the equivalent of one class off a day to do it.

> #21   There are not enough hours in the day to do the job to the standard I want to do it. I am here until 6pm every day. Finding it hard to get the correct balance between AP1 role and my role as a classroom teacher.

The level of responsibility associated with the role (5) was also a challenge to post holders.

#102 Weight of responsibility.

#95 Emotional needs of students.

#85 Dealing with sensitive information and/or child welfare issues.

Relationship Management

Learning to deal with others in their role as an AP1 post holder was a matter of concern for many post holders. Fellow colleagues (19) were the biggest cause for concern, particularly in the period after appointment as there were negative staff relations from some unsuccessful candidates;

#104 Managing the period after appointment with fellow staff members, ensuring that disappointed candidates had space etc.

#9 Staff being hostile.

#45 Staff that did not get AP1.

As well as having to deal with colleagues when their working relationship with them had changed;

#59 Directly dealing with staff, having professional conversations about difficult issues.

#62 Coming to an understanding about how to organise and lead other adults...I thought in advance of taking up the role that I had lots of experience of leading others, but these were generally within my own subject areas. I hadn't fully appreciated the extent that I would have to stretch to understand the perspective of such a diverse array of backgrounds. I've also found leading 'genuine' collaboration a challenge. This has been particularly an issue when we need to meet deadlines and keep the SIP and DL Plan relevant and achievable for the whole school community. Trying to balance a teaching load and the various demands of the role requires significant time management skills.

Managing relationships with students (5), parents (6), senior management (6) and the various education partners is also a concern for post holders. In particular, managing the expectations that colleagues and parents have of them in the role:

#26 People believing you have all the answers when you don't.

#67 Unrealistic expectations from teaching staff in dealing with discipline issues.

And dealing with conflict situations

#85 How to communicate with very difficult parents.

#30 Learning to deal with students' / parents' issues and perhaps dealing with conflict between teacher and student and resolving same.

Human Resource Management (HRM):

HRM

is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets — the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives. (Armstrong 2006, p.2)

As is evident from question 8 where 86% of respondents did not get an induction and from question 11 when 37% did not receive a job description, there appears to be a lack of a co-ordinated strategic approach to HRM for the ML tier. Respondents mentioned the lack of a defined role description (9) and lack of training in the new skills required in the role (5) as significant challenges. This was also evident when respondents stated that their biggest challenge was;

#6 with a change in principal and different expectations about the AP1 role. The previous principal was explicit about AP1/2s not having personnel functions but the new principal expected AP1s to manage and direct colleagues.

#68 No formal training or induction. Very much learning the ropes by a process of trial and error and informal advice gained from colleagues.

#46 Learning a new role, developing the area, where to seek advice, confining the role. I would have needed line manager.

#122 Clear understanding of role and to best manage those expectations, communication and consistency with protocol.

Question 14: How did you overcome these challenges?

Figure 13:   How Did You Overcome These Challenges?
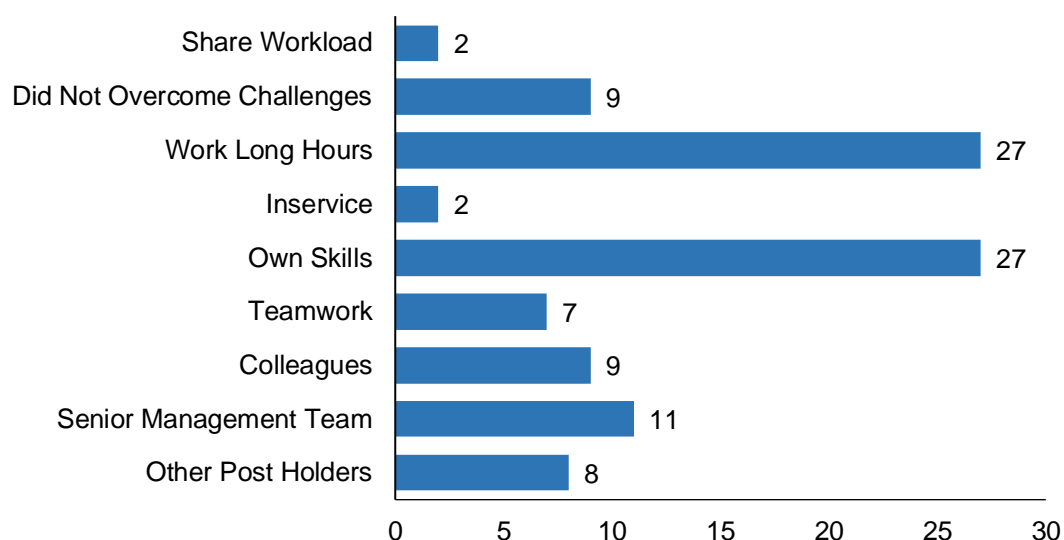
There were a variety of responses to this question. The answers reflect the findings in question 12 when respondents were asked who had supported them most since taking up the role. Other AP1 post holders (8) and the senior management team of Principal and Deputy Principal (11) along with colleagues' support (9) were reported as a way to overcome challenges faced in their role. Utilising the existing structures in the school and working with the various teams in place in the school was important for 7 post holders.

Working in teams is an integral part of any organisation. SMTs, care teams, SEN teams etc. are all essential to the efficient running of the school.

27 of the respondents reported utilising their own skills to deal with challenges: advanced planning, organisation, communication, resilience, being professional, listening, learning from mistakes, reflection, time management and using previous experience.

Only two people mentioned the notion of getting others to share the workload

    #53   work with others more to share the workload.
    #22   Lots of prioritizing and some delegation.

Utilising in-service was only mentioned by two people as a means to overcome challenges. This is disappointing given the benefits of effective PD outlined in the

literature review. The lack of engagement could be explained by either a lack of specific ML PD available to post holders or the lack of time attributable to an excessive workload.

One response illustrates a post holder who understands the complexity of change involved in the position and is fortunate to work in a supportive environment.

> #6 understanding that change is never easy and that people try their best in most situations. I'm very lucky to work with a very supportive staff.

This respondent had 20-30 years teaching experience and worked in a school with a supportive staff. They felt that they were "empowered to suggest initiatives/changes and implement with full support of the principal" and reported that they were comfortable with all aspects of the role. The respondent values PD and is currently undertaking further studies in the area of management and leadership. They appear to be in a privileged position where the climate of the school supports change, senior management is willing to distribute leadership and they are developing their knowledge of leadership and management theory.

This is in contrast to respondents who had not managed to overcome these challenges (9) and were "still struggling" and finding the role "a constant challenge." Time was again a prominent feature of the text here where 27 people mentioned the need to work long hours during term time and out of term time.

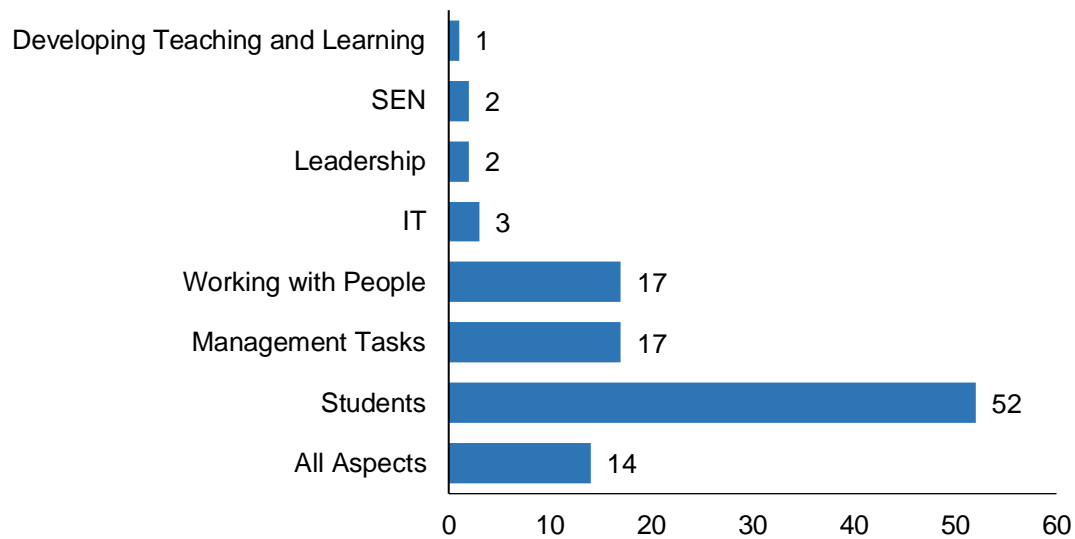> #17 by working at home and over weekends.
> #114 work break/lunch/after school or in / during holidays.
> #73 work at home during June.
> #94 I stay late most evenings and also over the summer.

Question 15: What tasks/aspects of the role do you feel most comfortable with?

Figure 14:   Aspects of the Role You Feel Most Comfortable With

43% of those who responded to this question specifically stated that they were comfortable dealing with students

> #117 Encouraging, motivating, supporting students.
> #109 Dealing with the students. I really enjoy building relationships with the students. You get to know students better as a year head.
> #44   Anything that involves interacting with the students.

With a further 12% stating that they were comfortable with all aspects of their role.

Interacting with students is the core focus of teaching and it is not surprising that it is the role that post holders feel most comfortable with. Teachers are trained to and have experience of dealing with students. This indicates that other aspects of the role that post holders are not trained in, require support.

> 14% noted being comfortable when dealing with other people, parents, colleagues and SM.
> 14% stated that management tasks were where their comfort level was.
>
> #73   Practical tasks, where you can say it is 'done'...e.g., summer exam timetable. Hard to deal with discipline issues when you have classes all that day.
> #84   Daily management tasks.
> #52   Assigned tasks, e.g., Website.

127

Less than 2% mentioned being comfortable with leadership indicating that there is a lack of investment in the leadership element of the role. This is not to assert that these post holders are not leading in their schools, but they do not exhibit the language of leadership theory or/and are not aware of their potential to lead.

Question 16: Have you had regular reviews of your performance as an AP1 post holder?

Figure 15:   Have you had Regular Reviews of Your Performance as an AP1 Post Holder?

Answered: 109   Skipped: 39

Yes
41
38%

No
68
62%
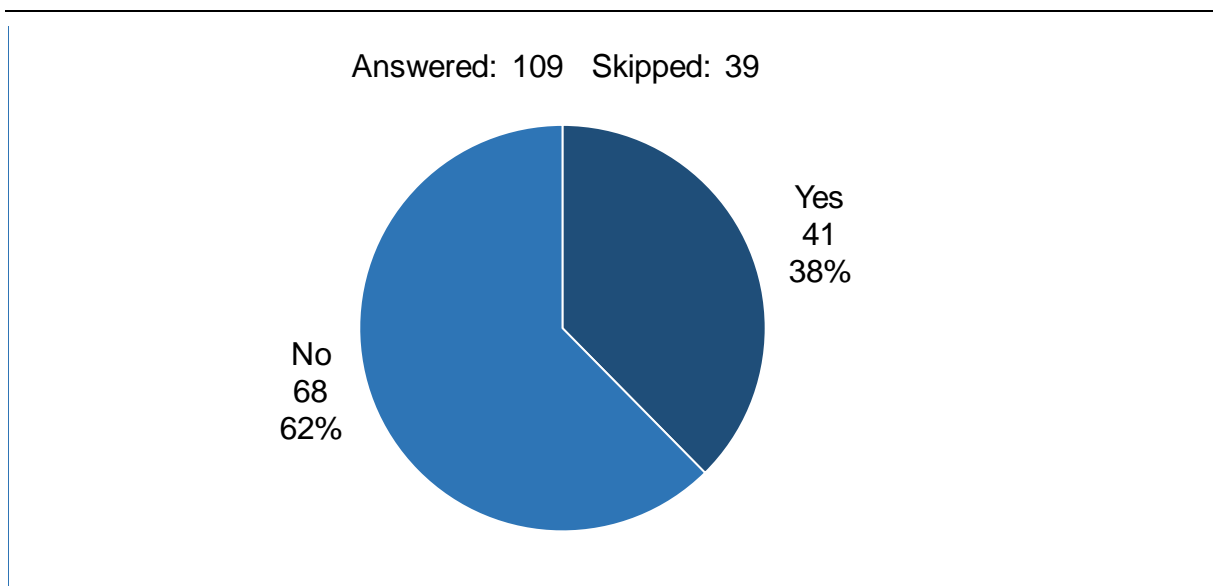
Up to May 2019 62% of respondents did not have a review of their performance in the post. Circular 003/2018, point 12.3 (DES, 2018) requires AP1 post holders to undertake an annual review with their principal/deputy principal. This review is to be informed by the post holder's annual report. The review should include:

(i)   review of progress in the areas of responsibility;
(ii)   review of the role in the context of the changing needs of the school;
(iii) review of professional development of the post holder.

(DES, 2018, p.17)

It would appear from the results that the senior management teams have not met this requirement. It is important to note that many of the posts of responsibility were only appointed in the 2018/2019 school year following the release of the circular. Provisions for interviews being made in the ETBs would have taken time with appointments being made in the 2018/2019 school year. Responses to this survey

were received between May 8th and May 24th in 2019 and SMTs could have scheduled reviews for the end of the school year.

**Question 17:** Were these reviews useful?

38% of AP1 post holders (41), did have a review of their performance in the role. Of those who had a review only 3 (8%) stated that these reviews were not useful. 92% found the process to be useful stating that:

#102	Yes, it just clarified and recognised my hard work.
#70	Yes, allows time to reflect and look at successes and failure.
#68	Yes. Good to sit down with principal to review the year and identify any issues or supports needed to help you carry out your role.
#5	Yes, as I got to highlight areas working well and those areas that provided challenges. Seek advice and guidance from SMT.

The DES have required senior management to review post holders at the end of each school year. These results demonstrate that the process is a positive one.

Question 18: Please indicate the degree to which you need training in the following areas.

Figure 16:   Identifying Training Needs
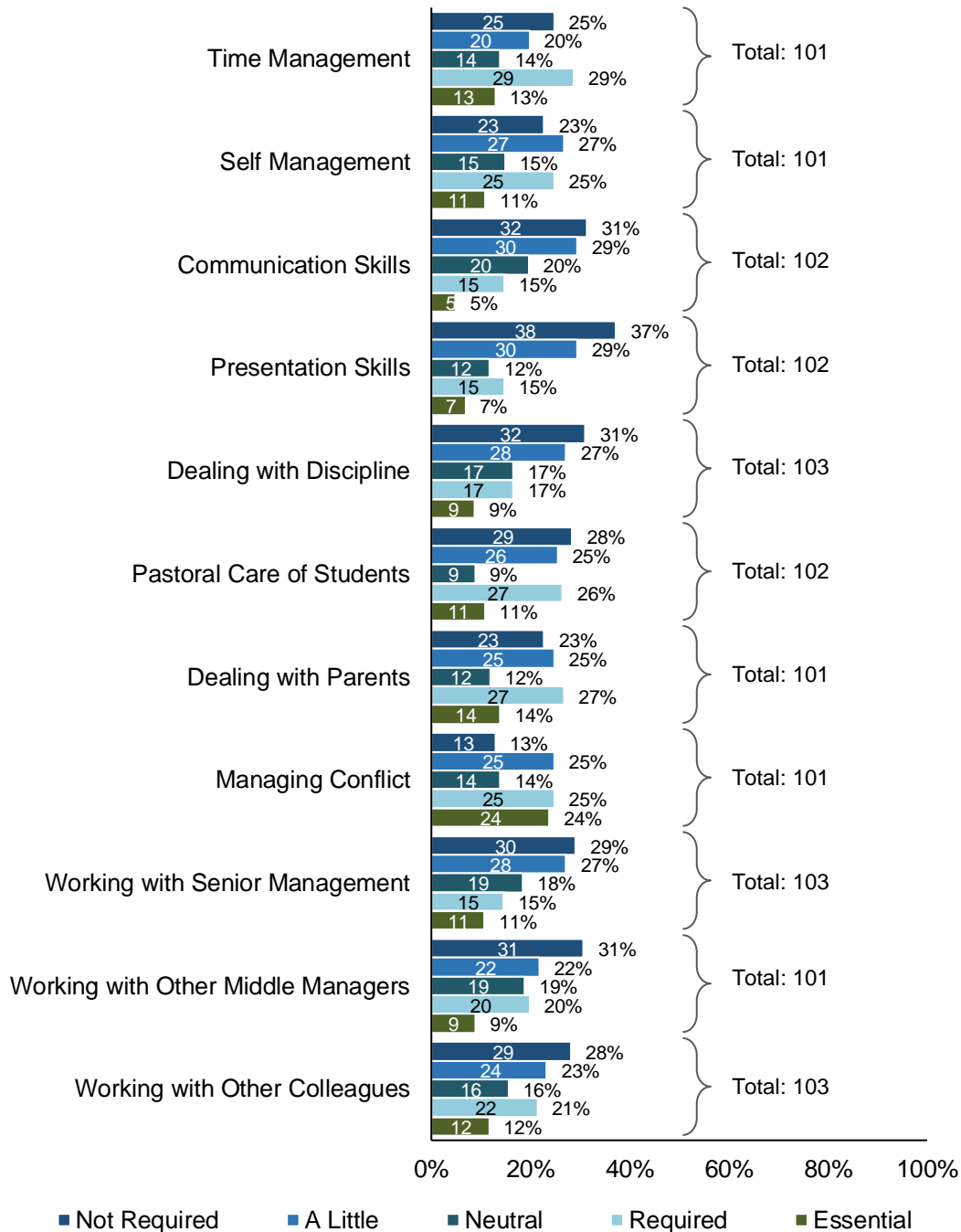
Combining the results from the required and essential sections of the above table shows a priority for PD in the following areas:

1. Managing Conflict
2. Time Management
3. Dealing with Parents
4. Pastoral care of Students
5. Self-Management
6. Dealing with Colleagues
7. Working with other Middle Managers
8. Working with Senior Management
9. Dealing with Discipline
10. Presentation Skills
11. Communication

Managing conflict was identified as the area with the greatest need by AP1 post holders. The AP1 post involves managing relationships with many people; colleagues, senior management, parents, students and other stakeholders. Managing conflict was a main priority in particular for those who had 20-30 years' experience when they were appointed an AP1 position. 41% saying it was required and 18% saying it was essential.

The literature review indicated that a teacher's career stage can have an effect on their motivation and engagement with policy and innovation. In consideration of this, I filtered the results of the questionnaire to ascertain if there were significant differences in needs at different career stages.

For those with 30-40 years' experience (17 respondents), there was no significant difference in the results for presentation skills, pastoral care of students, working with other middle managers and working with colleagues. There was a greater need for time management and self-management skills. Communication skills were less of a priority in this group with 54% stating that it was not required or only required a little (31%). There was a slight increase in the requirement for dealing with discipline, with 29% reporting that it was required and 7% essential. 38.5% stated that support to deal with parents was not required compared with 23% of the overall group. This group do not report having a need for PD to support them working with senior management with only one respondent in this group stating it was required and one that it was essential.

The responses from the 41 post holders with 20-30 years' experience were similar to the overall group in relation to their need for time management and they had slightly less need for support with self-management. Four out of the five respondents who stated that communication skills were essential were from this group. This group reported a greater essential need for PD

> to help with working with senior management (21.2%) compared to the overall group (10.68%),
> working with other middle managers (15.2%) (8.9%) and
> working with colleagues (18.2%) (11.7%)

The 42 respondents with 10-20 years' experience were similar to the overall group in all areas when reporting their needs.

There were 19 post holders with 5-10 years teaching experience. They expressed less of an overall need for time management, although there was a similar response rate at the essential level with 41% stating that it was not required. Presentation skills were also less of a priority for this group. There was a significant difference reported in the need for support when dealing with parents, 47% reported that this was required along with 18% who said that it was essential compared to the overall group (required 27% and essential 14%).

This indicates that experience and learning on the job is important to support post holders with relationship management. Dealing with SLs, parents and colleagues is an essential part of the role of AP1s.

Question 19: Please indicate what type of professional development you would be interested in

Figure 17: Preferred Types of PD
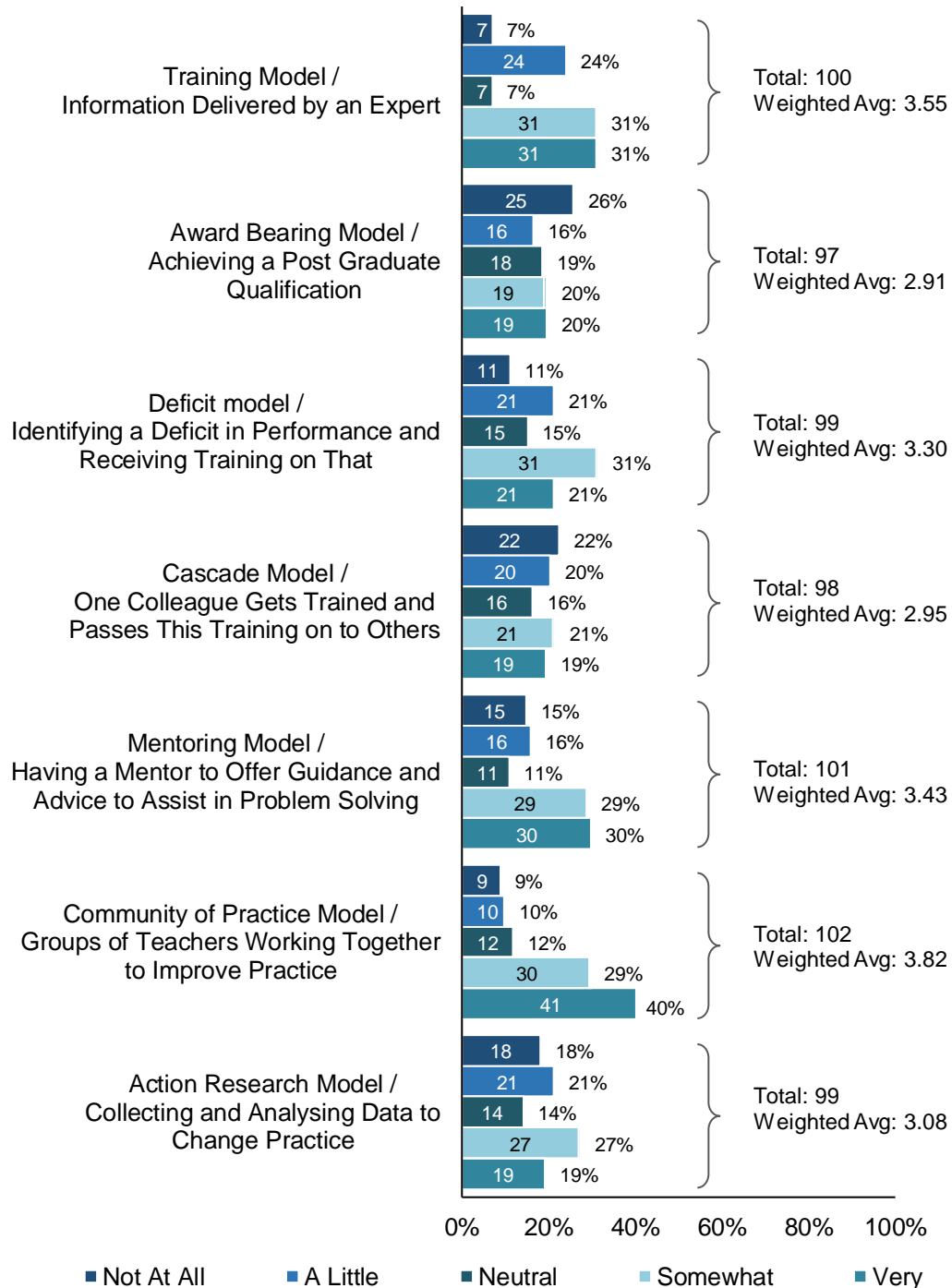
The previous question provided a priority list of the required PD needs of post holders. Acquiring these skills and knowledge can be approached in various ways. This question set out to identify the types of PD that post holders were interested in.

The award-bearing and cascade models were the least favourite types of PD with CoP, training and mentoring models being the overall preferred models. Overall the order of preference was:

1. Community of Practice (CoPs) or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
2. Training Model
3. Mentoring Model
4. Deficit Model
5. Action Research Model
6. Cascade Model
7. Award Bearing Model.

The award-bearing and cascade models were the least favourite types of PD of post holders. As reported in Q3 above, 68% of this group have already obtained further qualifications which could account for this group's lack of interest in the Award Bearing model. The literature review outlines the value of this model. Despite the financial and time commitment involved, undertaking a university course has a greater impact on practice (OECD, 2009).

The cascade model was identified in the literature review as a model with many challenges. Whether these challenges have been experienced by this group or if they are not familiar with this model, is not clear from the questionnaire and is something that can be explored in the follow up interviews.

Question 20: What professional development location do you prefer?

Figure 18:   What Professional Development Location do you Prefer?
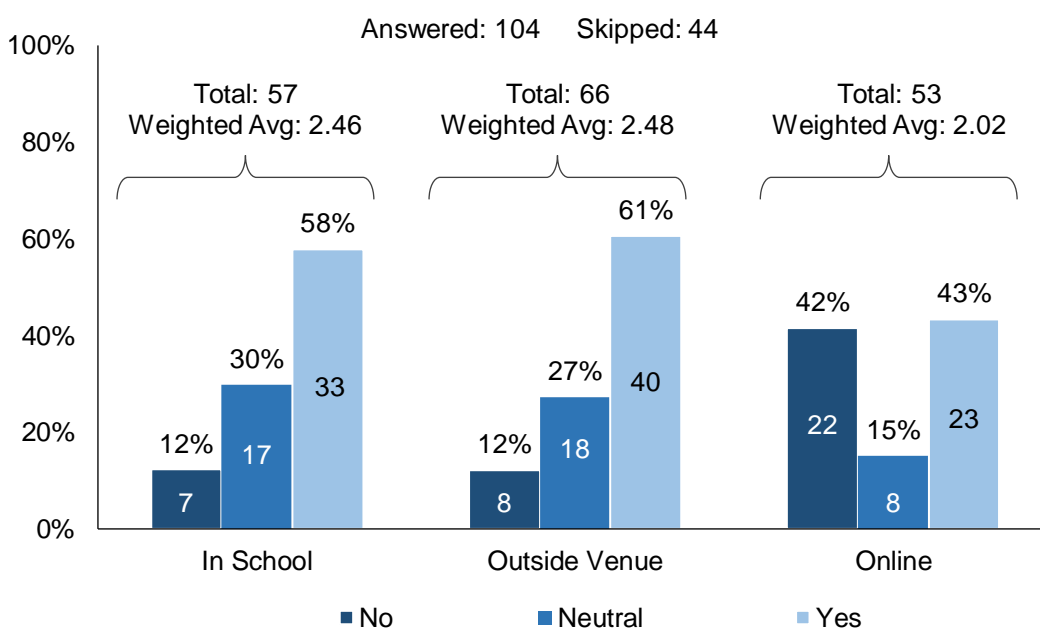
Despite the focus and investment in digital technology in the education system, the least favoured location of PD was online. This is an interesting finding and one which I will explore further when presenting the results to post holders for their reflections and comments.

Currently there is a move with the support service towards in-school support for PL (PDST, 2017). In-school support places the learning close to practice, yet there was little difference between the preference of an in-school or outside of school location.

Stage two involved a Web survey which quantified the needs of Ap1 post holders in ETB schools. It also acquired rich data from the open-ended questions that allowed the voice of post holders to be heard. The data from the surveys was analysed through the descriptive statistics from closed questions and the further analysis of open-ended questions using NVivo. A summary of the findings was compiled in a booklet in an easy to read format. These finding were used in stage three interviews with 10 post holders, to interrogate stage two findings and to ensure that they reflected the actual needs of AP1s.

4.4   Interviews on Findings: Stage three

The booklet outlining the main findings from the online survey results (Appendix F) was an essential element of this stage. This booklet was presented in an easy to read format and was distributed to 10 AP1 post holders. Subsequently each post holder took part in an interview to discuss the findings. The purpose of this was to ascertain if the post holders agreed or disagreed with each of the main findings and if they thought there was a PD need which had not been identified. The original AP1 post holders from the first stage of the research were interviewed as well as five other post holders (identified below as I-2.1, I-2.2, etc.). The five post holders were obtained by convenience sampling but I was cognisant of choosing post holders from different ETB regions and of having a gender mix. Overall, the interviewees agreed with the findings as outlined below.

1. A formal induction into the role is important

    I-2.2 It would be good to have a mentor or something like the Droichead process to help you, so that you would have someone to go to, to ask questions, check procedures.

    I-2.4 When I started, I genuinely did not know what was expected of me and what I should do.

2. A job description would support post holders and would help with the expectations of management and colleagues. This would also assist in the annual review.

   I-2.2 There is no job description… you are just expected to fall into a role that you have no experience in and you have to hit the ground running.

   I-2.3 A job description is really important.

3. Annual reviews are helpful to acknowledge good work and to identify areas for improvement and Professional Development.

   I-2.2 The feedback I got from my annual review, I found it very very beneficial and it builds confidence as well.

   I-2.3 It would be beneficial to be given the date for the review in advance so that you could prepare for it rather than just being called in on the day.

   I-2.6 If that is to work there needs to be a template for the review... so that there is a concrete analysis on it.

   I-2.9 These can just be a formality...a tick the box exercise at the end of the year. There needs to be better buy in in terms of the value of it.

4. The support of management and other AP1 post holders is important (and generally forthcoming) in the role.

   I-2.2 This is essential as the PD for post holders is not there and you constantly need to check things with them.

5. Time management skills are required as the workload is extensive.

   I-2.1 you could become utterly consumed by it.

   I-2.3 Time management skills are really important but a review of the workload that could be met within those timelines is essential as with all the best time management skills in the world, the workload could not be met.

   I-2.6 I don't know if that is possible, there is so much to be done.

6. Relationship management and dealing with conflict skills are required. Dealing with colleagues is an issue in the stage after appointment.

   I-2.1 You are constantly dealing with conflict

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I-2.2 You go from a normal teacher in the classroom and now you have lots of people challenging you… you are not prepared for conflict…I feel very strongly that this is needed.

I-2.3 I would have found dealing with colleagues during the process was quite difficult.

I-2.6 No course is going to teach you that, you learn it through experience.

7. The role is mostly task-based and post holders are not realising their leadership potential.

I-2.2 There are not enough courses for post holders, Comhar was booked out immediately. A lot of the courses are about how to get to the AP1 position but not about what to do when you are there.

I-2.5 Without a proper job description, I didn't know where I stood with regards to leadership in the school.

I-2.6 This is more an issue for senior management as they set the scene for middle leaders and what colleagues will expect of them.

I-2.9 I was very lucky that my XXXXX (the principal) gave me the space to go and do the job. This can depend very much on yourself and how far you want to push it. You wouldn't have a hope if you were dealing with someone that has to control everything.

8. Post holders generally do not delegate tasks to others.

I-2.2 You try and do as much as you can yourself, due to the workload on teachers. But experience will probably help with that.

I-2.3 This is possibly a comment you could make about teachers in general.

I-2.6 I don't agree with that. I have a set of tutors and I do delegate to my team...

I-2.9 I agree as there is the whole sense that you are being paid for it and you have to do it. There is never a conversation with senior management about that. In a business environment there are clear hierarchical structures and you know what the chain of command is.

9. Post holders identified: Communities of Practice, Training Model and Mentoring Models as their preferred type of PD.

I-2.2 yes mentoring is very good or training from other AP1 post holder, not principals. People who have done this for x number of years are good at it and are happy and content in their jobs. They are the people I want to hear from.

10. The award-bearing and cascade models were the least favourite.

I-2.3 I think the cascade model is a good one…there is always a little opposition to it as you are peer tutoring.

I-2.9 I disagree with that, the cascade model is very good and has worked very well for our school.

11. Post holders prefer face-to-face than online courses.

I-2.3 I definitely prefer face-to-face but online is good for time management.

I-2.4 In an ideal world you would go to face-to-face courses but for time management online is good.

I-2.5 I personally prefer to see the person and engage with others at the course.

I-2.6 I agree. It is better to get into a room with like people in similar situations and you learn as much from those beside you as from whoever is in front.

1-2.9 I agree and it is as much what you learn from the talk around coffee.

12. From an overall analysis of the findings I also suggest combined training for the senior and middle leaders:

To explore distributed LEADERSHIP and to come to a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their particular school and ETB context.

To agree a shared vision and mission for the school and

To help them to work as a team.

I-2.1 Schools could function much more successfully if there was a teasing out of the potential of AP1 post holders in the school and in relation to the SMT a forum for people to discuss expectations of each other would be beneficial.

I-2.1 If there was a specific framework with someone supporting school management in setting our expectations, exploring the needs of both senior and middle management. I think it would be most successful and would lead to a successful team …which would review annually and set targets specifically for the management team.

I-2.2 I would recommend training for year heads first, identify their needs and then put them to senior management and then combine them.

I-2.3 Yes that is really important and it is key to the success of management in the school….and it would make a stronger team.

I-2.4 This should be done at the beginning of the year with hours allocated to it in the planning days where someone would come into the school, this has to be a facilitated conversation.

I-2.5 I agree but I am very fortunate as I work with a great team but it is not like that in all schools. It is hard though to create a good team as it depends on the individuals in it.

I-2.9 Yes, you would have to go into the school and use something like consensus facilitation, it has to be facilitated by an external person.

13. Is there anything that has not been identified in the research?

As quoted under Q5, one interviewee noted that no amount of time management could support the role if the workload was excessive and that a review of the workloads should be undertaken. Managing time was also mentioned by I-2.6 who said that no matter how prepared you are you never know what will be facing you each day when you go in. They also stated that this was part of the beauty of the role

I-2.6 noted that post holders require training to deal with complex student and family issues in their role as year head. Anyone providing PD needs to be properly trained and that there needs to be some system of quality control on PD as some of the stuff that goes on at in-service is terrible.

I-2.8 stated that younger post holders often struggled with discipline and required a lot of support dealing with more challenging students.

4.5   Conclusion

The interviewees overall agreed with the findings and reaffirmed the need for PD for MLs in their current role and not just PD that is aimed at preparing them for senior leadership.

I-1.1 Being an AP1 holder is a very rewarding position but it comes with great responsibility… people should never think they know it all… things constantly change and you need to keep up with the changes and continuously seek support of your colleagues.

I-1.5 The biggest thing for me is the lack of PD for post holders, for those who don't want to use it as a stepping stone, who are content to stay here.

They agreed that there is a need for all leaders to work together and to come to a shared understanding of what leadership and management should look like in their

schools. Post holders who were relatively new to the position emphasised the necessity for a formal induction and job description to support them in the role. These would guide them in their work but also give them I-2.5 "permission" to carry out their role, particularly when it involved colleagues.

> I-2.3 The formal induction and job description is most important for me.
>
> I-2.4 The formal induction and the job description are the two most important and these would support the annual review. If the job is to be done effectively and efficiently those three must be in place.
>
> I-2.5 For me the induction and job description are the most important, every school is different, it can't be generic.

The findings from the three stages of the study were described in this chapter. They have corroborated the findings from the literature review and highlighted the need for specific processes to underpin a MLs role and the need for specific PD to develop skills specific to the job. A commitment to their roles and in particular to the student population is evident in the data. Additionally, a desire to fulfil and develop a strategic leadership position can be heard in the voices of the post holders and will be further explored in the discussions undertaken in chapter five.

5   Discussions and Recommendations

5.1   Introduction

Post Primary schools in Ireland have a system of Middle Leadership that appoints teachers at AP1 and AP11 level. Taking on a ML position involves a certain degree of change, change in your position in the management structure of the school, possible change in your relationship with colleagues and a change in the roles and tasks that you must undertake. Many elements of school life are predictable which makes dealing with change in a school setting difficult and more complex (Smith, 2008). Those taking on additional roles require a new skill set to meet the challenges and responsibilities that have been appointed to them. In this chapter I will draw on the literature and the findings to discuss, frame and pose solutions for the problem of practice. That is the question of The Professional Development needs of Appointed Middle Leaders in ETB schools.

I will disseminate my work in various ways and am in a privileged position as Director of an education centre where I have access to many of the stakeholders in the Irish education system.
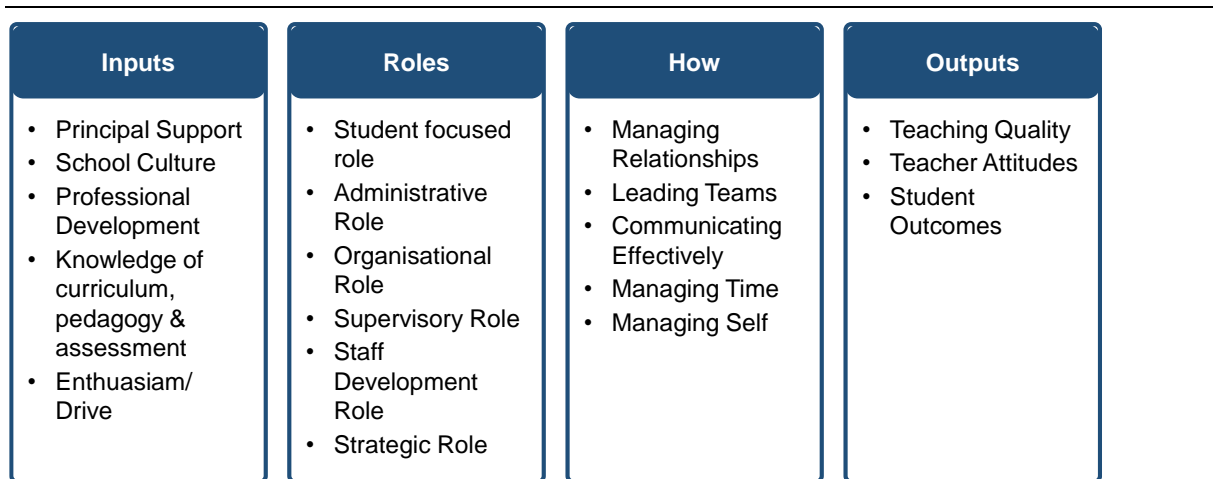
5.2   Relevance of the Research

The role of the ML as an entity on its own and not just a stepping-stone to senior leadership has been neglected in the Irish Education System. Recently, steps have been taken to remedy this but the reach of these programmes is not sufficient to meet the needs and demands of MLs. MIC is offering a postgraduate course in middle leadership but this involves a time and financial commitment that not all MLs can commit to. Access to this course is also confined to one location, making it inaccessible to some. PDST have also entered the realm of MLs and in the 2019/2020 school year offered the Comhar programme to MLs through the network of education centres. This programme which catered for AP1 and AP11 post holders was significantly over-subscribed which shows the need and desire for specific ML support. CSL have acknowledged the ML who is content in their position and is not looking to move to a senior management position. Despite the roll-out of the Excellence through Collaborative Leadership and Management initiative (which I see as an initiative for TLs and not specifically for appointed MLs), the CSL to date have

neglected AP1 post holders. The gap in the provision of PD for appointed MLs motivated me to carry out this study. The findings provide the ETB with the elements that the literature and current post holders have identified as being important for their PD. The recommendations provide a framework that can be used to design a PD programme for MLs and SLs in second level ETB schools. I am currently collaborating with stakeholders to design and pilot, sustained leadership team training and support for schools, which is partly informed by the findings of this study.

5.3   Discussion

I am using De Nobile's MLiS (2018) framework (shown in Figure 1 and again below in Figure 19) to structure my discussion.
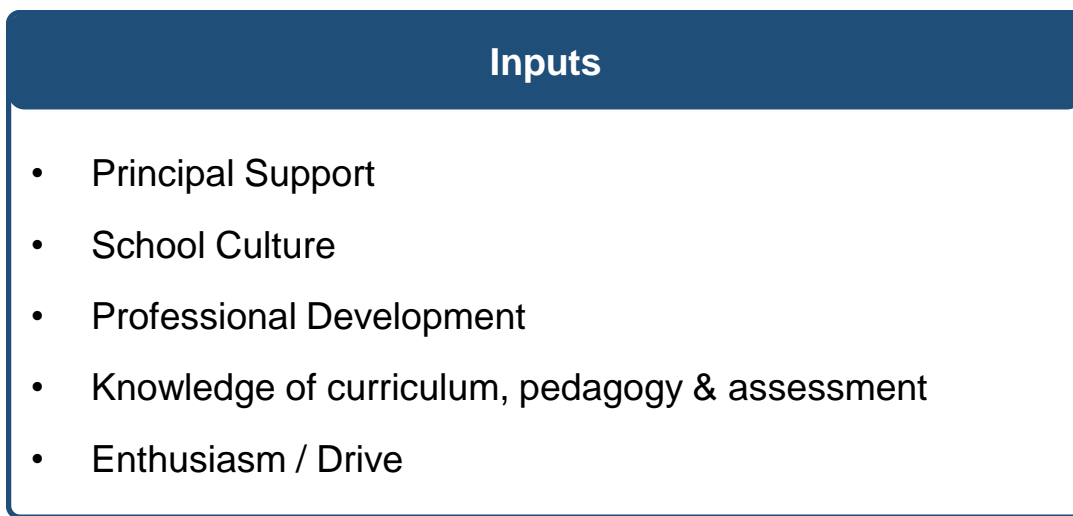
Figure 19:   MLiS Model Recap

Inputs	**Roles**	**How**	**Outputs**
• Principal Support • School Culture • Professional Development • Knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy & assessment • Enthuasiam/ Drive	• Student focused role • Administrative Role • Organisational Role • Supervisory Role • Staff Development Role • Strategic Role	• Managing Relationships • Leading Teams • Communicating Effectively • Managing Time • Managing Self	• Teaching Quality • Teacher Attitudes • Student Outcomes

(De Nobile, 2018)

5.3.1 Inputs

Figure 20: Inputs

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Inputs

- Principal Support

- School Culture

- Professional Development

- Knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy & assessment

- Enthusiasm / Drive

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Principal Support

De Nobile (2018) reports that principal support is an important element in the development and success of MLs. The absence of that support can hinder the development and the effectiveness of MLs (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013). This study reveals that primarily ETB principals and deputy principals are very supportive of their MLs. Predominately, when advice and support are requested, SLs are forthcoming in their response.

A key concern highlighted through this study is that the infrastructure to adequately support this ML position is not in place. Despite the formal approach to job descriptions and reviews required by the 2018/003 circular, clear and co-ordinated structures are not in place across all ETBs. Post holders identified two areas of weakness; receiving a job description and a formal induction, as two of their primary needs. Leithwood (2016) proposes that a ML's role needs to be outlined with a written description of what is expected of them. Gurr and Drysdale (2013) also recommend that MLs require help to clarify their role and enhance their capability. The clarification of the role would explore; the school's expectations; what strengths and skillset the ML can bring to the role and how the role could be further enhanced. The importance of clearly defined roles was validated in a recent study of four large high schools in Israel. This study revealed that one of the factors that supported the success of the MLs was when the schools had clearly defined their (subject leaders) role (Farchi and Tubin, 2019). Where schools adequately inducted the ML and clearly

outlined their role, this supported the post holders to transition to their new level of responsibility. I suggests that an induction process would be most beneficial if it had a dual level of support. Initially, an induction from the ETB to ensure the enactment of the role is in line with the ETB's policies and procedures. Subsequently an induction from the SL in the school. This would ensure synergy between peoples' understanding of the role and with the ethos, culture and climate of the school.

Scaffolding and supporting the post holder in their transition to this role will subsequently assist in the formal performance review process. Circular 003/2018 has initiated the implementation of a formal reporting and review process, which requires each post holder to complete an annual report in relation to their "specific roles and responsibilities" (p.17). This report informs a formal review and evaluation process at the end of each academic year. Where the role has not been formally outlined, it will prove problematic for the post holder to evaluate their performance as they will be unclear of the parameters of the position. The circular has a requirement that the roles and responsibilities of the post holder "will be set out in a statement of Roles and Responsibilities" (p.11). The template for the statement (p.26) recommends a maximum of 400 words for a succinct description of roles, responsibilities and objectives. Where schools comply with this process it will alleviate this void within the leadership system. Performance reviews are an integral part of the HR process. Conducting a successful review, requires a skillset that may not be adequately developed in all SLs. To ensure the success of this process, it would be necessary to provide training to principals and deputy principals to ensure they understand its value and to maximise the benefits of these mandated reviews.

The absence of a clear and co-ordinated induction process raises a number of questions regarding the underlying issues prohibiting SLs from engaging with this process. One is that here is either a lack of realisation of the potential of the role or the capacity of the individual. Or that there is a lack of knowledge and skill on the part of SLs to execute this process. It is disappointing that the formalisation of the role of the ML (Circular 2018/003) was not accompanied by a formal training process to prepare and support SLs to successfully implement this at school level.

The literature exposed challenges to distributing leadership in a school (Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss, 2009; King and Stevenson, 2017; Harris, 2009) and these will be further exacerbated by ambiguity in the definition of the ML role. As identified by

Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss (2009), if the role is not clearly defined, then it will increase the post holder's burden without an increase in their power. This reflects the dark side of leadership (Harris and Jones, 2018) which serves to deliver on managerial targets without giving genuine agency to MLs. The lack of clarity in the role also raises boundary issues, particularly with regard to a MLs authority to delegate to other teachers. This inhibits the post holder from realising their leadership potential and leaves them in the more comfortable task orientated management realm. This study also revealed that post holder are more comfortable with their management tasks and are reluctant to delegate to colleagues.

Support from the principal should also reflect the characteristics of DL (Leadership plus and practices aspects). Leadership in the school should permeate all staff. Most notably it should be shared with MLs who have been promoted to this leadership role (leader plus aspect). Leadership in schools must also reflect the practice aspect. This frames all the interactions of leaders and followers in their particular setting. This practice of DL transcends the appointment of leaders, to a school setting where the arrangement, interaction and interdependence of the leaders is carefully planned. The Leadership and Management in Post-Primary Schools circular (DES, 2018) stipulates, empowering staff to take on and carry out leadership roles, as a requirement of the role of SLs. In schools, leadership is practised by more than those formally appointed and in daily school life TLs regularly embody the practice aspect of DL.

Despite the potential of TLs, the formal philosophy of DL is interpreted in most schools as a distribution of leadership from senior management to appointed middle leaders and not beyond. Schools and principals vary in their approach to whether MLs have a role to play in the supervision and guidance of colleagues. This is an area which needs to be explored in Irish schools so that leadership can be celebrated and encouraged at all levels of school life. The responsibility to manage and/or lead colleagues should be clarified and specified within the post holder's job description and encouraged within the culture of the school. I predict that this clarification would not be a straight forward process. Formalising and enhancing a MLs position with regards to their responsibility for colleagues would require consultation and agreement with teacher unions. Without this clarity and change there is a doubt that MLs can fully embrace and embody an authentic distributed model of leadership.

The role of the ML in Irish schools is evolving from one of post holder who is assigned specific tasks to one of an influential leader in the school community. This study reveals that this evolution is not complete and schools are at various stages of this development. The findings show that authority or power has not been fully devolved to MLs. This deficit could be rationalised by the exploration of two factors; (a) principals are either unable or unwilling to release some authority to ML and (b) MLs are ill-equipped or unwilling to assume their share of the leadership responsibilities in the school. I determine that this finding is a key one to be explored and unpacked in all PD provided for MLs or SMTs. The SMT must be clear in their understanding of and enactment of their roles and responsibilities in their particular school context. During the third phase of this study, MLs were presented with a summary of the survey findings. The finding reported to MLs that recommends combined training for senior and middle leaders was acknowledged as an intrinsic need. The MLs who were presented with these findings noted that there was a significant gap in the current provision of PD for school leaders. They agreed that PD that supported MLs and SLs to come to a shared understanding of DL in their particular school context was essential. Two of the interviewees recommended that this should be facilitated by an outside person so that the status quo does not prevail. They stated that for real evaluation and subsequent improvement of the school's leadership to occur it must be from a suitably qualified independent facilitator. This facilitation would support the team to make the roles and responsibilities explicit and ensure that senior and middle leaders are secure in their understanding of them. This would also serve to support the principal to distribute leadership in an environment where every member of the leadership team was clear on their individual and collective roles and responsibilities.

The literature acknowledges that principal support for individual MLs is essential (DeNobile, 2018; Gurr and Drysdale, 2013) and the findings of this study have revealed that support is forthcoming. Although forthcoming, general support from the principal to the individual post holder alone is not sufficient. Formalised HR systems need to be in place. This requires a clear and written job descriptor, induction, regular reviews and evaluation, ongoing SL support for the post holder and the fostering of a supportive school climate. The role of the principal has already been identified as one that has grown exponentially (Drysdale, Gurr and Goode, 2016; O'Donovan, 2015;

Martin, 2006). Consequently, this study reveals that sufficient time and expertise have not been invested in the induction, mentoring and regular review of post holders. This highlights the need for the ETB to support their principals with systems and skills to provide a more co-ordinated and structured framework for MLs thus enhancing the utilisation of the role of MLs in the school.

School Culture

Fleming (2013) proposes that culture in its broadest sense can be described as 'the way of life'. In a school setting a combination of the values, norms and beliefs of the school and its sub-cultures constitute that culture. He explains that a collaborative school culture is important for the success of middle managers in their role. Within this collaborative culture, schools must take time to scaffold their work. West-Burnham (1997, p. 134) notes that many groups of people in schools are given a label of team without any time being invested to design and develop these teams. Crosby (1979, p.126) cautions that "being part of a team is not a natural human function; it is learned". Sallis (1996, p.82) also raises a concern over teams within schools as many teams are just a collection of people with one person appointed to lead the team. The leaders in this system should be concerned with the development of each person on their team, which in turn develops leaders out of followers. This study has revealed that not all schools and ETBs are investing enough time to mentor or nurture their middle and senior leaders to work in synergy. Investment in these teams would assist in maximising their performance and modelling good practice. This will support a collaborate school culture where DL can flourish.

Professional Development

As outlined in the literature review there are various different models of PD available to teachers that aim to deliver knowledge and develop skills. The more transformative methods will be participant-led and will include the values, voice and expertise of teachers. The support service (PDST) for teachers, acknowledges that PD needs on a macro (policy) level and a micro (daily issues for teachers) level require a combination of training models which are context specific, collaborative and sustained. Their strategic plan (2017) outlines that their focus on PD is moving towards school-based support. They aim to provide sustained on-site support and to

encourage the creation of PLCs which encourage teachers to be reflective learners who can "contribute to and shape educational reforms" (p.6).

The finding of this study affirms the PDST's approach. MLs in this study reported that CoPs (PLCs) were one of their preferred methods of PD. Along with CoPs, they reported that they find value in the training model and mentoring models. The award-bearing model was one of the least preferred methods. This finding must be coupled with the knowledge that 68% of this group already had post -graduate qualifications and therefore might not see the need for further qualification courses. Their completion of award bearing courses shows that participants valued these courses and they would also have supported them to be successful in their attainment of a leadership position.

It is interesting to observe that there is not a correlation with the view of the training and deficit models which have been critised in the literature (Mitchell, 2013; Tuli Gemeda, Fiorucci and Catarci, 2014). Survey participants considered them of interest and stage three interviews clarified that this model proved useful for the delivery of certain types of information (e.g. child protection updates, GDPR etc.).

The Cascade model was identified as one of the least preferred methods of PD. When this finding was explored by MLs in the stage 3 interviews, they reflected that the model had great potential as a means of disseminating knowledge. The challenges to this model were reported as twofold. One; teachers do not have the confidence to bring their learning back to their colleagues and two: the culture in the school does not support a colleague who might be perceived as going beyond their role. This correlates with the the deduction under the 'principal supports' discussion which recommends that the role and authority of MLs with regards to their colleagues needs to be clarified. MLs should not be restricted by an uncertainty in what their role entails. This ambiguity with regards to the MLs role and authority within the school is a possible explanation for the ML's reluctance to embrace and fulfil their leadership potential.

An interesting finding is that MLs prefer face-to-face to online courses. Participants expressed that convenience and time saving were the benefits of online courses. Despite the advantages of the virtual learning environment, they reported that human interaction is the key attraction of their preference for face-to-face learning. Learning in this environment was twofold; the learning from the facilitator and that from fellow

participants. One interviewee stated that there was as much learning from those beside you in a course than the person who was in front facilitating it. In recent years there has been an increase in provision of online PD opportunities. This is harmonious with the provision and culture of digital technologies and the Digital Learning Framework (2017). MLs who are time-poor will engage in online courses but are clear that it is not their preferred experience.

This poses a challenge for online course providers and the education system, particularly in light of the pivotal role that digital technologies played during the 2020, Covid-19 school closures. Overnight teachers and PD course providers embraced an online environment. Teachers eagerly tried to maintain teaching and course providers avidly supported teachers to gain and enhance the skills they needed. Teachers' innovation and commitment were widely praised during this unprecedented event. While it is too early to adequately analyse the outcome of this, many questions are being raised as to the effectiveness of this response for those in disadvantaged households and those with special educational needs. The covid-19 closures have substantiated the importance of the human face-to-face interaction of a classroom or training room environment. Opportunities for learning are more complex than merely the delivery of a specified piece of content.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) agree that professional development results from a large number of dynamic factors. They state that a major flaw with research into teachers' PD is that it focuses on individual teachers or specific programmes. This ignores how these factors interact with the wider complex system. They contend that it is impossible to understand teacher learning except as a result of nested systems, "a complex system rather than as an event… various dynamics at work in social behaviour and these interact and combine in different ways such that even the simplest decisions can have multiple causal pathways" (Opfer and Pedder, 2011, p.378). This finding supports the recommendation for combined, facilitated group PD for the SMT. This PD can factor in the complex nature of school life and the particular challenges of the team's setting. This PD should reflect the transformative model outlined in 2.7.9 where a number of approaches can be used to reflect the needs of the team.

It is imperative that PD opportunities for MLs are ongoing and sustained and not merely a one-time provision, "Rather middle leader performance is an ongoing chain

of actions that produce and reproduce school effectiveness everyday" (Farchi and Tubin, 2019, p.376).

Knowledge of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were not identified as a concern for MLs in this study. In many jurisdictions, leading subject departments and learning features more strongly in the role of a ML. In Ireland the predominant role of the ML is that of year head, where the post holder has responsibility for the pastoral and academic progress of the students in a particular year group. Recently there has been some adjustment in the allocation of areas of responsibilities in Ireland where a number of post holders have been allocated responsibility for leading improvements in learning in their school. If this is to be a successful evolution, then it will have to be coupled with a change in school culture and an enhanced understanding of the role of an AP1. Many MLs are unclear with regard to their authority and role in the direction or supervision of colleagues. Clarification of this would assist post holders to develop the leadership element of their role. A paradigm shift would help to create a leadership culture than spans boundaries and would place the ML in a position to model and legitimise leadership practice across the whole school.

Enthusiasm / Drive

De Nobile (2018) explains that a ML's actions should be underpinned by a moral purpose. This purpose should lead to the best possible outcome for students. To enact this, MLs need to have an enthusiasm and drive to navigate the complex nature of schools. MLs are challenged in the discharge of the role by a lack of confidence and a lack of clarity. This can be exacerbated by a conflicting and misaligned school culture.

In recent years, the practice of awarding points to applicants in recognition of their number of years teaching experience, has ceased. This combined with the challenges identified by inexperienced post holders suggests a re-evaluation of this procedural change. This does not suggest a return to the previous practice of awarding the promotion to the longest serving teacher as occurred in some schools. It recommends a recognition of the skills acquired and refined through interactions with students, parents and colleagues over a number of years. Currently, teachers with a minimum of "3 years teaching service recognised by DES/ETB for incremental

credit purposes" (DES, 2018, p.12) are eligible to apply for AP1 positions. Theoretically, a teacher who is in the stabilisation phase of their career is eligible for this promotion. At this stage a teacher is establishing their classroom practice and their identity as an educator. Therefore, they could be given responsibility for the academic and pastoral needs of a large group of students at a stage when they have not refined and mastered their classroom practice and established themselves professionally. Teachers should become comfortable and confident with their classroom practice before they are awarded responsibility at this level.

The literature and this study identified that a formal system of support is required for all appointees regardless of their level of teaching experience. Participants determined that mentoring was one of their preferred methods of PD and existing AP1s have been identified as a critical support for new appointees. A formalisation of mentoring for newly appointed post holders is required to facilitate a successful transition to the role. This mentoring support provided by an experienced colleague would assist a post holder to develop their skills and to become a confident and competent leader.

5.3.2   Roles

The position of AP1 post holder in Irish second level schools requires an individual to take on several roles and responsibilities. Fleming (2013) explains that being an effective middle manager involves

- *Leading*, by being a role model for other staff;
- *Serving* pupils, teachers and senior managers;
- *Managing*, the implementation of school and team aims and policies.

(p.9)

De Nobile (2018) divided the workload associated with a ML position into 6 roles.

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Roles

- Student focused role
- Administrative Role
- Organisational Role
- Supervisory Role
- Staff Development Role
- Strategic Role

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Student Focused Role

In Ireland the roles of a ML differ to those in other jurisdictions. Research on MLs frequently looks at the role of the subject leaders (Farchi and Tubin, 2019) who help to co-ordinate departments in large second level schools and are responsible for monitoring colleagues' work. The role of subject co-ordinator in Irish second level schools is one which is usually taken on by teachers on a voluntary rotational basis but does not involve the monitoring of peers.

In Ireland the majority of ML are given responsibility for a particular year group. They monitor and support their progress, discipline and pastoral care. Further exploration of this interpretation of the role is warranted to ascertain if the student focused or subject focused approach is most effective. MLs in this study were most comfortable with their interactions with students. However, they did express a need for more support in the area of pastoral care to help them manage the complex challenges that some students are faced with.

Administrative Role

Participants in this study reported being comfortable in the execution of their task-related duties despite the actuality that these duties absorb the majority of their time. The overburdening of management tasks and insufficient time to lead is a feature of the role of MLs in other jurisdictions (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013) and was correspondingly reported in a previous study on MLs in Ireland (Larusdottir and O'Connor, 2017). Feedback from stage three interviews identified that while training

in time management is needed, training alone would not suffice if the workload is excessive. This is a complex role that requires the individual to constantly adapt to changes in curriculua and the diverse needs in their classrooms in tandem with the challenges of their posts. This study provides evidence that post holders find that lack of time and excessive workloads are challenging and prevalent features of the ML role.

Informed by this and recent policy changes (DES, 2018) affecting MLs in Irish schools, it is timely for the DES to undertake a review and evaluation of the workload associated with the post. The ability of the ML to acuminate their leadership skills is inhibited by the apportioned responsibilities of their role.

Delegation is a strategy often used to manage excessive workload but MLs are reluctant to delegate work to other teachers. This reluctance can be attributed to a lack of clarification and exploration of their role. Post holders are reluctant to delegate or instruct colleagues. Their role appears to be more positional than one of influence. This supports the following recommendations; the ML role needs to be clearly defined in a job description; senior and middle leaders should collaborate to have a clear and shared understanding of leadership roles in their school and senior leaders should provide a comprehensive induction process for MLs.

Administration and organisational roles are often grouped together as a management concept but DeNobile (2018) views them as being distinct. He argues that the administrative role involves dealing with things where the organisational role involves organising people (rosters, timetables, events etc.).

Organisational Role

The organisational role involves MLs collaborating with colleagues to plan activities, programmes and events. There are various requirements and opportunities for collaboration in the ML role. Year heads work with tutors and class teachers to plan for the academic and pastoral needs of their students and to organise social events. MLs with responsibility for the coordination of SEN, work with colleagues to plan systems and timetabled supports for the specific needs of the students under their remit. Working effectively with colleagues requires a skillset that includes, managing teams, motivating people and good inter-personal relations. As was discussed earlier the position and role of MLs has not been adequately explored or clearly defined in

schools and this makes working with colleagues a more difficult task. This ambiguity requires MLs to negotiate their position within the various teams they work in making the organisational role more complex. In previous iterations of the role, the post holder was appointed based on years of service and then given a list of tasks to perform. The evolution of leadership in Irish schools is guiding the role to one where post holders have a number of responsibilities in conjunction with the potential to be a significant leader in the school community. Clearly defining the remit of the role would assist MLs to work more effectively with colleagues and would clarify what if any supervisory role they have.

Supervisory Role

Participants in this study did not report being comfortable with leadership and developing teaching and learning. This can be informed by the discussion in previous sections outlining that post holders are not realising their leadership potential. Roles appointed to MLs generally relate to the supervision and care of students and do not involve the supervision of colleagues. The ambiguity with regards to the supervision of colleagues can inhibit MLs from expanding their sphere of influence. The concept of peer supervision was a feature of the first iteration of the Droichead programme in Irish schools. This programme supports NQTs as they commence their teaching career. The role of mentor for the Droichead programme is separate to the ML structure and involves a teacher taking responsibility to mentor NQTs. Mentor teachers are trained members of the Professional Support Team (PST). Issues arose with this initiative surrounding the evaluative element of the process. The teacher's union, TUI, held a ballot in May 2017 over concerns that members would be asked to engage in peer evaluation. Subsequently changes to the Droichead process brought clarification that mentors did not have an evaluative role with the NQTs. This indicates a reluctance in the system to entrust teachers with a role in the supervision of colleagues. Concurrently, this can create a culture where MLs are restrained by traditional hierarchical views of leadership.

Staff Development Role

As outlined in the literature review, effective PD is content-focused, uses active learning, is collaborative and job embedded, uses modelling of effective practice, provides coaching, provides opportunities for feedback and reflection and is of sustained duration. MLs are well placed to facilitate PD informed by these features.
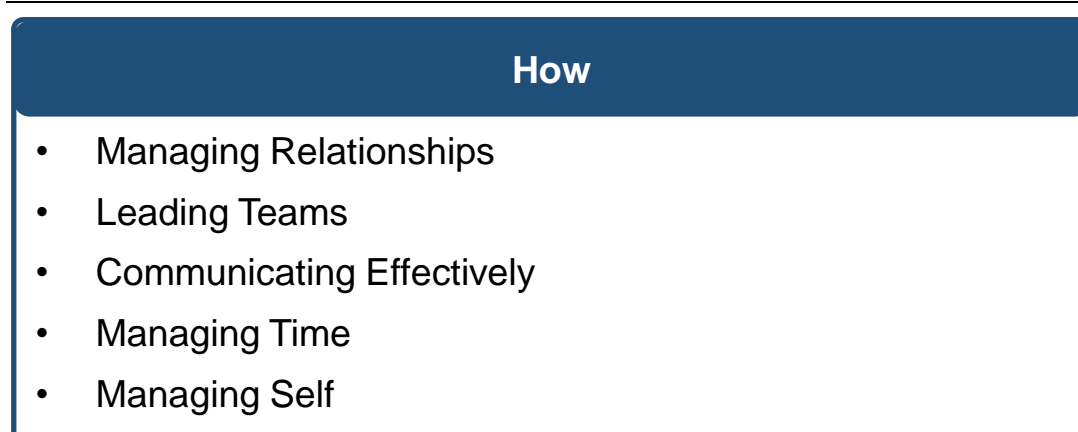
Their craft knowledge has been developed in their particular school setting and could be a powerful support to colleagues. The support service, PDST, recognise the importance of this approach and are currently focusing their efforts in schools. The DES and schools should explore the potential resource they have in their MLs to lead teaching and learning (T&L). Their experience is context specific and they can provide timely and sustained support. Despite the potential, the majority of MLs are not undertaking an assigned role that specifically involves the development of colleagues. Experienced AP1s were reported in this study as being effective unofficial mentors to new post holders. This demonstrates that experienced post holders have the capacity to mentor their peers.

Strategic Role

De Nobile (2018) explains that the strategic role involves vision forming, setting goals and influencing policy and people. Stage one interviews asked post holders if they felt part of the leadership structure of the school. Participants reported that they were not fully included in decision making but were the first ones to be told the outcomes, before the rest of the staff. I did not include this question in the online survey as I found that this question provoked a feeling of resentment towards senior leaders. Cognisant of this it was decided not to include this in the online questionnaire. Post holders did not report being comfortable with their leadership role which indicates that they are not occupying strategic positions in the school system. The strategic potential of the ML role warrants exploration in the recommended, combined SL and ML training.

5.3.3 How

Figure 22:   How

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How

- Managing Relationships
- Leading Teams
- Communicating Effectively
- Managing Time
- Managing Self

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Managing Relationships

Middle leaders are often the conduit between policy and practice and are well placed to support and enact policies and system changes. Establishing and maintaining positive working relationships is an essential element in enacting this pivotal role. Managing these relationships can be difficult for MLs, particularly in the time following appointment (De Nobile, 2018) and is further complicated by the absence of clarity in their roles. In this study, participants reported that they required additional skills in relationship management and dealing with conflict. A number of participants experienced a difficult relationship with some colleagues following appointment. This issue cannot be rectified solely by providing PD to improve a leader's skills, it requires a supportive culture that embraces an authentic model of distributed leadership.

Leading Teams

MLs in this study predominantly have responsibility for the needs of a year group. This involves interactions with class tutors, class teachers, the pastoral care team, senior management and many other stakeholders. Unfortunately, groups of people in a school are often given the label of a team without any time being invested to design and develop these teams (West-Burnham, 1997). MLs are required to work in many teams but team development and dynamics can be complex. Subsequently this is an area in which MLs will require support.

Sallis (1996, p.82-84) highlights Tuckman's stages of development of a team as forming, storming, norming and performing. During the forming stage, time is required in order to clarify goals and procedures. This can be a difficult stage as people are not yet comfortable with each other and their roles within the team. It is important that the team maximises the talents, skills and interests of its members. Once people are more comfortable with the relationships within the team they move to the storming stage. The real work of the team becomes apparent and certain personalities might try to push their own agendas. This can be a stage where conflict arises and, if dealt with appropriately, it can lead to a deeper understanding between members. The team then must move on to norming. At this stage the roles of the members are clear, the rules of the team are defined and the team's methods of working are established. Tuckman's fourth stage is performing, where the task of solving problems and improving processes is undertaken. If the team is functioning well then

it matures into a unit, which gains respect and influence within the school. To avoid getting stuck and to challenge its members, a team should be given extra responsibility as it develops and grows as a unit.

If a school has a vision for a true collaborative culture, then it would follow that team-work skills should be provided through focused PD. A considerable barrier to developing team-work skills in school is time. Effective team development requires time and this is one commodity that participants in this study and the literature agree is in short supply in schools.

Communicating Effectively

Participants in this study did not prioritise communication skills when they were requested to express their training needs. The nature and importance of communication skills indicates that improvement and development will continually be required. Improved communication skills will potentially be required if the AP1 role evolves further to include more responsibility for the development of colleagues.

Managing Time

The notion of time, or lack of it was a recurring aspect of the responses in this study. Post holders noted that balancing the time required for their area of responsibility and their class work requirements was a difficult task. This is exacerbated by reports that the workload of posts is excessive. Post holders identified that they require skills in time management. However, as was noted by one respondent, no amount of time management skills will suffice if the workload is too much. This indicates a need for a review of the duties and responsibilities of AP1s as was discussed earlier.
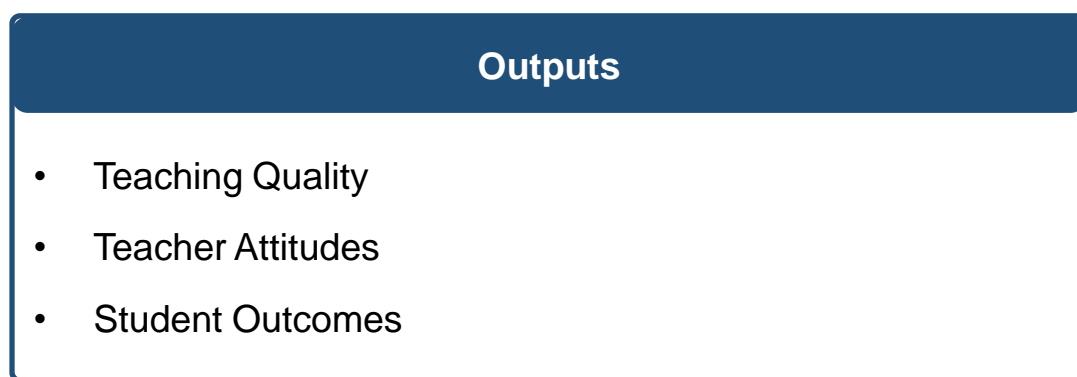
Managing Self

Managing oneself refers to how you deal with the pressures, emotions and demands made on you. From his extensive review of the literature, De Nobile (2018) reports that engaging in PD is a major factor when exploring MLs' self-management. Leadership development can be viewed as a self-managed process and those in ML positions have a responsibility to "seek out opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and capabilities to successfully carry out this work" (Gurr, 2019, p.290). Predominately, post holders in this study have exhibited a value of and willingness to engage with PD opportunities. Participants completed a combination of award-bearing and other forms of PD, prior to or in preparation for the AP1 role. A concern

emerging is that the workload associated with the role will discourage them from engaging in further PD opportunities that would assist them to develop and enhance their leadership and pedagogical skills.

5.3.4   Outputs

Figure 23:   Outputs

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Outputs

- Teaching Quality
- Teacher Attitudes
- Student Outcomes

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Teaching Quality and Teacher Attitudes

MLs have the potential to greatly influence the T&L in their schools, from both a student and teacher support perspective. This aspect of the role of an ML in Ireland is in its infancy and needs to be further developed to harness the important and influential potential of the position of the ML as a conduit between policy and practice.

Student Outcomes

Fostering a system that aims to create a highly educated and happy society that can met the needs of the 21st century is both an economic and moral undertaking. High quality teachers and their leadership are crucial elements of an effective education system. This facilitates students to reach their potential and to be happy and engaged members of society. At school level, AP1 post holders are awarded responsibility to support a group of students with their academic and pastoral development.

I note the passion and commitment expressed by post holders to do their best for all their students. Despite the lack of time and excessive workload reported, post holders mitigated this by working long hours to ensure tasks were addressed. This is in line with DeNobile's (2018) position which states that MLs' actions should be underpinned by a moral purpose that leads to the best outcomes for students. MLs'

passion for doing their best for their students was evident in the data gathered from post holders. This demonstrates their professional and moral commitment to student outcomes. The current system fails to fully embrace an authentic DL model and it limits the circle of control of the ML. Despite the challenges faced, MLs work with their resources to advance their students. MLs might not be using the language of leadership theory and practice but they are leaders. They are utilising the systems and resources available to them to fulfil their formal responsibilities to students. It is reasonable to assume that this will not occur without the use of leadership skills.

5.4   Recommendations for Practice, Policy

The important role of MLs has been outlined in the literature that was reviewed for this research. They can make a "powerful contribution to secondary-school improvement" (Gurr, 2019, p.136) when they work well with SLs. The recommendations below focus on both the individual needs of the post holder and the collective needs of the school leadership team.

1. Providing job descriptions, inductions and performance reviews for MLs require skills that not all senior leaders possess. This puts an onus on the ETB to upskill their SLs or/and to provide HR systems to manage this.
2. Combined training should be provided for the SMT (principal, deputy principals and MLs). This training should (a) unpack the meaning of leadership in the school; and (b) support the team to come to a shared understanding of expectations and limitations of each leader in their particular context. This should be facilitated by an independent person to allow for authentic conversations and real engagement with changing the status quo.
3. A distributed leadership culture should be encouraged and appropriately led in schools. It is important to concurrently include efforts to foster this culture in the student and parent population.
4. ML, PD opportunities should be face-to-face rather than online.
5. PD for MLs should include time management skills, relationship management, conflict management and support to support the pastoral care of students.
6. National and local reviews should be carried out on the workload and expectations of the role of an AP1 post holder.

7. Experienced AP1 post holders should receive training in mentoring skills. New AP1 appointees should have the formal support of an experienced post holder as they transition into their new role.

8. The AP1 role should be explored and developed to include a responsibility to support colleagues in developing the skills necessary to be an effective and motivated professional.

9. Team development skills are required at all levels of school life to encourage a collaborative culture where leaders (SLs, MLs and TLs) can flourish and where they can in turn build capacity in followers.

10. The experience required by teachers to be eligible to apply for an AP1 position should be reviewed and possibly increased.

5.5 Limitations of the Research

This study was confined to looking at AP1 post holders in ETB settings. Post holders in the ETB sector get a four-hour reduction in their timetable to provide time to undertake their role. The online questionnaire was informed by interviews with AP1s in ETB schools. The questionnaire was distributed to all ETB schools in the country. A response rate of 10% informed the findings which were subsequently validated by 10 AP1s. I propose that following this mixed methods process, the findings are generalisable to all AP1 post holders in ETBs in this country.

The community and comprehensive (C&C) sector in Ireland governs 96 second level schools. Their funding model is similar to the ETB structure. At AP1 level, post holders in the C&C sector also receive a four-hour reduction in their timetable. This would imply that the results are generalisable for post holders in the C&C sector.

The funding model and governance structures vary considerably in the voluntary secondary school sector. In the voluntary sector the time reduction given to post holders is dependent on the resources available to them and it is not guaranteed. I believe that the same level of responsibility and work cannot be expected if the time allocation is substantially different. Although many of the same needs will exist for post holders in the voluntary sector, further research is warranted. This research would explore if the needs identified are applicable to the voluntary sector and if there are any additional needs to reflect their specific circumstances. Therefore, the

results of this study, which will be of interest to this sector, are not generalisable to this group.

Middle leadership roles in Ireland are different to those of the subject leader role found in many jurisdictions. Many of the needs identified in this study reflect the findings in other jurisdictions but a variety of structures and responsibilities underpin the ML role in other countries. This renders them not generalisable to other countries.

5.6   Recommendations for Further Research

The role of a ML has evolved substantially but it is not yet reaching its full potential. MLs have the potential to be important strategic, pedagogical and pastoral leaders in Irish second level schools. A lack of clarity in their role, insufficient HR processes and a legacy of a traditional hierarchy are limiting their potential. I recommend that the following areas of research would assist in gaining an improved understanding of the PD needs of appointed MLs in Irish post primary schools.

1. I recommend a follow up study in five years to assess the PD needs of MLs. This would allow time for the requirements of the 2018/003 circular to be fully implemented and embedded in schools.

2. I recommend a study which explores the experience of AP1s who have completed recently available PD courses specifically designed for aspiring and existing MLs. This would evaluate if these courses adequately prepared them for the role. It would subsequently inform future PD providers to ensure that the needs of the post holder and schools are adequately provided for.

3. Linking De Nobile's (2018) enthusiasm and drive and Halton's career stages; I recommend a study into mid and late career teachers who have a post of responsibility. This would investigate if obtaining an AP1 post impacts on the motivation and engagement of teachers at this stage of their career. It would also explore whether this promotion protects them from the potential negative elements of the end career stage.

4. The challenge of time reported in this study raises a question regarding the ability of AP1s (in general and in particular in voluntary secondary schools) to adequately perform their duties. AP1s in ETBs are entitled to a four-hour reduction in their timetable. Despite the extra time awarded, they overwhelmingly report that they are time poor and have excessive workloads.

Reductions in timetabled hours for AP1s in the voluntary sector is given at the discretion of school management and is not guaranteed. Therefore, a study into the role and the responsibilities of AP1 post holders in general and specifically in the voluntary sector is recommended.

5.7   Conclusion

'Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts, never fears and never regrets' (Leonardo Da Vinci).

Learning is an essential human concept that transcends the student teacher divide. Opportunities to learn are essential to develop a range of personal and professional skills. This study explored the opportunities required by MLs to adequately fulfil and embrace their role.

I aimed to listen to the voice of teachers to ascertain their PD needs when they have a post of responsibility at Ap1 level in ETB post primary schools. The voice of one of the interviewees reflects the findings which show that the ML position has been neglected and post holders are unclear as to what their role and remit is.

> I-1.3 "I think the role as a middle leader is lost a little bit and maybe that's because there's that lack of guidelines. I guess that lack of clear structures in the school. It's very much the principal and the vice principals make the decisions they inform you before they inform the rest of the staff but you are still just being informed rather than being part of the decision making."

"The need for strong professional middle leadership is incontestable" (O'Connor, 2008, p.16) as it has the potential to affect teacher attitudes and beliefs, school culture and most importantly student outcomes. MLs in Irish post primary schools are venturing to embrace a DL model while battling the historical hierarchical systems which are ingrained in the system. MLs are not being adequately supported or utilised to realise their potential. They face many challenges in their role. A lack of understanding and support from senior management, lack of professional preparation and leadership development hinder their effectiveness (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013). They have been neglected in the literature and in our school system. Teachers who take on a leadership position require relevant PD to acquire and develop the skills that are necessary for the additional responsibilities. MLs require a clear

understanding of their roles and tasks before they explore more explicitly the practice of leading from the middle.

The ML's role is at a pivotal point in Ireland for two reasons. Firstly, the enactment of circular 003/2018, highlighted the importance of high-quality DL and it reinstated the posts of responsibility. Secondly, the TC are embedding Cosán, the national framework for teachers' lifelong learning. PD is essential for all teachers and is at the heart of any improvements in a MLs development. This is an opportune time to highlight and address the professional needs of MLs in the system.

The development of MLs can be supported by five elements: career self-management, principal support, provision of leadership programmes, supportive school culture and clearly defined roles (Gurr and Drysdale, 2013). These supports are reflected in the findings and subsequent recommendations of this study. The ultimate goal is to inform a system that acknowledges the pivotal role that MLs can play and subsequently supports and utilises that role for the benefit of the system and the Leader.

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7   Appendices

Appendix A

<div align="center">Plain Language Statement</div>

(Date)

Dear Participant:

This Research Study is entitled: The Professional Development needs of appointed Middle Leaders in ETB Post-Primary schools.

The study is part of the requirement for the completion of the Professional Doctorate Programme in Dublin City University. The research will be conducted by Siobhán Kavanagh (Siobhan.kavanagh54@mail.dcu.ie) under the supervision of Dr. PJ Sexton and Dr. Sabrina Fitzsimons, School of Policy and Practice, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.

Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by me for approximately 40 minutes on one occasion at a time, date and venue that suits the participant. With your permission, I will audio-tape the interview. The tape-recording will be transcribed for analysis by me, following the interview. The interview will focus on the Professional Development needs of AP1 holders in ETB schools. The needs identified will inform the questions on a further online survey.

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

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

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

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

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

The sample size for the individual interviews is expected to be relatively small but every effort will be taken to ensure the privacy and anonymity to which you are entitled. Schools will not be named or identified: you will be referred to as a number e.g. 1,2,3, etc.

Biographical details, if deemed relevant, will be included in the following format: number of years' experience; qualifications, etc.

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

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

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

(Date)

Dear Participant:

This research study is entitled: The Professional Development needs of appointed Middle Leaders in ETB Post-Primary schools.

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

The purpose of this research is to explore the Professional Development needs of AP1 post holders in ETB post-primary schools.

Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by me for approximately 40 minutes on one occasion at a time, date and venue that suits the participant. With your permission, I will audio-tape the interview. The tape-recording will be transcribed for analysis, following the interview. The interview will focus on the Professional Development needs of AP1 holders in ETB schools. The needs identified will inform the questions on a further online survey.

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

Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement   Yes / No

Do you understand the information provided?   Yes / No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?   Yes / No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes / No

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

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

Data and information gathered will be stored securely. There will be no public access to the audiotapes; these tapes will be destroyed on completion of the final research project. Confidentiality of

information, while promised, is subject to legal limitations and, in the event of a subpoena or a freedom of information claim, protection cannot be guaranteed.

The sample size for the individual interviews is expected to be relatively small but every effort will be taken to ensure the privacy and anonymity to which you are entitled. Schools will not be named or identified: you will be referred to as a number e.g. 1,2,3, etc;

Biographical details, if deemed relevant, will be included in the following format: number of years' experience; qualifications, etc.

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

Participant's Signature:

Name in Block Capitals:

Witness:

Date:

Appendix C

Interview questions for Semi-Structured Interviews:

1. Can you describe your career path briefly up to the point of taking on the role of AP1?

2. What are your current roles / responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?

3. Have these roles / responsibilities changed over the years?

4. Did you do any professional development courses to prepare for the AP1 post?

5. If yes, did they prepare you for the role?

6. Did you receive any formal induction after taking up the post?

7. Did you receive any training after taking up the AP1 post?

8. If yes, did it support you in the role?

9. Who / What supported you the most since taking up this role?

10. Was the role different than what you expected?

11. What challenges did you face in your AP1 position?

12. How did you overcome those challenges?

13. What do you like best about the AP1 post?

14. What do you like least about the AP1 post?

15. What tasks / aspects of your role do you feel most comfortable with?

16. What tasks / aspects of your role do you need training in?

17. Has this post changed your relationship with your colleagues?

18. Have you had regular reviews of your performance as an AP1 post holder?

19. What advice would you give to a colleague just starting in an AP1 post?

Appendix D

Appendix E

AP1 post Holder Survey

Dear AP1 Post Holders

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is important.

Information collected will be used in a Thesis for a Professional Doctorate:

"The Professional Development Needs of appointed middle leaders in ETB Post-Primary schools"

Data collected will be confidential and your continuation with the survey will be taken as your consent.

AP1 post Holder Survey

1. How many years teaching experience have you?

○ 5-10

○ 10-20

○ 20-30

○ 30-40

2. How many years experience had you when you were appointed the AP1 position?

○ 5-10

○ 10-20

○ 20-30

○ 30-40

3. Please list any further qualifications you achieved after initial teacher training

4. Did you engage in any professional development courses to prepare for the AP1 postion?

○ Yes

○ No

5. Please list any professional development you engaged in for the AP1 position

6. Did this/these courses prepare you for the AP1 role?

○ Yes

○ No

7. What are your current roles/responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?

8. Did you receive any formal induction after taking up the AP1 position?

○ Yes

○ No

9. Please describe this induction

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│                            │
│                            │▼
└◄──────────────────────►─────┘
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10. Did this induction support you in your role?

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11. Did you get a Job description outlining your roles and responsibilities as an AP1 post holder?

○ Yes

○ No

12. What/who has supported you most since taking up the AP1 position?

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13. What were the biggest challenges that you faced in the AP1 position?

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14. How did you overcome these challenges?

[text box]

15. What tasks/aspects of the role do you feel most comfortable with?

[text box]

16. Have you had regular reviews of your performance as an AP1 post holder?

○ Yes

○ No

17. Were these reviews useful?

[text box]

18. Please indicate the degree to which you need training in the following areas

	Not required	A little	Neutral	Required	Essential
Time management	○	○	○	○	○
Self Management	○	○	○	○	○
Communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Presentation skills	○	○	○	○	○
Dealing with Discipline	○	○	○	○	○
Pastoral Care of Students	○	○	○	○	○
Dealing with Parents	○	○	○	○	○
Managing Conflict	○	○	○	○	○
Working with Senior Management	○	○	○	○	○
Working with other Middle Managers	○	○	○	○	○
Working with other colleagues	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

19. Please indicate what type of Professional Development you would be interested in:

	Not at all	a little	Neutral	somewhat	Very
Training model/ information delivered by an expert	○	○	○	○	○
Award bearing model/ achieving a post graduate qualification	○	○	○	○	○
Deficit model/ identifying a deficit in performance and receiving training on that	○	○	○	○	○
Cascade model/ one colleague gets trained and passes this training on to others	○	○	○	○	○
Mentoring model/ having a mentor to offer guidance and advice to assist in problem solving	○	○	○	○	○
Community of Practice model/ groups of teachers working together to improve practice	○	○	○	○	○
Action Research model/ Collecting and analysing data to change practice	○	○	○	○	○

20. What Professional Development location do you prefer?

	No	Neutral	Yes
In school	○	○	○
Outside Venue	○	○	○
Online	○	○	○

Appendix F

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF APPOINTED MIDDLE LEADERS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD, POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH CARRIED OUT AS PART OF A DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EVALUATION

DCU
Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

The researcher interviewed AP1 post holders and then designed an online survey based on the information gathered.

The online survey was sent to all principals in ETB post-primary schools in Ireland. Principals were requested to send the survey to all their AP1 post holders. This occurred in May 2019. 122 post holders responded and the following are the main findings.

1. A formal Induction into the role is important

2. A job description would support post holders and would help with the expectations of management and colleagues. This would also assist in the annual review.

3. Annual Reviews are helpful to acknowledge good work and to identify areas for improvement and Professional Development

4. The support of management and other AP1 post holders is important (and generally forthcoming) in the role.

5. Time management skills are required as the workload is extensive.

6. Relationship management and dealing with conflict skills are required. Dealing with Colleagues is an issue in the stage after appointment

7. The role is mostly task based and post holders are not realising their leadership potential.

Aspects of Role you feel most Comfortable with.

Category	Value
Developing Teaching and Learning	~1
SEN	~2
Leadership	~2
IT	~3
Working with people	~17
Management Tasks	~17
Students	~52
All Aspects	~14

8. Post holders generally do not delegate tasks to others.

9. Post holders identified:

Communities of Practice,

Training Model and

Mentoring Models

as their preferred type of Professional Development.

10. The Award Bearing and

   Cascade Models

were the least favourite.

11. Post holders prefer Face to Face than Online courses.

12. From an overall analysis of the findings the researcher also suggests combined training for the Senior and Middle Leaders:

-To help them to work as a team.

-To agree a shared vision and mission for the school and

-To explore Distributed Leadership and to come to a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their particular school and ETB context.

Is there anything that has not been identified in the research or anything you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your participation in this research as without participants like you, studies like this could not be undertaken.