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School Placement in Initial Teacher Education

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School Placement

in

Initial Teacher Education

Final Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPD Continuing Professional Development

CT Co-operating Teacher

DES Department of Education and Skills

DEIS Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

HEI Higher Education Institution

ITE Initial Teacher Education

NCCA National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NQT Newly Qualified Teacher

PAC Postgraduate Applications Centre

PME Professional Masters in Education

PDST Professional Development Support for Teachers

SEN Special Educational Needs

SSE School Self Evaluation

ST Student Teacher

SP School Placement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

The reforms in initial teacher education (ITE) introduced new arrangements for School Placement (SP) that require an extension to the duration of ITE programmes as well as an extended period in school during which students have opportunities to participate in the life of the school as well as engage in direct teaching in classes. A more broadly based professional experience is thus expected. A major change is that all STs on placement have a co-operating teacher (CT) who, along with their Higher Education Institution (HEI) tutors, supports them in their professional learning. A key element in this support is the opportunity to observe teaching, co-plan and co-teach with their CTs. Having experience in more than one school is also necessary and STs are expected to get experience of teaching across all the levels of the school e.g. junior and senior cycle classes; multi-grade classes in primary schools. Among the educational purposes of the changes are the strengthening of the integration of theory and practice, the development of an inquiry orientation, and an appreciation of the need to base professional decisions on evidence. HEIs and schools are expected to build partnerships in the interests of maximising the professional learning of student teachers and a much stronger emphasis is placed on the student teacher as learner while in school than was the case in the past. Both the CT and the HEI tutor are expected to collaborate and share expertise in fostering the student teacher's learning. In this context the Teaching Council is encouraging new kinds of relationships across CTs, HEI tutors and student teachers (STs). The school itself is viewed as fundamental to the acquisition of the sophisticated repertoire of skills and competences needed by teachers in contemporary society.

THE STUDY

Research was needed about the implementation, bedding down and impact of the reforms and so the Council commissioned this research. The research set out to document how the new policy is being enacted, to track how HEIs, in collaboration with schools, are giving STs access to high quality professional learning opportunities. The experiences and perspectives of the major players in the system: student teachers, HEI tutors (including programme leaders and directors of SP), co-operating teachers and school principals were central to understanding the extent to which the new policy was being put into practice, and the issues that were influencing its enactment. The commissioned study spanned over four years with fieldwork beginning in late 2014 and continuing into early 2018. The project incorporates a review of relevant international literature followed by a short account of policy on SP in some selected countries, New Zealand, Scotland, Singapore, Finland and Western Australia. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed methods design with quantitative and qualitative dimensions. It is based in six different HEIs that provide a variety of ITE programmes. Qualitative and quantitative fieldwork took place in both primary and post-primary undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Student teachers, HEI staff and school staff associated with these programmes were surveyed through questionnaires and interviews to establish their views and experiences over time. The following numbers summarise the scale of interview evidence over two rounds of data gathering respectively: 51+36 HEI tutors;

95+67 students teachers: 36+28 co-operating teachers; and 11+10 principals. In addition, the scale of questionnaire data in both rounds respectively was: 112+80 HEI tutors; 235+410 student teachers; and 17+50 co-operating teachers.

Since effective practice is of particular interest, this was fore-grounded in the examination of the literature and throughout the empirical analysis. In view of the design and scale of evidence assembled and analysed, the findings provide a fair and representative account of practice nationally. Incorporated in the main empirical study are many accounts of good practice and practices that align with the new policy. An additional aspect of the study presents (further) illustrations of effective practice involving partnership between schools and HEIs which are designed to provide case material for development

MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Research highlights the importance of SP. Having diverse and extensive opportunities to learn the art, craft and science of teaching, appropriate mentoring, feedback and constructive dialogue are all important for the professional learning of the ST. Good working partnerships between HEIs and schools are also vital. The Irish reforms involving an extended placement and the opportunity to work in different settings with co-operating teachers align with the international evidence. The diversity of contacts and settings maximises chances for observation, reflection and co-constructing knowledge. A major message from the review of literature is that both the HEI and the school are fundamental to the professional development of the student teacher and that how these partners relate, share and integrate their various contributions matters a great deal. The HEI and the school are needed to enable the integration of theory and practice and the notion that theory is associated with the HEI and practice with the school is outmoded. STs benefit from having assignments set for them that link with both settings. Opportunity to observe teachers teach is vital but the literature would suggest that on its own it is inadequate. Observation needs to be balanced with opportunities to reflect on and discuss the observed practice. The literature would suggest that to be a reflective practitioner, reflection needs to be modelled by the school staff as otherwise it is simply not valued by the student and not taken with them as part of their identity into their future practice.

The literature indicates that CTs need to be carefully selected and trained for their roles and that their roles need to be made explicit in terms of responsibily and approach. Training in mentoring is important but training in matters of research/inquiry and innovative practices would also appear to be relevant in view of the tendency in the existing research for STs to mimic the practices of their CTs which may not always be effective or progressive. HEI tutors working alongside teachers and student teachers in school would appear to be one way, identified within the literature, of building effective partnerships between HEI and school. Any such development has resource implications since effective mentoring requires investment and it cannot be assumed that good teachers are automatically good mentors for student teachers. Some jurisdictions devote considerable time and resources to this dimension of teacher education. In Singapore for instance many school-based mentors are senior teachers who have gone through a six-week, full-time course to enable them mentor STs with a deep understanding of both college and school-based requirements while in Australia state-based, online programmes are available to CTs/school mentors. STs do not typically source

their own school placements. In Scotland, for instance, there is a national system in operation for placing students in schools.

MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

IN A NUTSHELL

SP is a deeply meaningful professional experience for the vast majority of STs who report that they felt competent and confident about it and feel well prepared. It is the major vehicle for the integration of theory and practice. STs teach in a variety of schools and all STs have experience of teaching in more than one school over their ITE programme. All have an extended SP of at least the equivalent of 10 weeks in duration, with strict adherence in all programmes to the Teaching Council requirements on direct teaching. It is common practice for STs to have at least one SP in their home area and most likely in a school they themselves attended as a pupil. STs have a gradual increase in teaching responsibility and in no case do STs assume a 100% teaching load. The concept of 'co-operating teacher' is established insofar as STs, HEI tutors and teachers themselves are very familiar with the new terminology and there is strong evidence that all STs are allocated a CT who offers guidance and feedback on their developing practice. The vast majority of STs have the opportunity to observe teaching. There is a great deal of communication between HEIs and schools about SP and its processes. While partnerships between HEIs and schools are still mainly informal and 'ad hoc', there are aspects that suggest greater formality in procedures are emerging. While it is clear that the reforms are being enacted, there is much variation in the experience of students in schools. HEI tutors have experienced considerable intensification in their work and this is especially the case for programme leaders and directors of SP.

There are two major elements that merit further consideration in policy and practice to foster better implementation and adherence to the new arrangements: the process of securing school placements and the training for CTs. There are inescapable resource implications.

FEEDBACK

STs are observed teaching and get detailed feedback against professional criteria from their HEI tutor on all aspects of their teaching. HEI tutor feedback tends to be detailed, criterion-referenced, challenging, focussed and bearing on professional performance including lesson planning and critical reflection and evaluation. There is considerable consistency across how HEI tutors formatively assess their students. Feedback is offered orally and in writing and the debrief provides for in-depth discussion and dialogue around pupil learning, and targets for the ST's own professional development. HEI feedback is highly regarded by STs. Students are observed and evaluated by more than one tutor on their extended SP. The vast majority of STs report that they receive guidance on a comprehensive range of aspects of professional practice but only a minority reported receiving guidance on some broader aspects of school life such as participating in staff meetings, dealing with parents, and cross-curricular activities like sport.

STs also get guidance and support from their CT which they value highly. CT guidance and feedback is more varied in that it is not as 'standardised' as that of the HEI tutor since much depends on the context and especially the available expertise and time of the CT. In general,

CT guidance is strong on planning, classroom management and teaching/learning of specific learners and curriculum elements. It is usually informal and rarely if ever written down. The vast majority of STs have conversations with their CTs about their progress. A key difference in the nature of feedback from the HEI tutor and the CT, apart from formality, is that the focus of the tutor is always the ST's learning whereas the primary focus of the CT is pupil learning and this partially explains the difference in orientation. HEI tutors focus on a wide range and in considerable depth on areas of professional practice and pay attention especially to reflective practice and students' own evaluations and responses to earlier feedback. CTs are very much less inclined to pay attention to STs' developing reflective and inquiry capacities.

OBSERVATION, TEAM-TEACHING AND REFLECTION

All students have some opportunity to observe teachers teach with greater opportunity for this in the primary sector. There are sectoral (primary/post-primary) differences with primary STs more likely to be observed and involved in team-teaching with their CT. Students value the opportunity to observe teachers and to team-teach but this experience is very dependent on their CTs and can vary significantly from student to student. Thus it is arguable that this could pose an equity issue and is a theme worth addressing.

Reflection, as in the development of the reflective and critical professional, is happening across the board on all programmes and it is a key requirement for all students. It functions as a key mechanism for integrating theory and practice, for enhancing and moving to more nuanced practices, for attending to and understanding learner responses, for appreciating the role of evidence in decision making, and for beginning the action research journey as a professional from which more than they themselves can benefit. As such it is clearly a vital component of the initial teacher education programme and its role is recognised by students and is highly valued by HEI tutors. CTs' understanding of critical reflection, and how to engage students in a structured dialogue that supports critical reflection, is not yet evident in CTs' practices. Students themselves believe they are over-asked in regard to reflection and for some it is perceived as 'overwhelming' and a source of stress.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

HEI tutors are exclusively responsible for grading and there is a strong reluctance on the part of schools to share this responsibility. There isn't a consensus, even among HEI tutors, about the potential role of CTs in assessing/grading STs although the balance of evidence is away from such a role currently. Summative assessment and grading is not based on individual observed lessons but is based on a holistic judgement of the range of factors and areas of professional practice. All assessment, formative and summative, is based on direct observation, is performance-based with high validity. STs' assessments/grading are also high on reliability given the scale and emphasis on quality assurance mechanisms for maximising the consistency of interpretations. This ensures faith in the fairness of results to students and maximises equity. HEI tutors seek to meet and do meet CTs on visiting their STs and have conversations about student progress. These encounters are informal. HEI tutors, CT and ST meeting together to discuss progress is a very rare practice. Conversations between HEI tutors and post-primary CTs are more problematic since the CT is not necessarily available.

(HEI visits are not announced in advance with the exception of one of our case study programmes).

SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIPS

School-HEI partnerships are developing with high levels of communication and sharing of documentation from HEIs to schools, including communication between STs and schools about the requirements of their SP. There is evidence of some very effective practices that are well established in some schools such as a link teacher who is the liaison person with the HEI provider and a support person at school level for the STs; SP teams of CTs who meet regularly about SP and the STs in the school; school policy document on SP; CT Handbooks prepared by the HEI for schools in consultation with schools, providing guidance on various aspects such as giving feedback and participating in observation; newsletters from the HEI to its partner schools about developments of relevance to the schools; and, training sessions at the HEI for CTs.

However, in general, development of school-HEI partnership is hampered and dominated by the challenge of securing school placements for student teachers and this is an overarching finding of our research. Uncertainty and unpredictability about the supply of places mean that senior HEI staff such as programme leaders and directors of SP are unable to devote adequate time to other aspects of partnership development such as co-teaching/team-teaching and the sharing of action research studies. HEI programme leaders and SP Directors are at one in pleading for a national solution to this difficulty. Currently, STs and HEIs share some of the responsibility of securing schools with STs taking the lead in securing a school for their extended placement and the HEI sourcing schools for shorter placements.

THE EXTENDED SP: 10-WEEK BLOCK AND CONTINUOUS SP

Both the 10-week block and the continuous SP allow for establishing working relations with learners and colleagues and thus to experience and sustain deeper and more meaningful curricular activities as well as see progression in pupil learning. The extended SP allows STs experience a range of classes in the school system. Students were unanimous in their support for the extended experience in schools, comparing it favourably with their earlier, shorter placements. The continuous SP is especially liked by STs. Both STs and HEI tutors are very positive about the value of the extended placement. The extended SP is pivotal in allowing students experience professional life across the school, including participation in cross-curricular and cross-school activities, such as musical and sports events and trips.

However, CTs are generally not in favour of the 10-week block as it is viewed as ceding control of the class for almost a full term. For post primary teachers, a block placement is considered restrictive compared to the developmental process and valuable learning that can occur over the course of a year, especially if this is a graduated experience where responsibilities are added and supported incrementally.

PAYMENT

Primary students, while on SP, do not get paid and tend to be precluded by their HEI from taking up positions of substitute teacher. Their HEIs are strongly opposed to this until into

June when their academic year is over. There is a tendency for post-primary students to receive payment for some teaching in their placement school: a quarter of the STs reporting that they are paid for teaching or doing other work in school. Some post-primary students are timetabled in their subjects outside of their allocated quota of CT classes but do not get paid. In these cases tutors encouraged their students to tell them about such arrangements and any pressure from schools to teach extra hours but it seems to be a grey area. It was noted by a minority of STs as a source of stress to them since they find it difficult to refuse to help out in schools given the potential for securing employment in the school on completion of their programme.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SP TO STS AND ST CONCERNS

Evidence from students themselves demonstrates that SP is a significant and positive experience for the vast majority. It is the space where theory and practice meet for them. It is hugely affirming and life-enhancing: it powerfully communicates to them in the most direct way what their strengths and skills are as emerging teachers; equally, it exposes their weaknesses but it clarifies what they need to do to overcome them; it reminds and re-affirms their idealism, optimism and passion about their chosen career. The evidence shows that STs are highly appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the life of their placement school and the extended placement is key to this opportunity. The vast majority reported that they feel well prepared and well supported on SP and that they contribute to the life of the school.

Students recognise the importance of planning and evaluation but they are very critical of the scale of lesson planning and evaluating that they are required to do. Some are also critical of inconsistencies in feedback and assessments they receive from their HEI tutors although the vast majority are extremely positive about their experience of being observed by their tutors. Being observed brings stress and this combined with the very heavy workload of SP mean that SP is overall a very intense and tiring experience. They are very conscious of the considerable expense associated with training to be a teacher and much of the expense is associated with SP.

ADDITIONAL ELEMENT: ILLUSTRATIVE EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The development of placement-related materials can be the seed that enables 'partnership' between a school and a HEI to be experienced, understood, and grown. Opportunities for teachers, STs and HEI staff to talk about teaching, learning, knowing, and knowledge in shared spaces contribute to the effectiveness of school placement by making explicit the implicit in teaching and learning. Graduated expectations are useful in helping to align mentoring support with the stage of development of the student teacher. HEI-based professional learning seminars responsive to the needs of placement schools are valued by schools and help build school-HEI relationships. Student teachers are a rich learning resource for teacher professional learning across the continuum. If research projects are undertaken by students in placement settings during placement, ought there be some professional responsibility on all students to share the outcomes of their research with their placement settings? How might the HEI showcase the finalised research projects in a way that celebrates partnership on placement and opens up further learning potential for school-HEI-student

teacher learning? Conceptualising 'partnership' as webs of relational community networks has merit in terms of understanding situated teacher learning across the continuum.

IMPLICATIONS

While the new arrangements introduced by the Teaching Council have been introduced and are bedding down in practice as shown by the evidence presented in this Report, there are significant implications for the enactment of a more coherent and consistent approach nationally. These implications concern the development of the partnerships that are needed between schools and HEIs to maximise the learning potential of SP for STs. On the basis of the evidence presented in this study the following implications merit consideration:

1. That a mechanism be found so all schools are part of ITE through allowing access to STs for SP. Specifically, this would mean that all state-funded schools would agree to give access to STs for placement and that they would co-operate in line with the Teaching Council requirements on such aspects as observation. This would greatly alleviate the pressure on the system in securing SPs. It may be that the official processes of whole-school evaluations and school-self evaluations could feature in opening up schools to this possibility.

2. That support be extended to CTs to prepare them for their role especially in relation to offering feedback on observed teaching, providing recommendations for improvement, and in formatively assessing and discussing student teachers' performance. This suggestion, in particular, requires that attention be paid to resources for training. The training of CTs is entirely under-resourced and is currently dependent on HEIs providing some opportunities for CTs to attend meetings. If CTs are to be effective supporters of STs on placement, they need appropriate training and ongoing opportunities to share their practice in this regard. This is crucial in schools especially in those that do not have a tradition of supporting STs on SP. The Dutch system (and others) whereby school-based teacher educators straddle both school and HEI would be one aspect worth consideration in this context. Another is the potential for clustering of schools or cross-school collaboration for CPD. If all CTs could be released for the equivalent of one period per week to plan and feedback with their STs, to meet with HEI tutors, engage in some 3-way conversations with tutors and students, and engage in professional development on the support of their STs on placement, this would go some way towards more effective and consistent provision for STs on placement.

3. The current level of variation in the experience of the ST would be reduced if the first two implications noted here are enacted. HEIs are not in a position, nor do they wish to be, to oblige schools to allow their students engage in such activities as observing CTs or team-teaching or to demand that their STs are not time-tabled for lessons outside of those of their CT, yet these are vital issues impacting the learning of the ST. The bigger point here is that there is a need for greater clarity about the role of the CT.

4. That resources be provided to allow HEIs and schools together to consider the potential for joint inquiries. If reflective practice and an inquiry stance are to be valued by student teachers, they need to see this enacted in their placement schools. HEI tutors have a role in supporting this process and would be well placed to provide the support to schools. This could be linked to induction and ongoing teacher learning and may support the continuum of learning over the teaching career.

5. That further consideration be given to the pressures on schools of the requirements of SP, including the pressure of engaging with multiple providers and that greater opportunity be provided for schools and HEIs to liaise and communicate about SP, all of which are resource-dependent.

6. That the current national framework be revisited and revised to encourage a consistent approach for STs but one that also has enough flexibility to be responsive to particular needs and school contexts. With regard to the latter for instance, some school concerns about releasing classes for the ten week block could be mitigated by encouraging more team-teaching on the part of STs and CTs during the block.

7. There is strong merit in addressing the development of school placement within the overall continuum of teacher education. This would place school placement side-by-side with Droichead and Cosán in terms of processes, structures, resources and overall coherence in teacher education. A continuum-wide lens would support capacity-building across the continuum of teacher education and build on the practice of collaborative professional dialogue encouraged through Droichead.

8. That, a Working Group be convened to consider how greater alignment can be obtained between the policy on SP and its enactment, bearing in mind the findings and implications of this study. It may be that the Working Group on SP that was established some time ago could be revitalised to develop a timeframe for the enactment and monitoring of a framework that would address roles, responsibilities, resources, and CPD. This group, chaired by the Teaching Council, would need to include members drawn from key interest groups: the Teaching Council itself, HEIs, schools, the DES and HEA. In particular, it would need to include CTs as well as STs, i.e. representatives who were not part of the original Working Group.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This research arises from developments in policy and practice in teacher education in Ireland and in relation to changes in school placement (SP) in particular. It is a systematic investigation of current placement practices in initial teacher education (ITE). Understanding the issues that constitute an effective school placement experience for student teachers in both primary and post-primary sectors is a key aspect.

Initiated by the Teaching Council and endorsed by the DES and HEIs, the move to enhance and extend the SP component within ITE presents both an opportunity and a challenge to all concerned. Enthusiasm for greater emphasis on SP and a more integrated approach to school and college experiences is high among all interested parties but there are significant concerns too that stem from the current cultural and historical context, and the scale of the change to traditional practice. The study attends to how the new arrangements for SP are enacted and experienced with a view to enabling the Council make informed policy and offer robust guidelines to HEIs and schools about how best to foster the professional competence of the student teacher. Overall the aim is to build a comprehensive picture of SP and offer portrayals and exemplifications of 'leading practice' grounded in the current realities of Irish schools and HEIs.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE CHANGES

A number of factors influenced recent reform of teacher education in Ireland. While it has long been recognised that teaching is a complex activity, the changing and more diverse population of learners alongside the constant demand for higher standards on the part of pupils gave impetus to the need to scrutinise how teachers were prepared for their professional roles. A new extended professionalism was deemed necessary. Ireland was not unique in attending more critically than in the past to teacher education matters. Various international reports such as OECD's *Teachers Matter* (2005) had pointed to the need to take a fresh look at how student teachers are prepared for their profession and how they are developed and supported over their teaching careers. While the OECD had commented favourably on many aspects of teacher education in Ireland, not least the calibre of student entering and the esteem in which the teaching profession is held in society, it had identified a number of areas that needed strengthening. In a publication prepared for the Teaching Council, John Coolahan (2007 had highlighted the need for a restructuring of ITE courses to better integrate theory and practice and to foster teachers as reflective practitioners.

In Ireland, in addition, great attention was being paid to policies and practices in countries that on various quality metrics were achieving very well. For instance, the emphasis in Finland on teacher professional knowledge and professional decision-making, on the high level of teacher training at the initial stage, trust in teachers, and sense of collegial professionalism (Sahlberg, 2006, 2011) was especially influential in shaping some of the reforms that occurred in Ireland. Finland appears to be successful on two key fronts: high standards of academic achievement on the one hand and high standards of equity and

inclusion on the other hand. This dual success is not a feature of many other OECD countries (Hall, Ozerk, & Curtin, in preparation).

Comparative research commissioned by the Teaching Council and conducted by a team of colleagues in UCC (Conway, Murphy, Rath, & Hall, 2009) showed that teachers need opportunities to become critical, inquiry-oriented professionals able to investigate pedagogical practices and share their inquiries among colleagues. This and other work conducted in Ireland helped shape the changes that have been introduced over recent years. As the statutory body charged with regulating teaching as a profession in Ireland, the Teaching Council established a *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2012) which includes standards of teaching knowledge, skill and competence. In 2011, it set out expectations on the knowledge, skills and competences that STs should acquire on their ITE programmes. This was the first time in Ireland that expectations were defined at national level. Up to then it was up to each Higher Education Institution (HEI) to determine the learning outcomes and processes of their teacher education programmes. All ITE programmes now go through a rigorous professional accreditation process.

Initial teacher education in Ireland is provided by a number of HEIs, most of which are state supported. One private college is state accredited for the provision of teacher education. Both concurrent (undergraduate) and consecutive (postgraduate) models of ITE are and were available in Ireland. The vast majority of post-primary teachers in the system hold a postgraduate diploma in education while the vast majority of primary teachers completed a 3-year BEd. Concurrent courses are common for post-primary teachers of specialised subjects with a strong practical component such as art, physical education, music, home economics, technology (Conway et al., 2009). Recently there has been an on-going process of mergers and alliances forming between some ITE providers, following the recommendations of the 'Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland' (Sahlberg, 2012). This is an on-going process the aim of which is to rationalise and essentially reduce the large number of ITE providers in the State.

1.3 THE CHANGES: NEW POLICY ON SP

Three documents are especially noteworthy on the changes and new arrangements and all clarify requirements on SP: *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* published in June 2011 (Teaching Council, 2011b); *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers,* published in June 2011 (Teaching Council, 2011a); and, *Guidelines on School Placement* published in 2013 as an addendum to the aforementioned Criteria and Guidelines (Teaching Council, 2013).

Over the past six years all programmes of ITE were required to extend the period of teacher education. All concurrent (undergraduate) programmes of initial teacher education, must be a minimum of four years' duration and all consecutive (postgraduate) programmes of initial teacher education must be of two years' duration. There are also post-graduate programmes for primary teachers and again these programmes are of two years duration and lead to a PME. Since 2012/2013, all undergraduate programmes are four or five years in duration, and from September 2014, all postgraduate programmes have been of two years in duration.

Along with the extended duration of the period of ITE is the nature of the educational experience itself. A key principle of the new provision across all programmes is the closer integration, than previously, of theory and practice and in this regard the SP element of the redesigned programmes is central. All programmes are required to have an extended period of SP and the school itself is viewed as fundamental to the acquisition of an inquiry-oriented professional stance. While the HEIs have the ultimate responsibility for the programmes, schools are viewed as central, experienced teachers are encouraged to serve as co-operating teachers (CTs) and school-HEI partnerships are essential to this agenda. Both the CT and the HEI tutor are expected to collaborate and share expertise in fostering the ST's learning. In this context the Teaching Council (2011a, 15) is encouraging 'new and innovative school placement models' and new kinds of relationships across CTs, HEI tutors and STs. The placement guidelines call for HEIs and schools to work together on school placement **'as partners'** (TC 2013, p.5) but without placing 'an undue burden on schools' (2013, p.7).

While SP was part of initial teacher education for many decades and teacher education providers have a long history of involvement with schools, relationships and partnerships were usually informal and based on goodwill. In the current context partnerships are expected to become more explicit and formal and initiated by the HEI. Overall, the new ITE policy seeks practice that is professionally and academically enriching and which lays the foundation for the teacher as a lifelong learner.

An important requirement in the new arrangement is that STs have the opportunity to observe experienced teachers teaching and to have opportunities to discuss their observations with CTs, HEI tutors and fellow students. In other words, the new policy is one where student teachers are positioned as learners (as well as teachers) while they are in school. This is a theme that has been flagged as an identity issue traditionally in 'teaching practice' (Hall et al 2012) and argued as highly significant in teacher formation (e.g. Conway and Munthe, 2015).

The nomenclature itself – 'school placement' - replaces 'teaching practice' thus emphasising the need for STs to gain an understanding and experience of the wider culture and practices in a school. A more broadly based experience is thus expected beyond direct teaching. All students have to spend a considerable period of time in school and this involves engaging in teaching, observation and participating in a range of school activities. The School Placement Guidelines (Teaching Council, 2013) state that 'over the full programme, the school-based element must incorporate, at a minimum, 100 hours of direct teaching experience….it is expected that HEIs and schools will work towards a position where student teachers will gain direct teaching experience in the region of 200 to 250 hours' (p.12). Typically, a student teacher on an undergraduate programme spends about 24 weeks on SP. A student on a two-year postgraduate programme spends 30 weeks of that programme in schools. In all cases, the Council requires that the second half of the programme should include at least one block placement for a minimum of ten weeks.

Within those requirements, programme providers have flexibility in determining the duration, structure and timing of the school-based element and thus can have regard for local circumstances. Over their programme STs must experience at least two contrasting placement settings. They are expected to have experience of teaching at a variety of levels of the system (e.g. classes at upper and lower primary level if becoming a primary teacher, and at junior cycle and senior cycle in the case of post-primary student teachers). Students are observed and assessed by their HEI tutors.

There is no formal structured or paid mentoring scheme in operation for the CT and assistance to the ST from school staff is on a voluntary basis.

1.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND BEDDING DOWN OF THE CHANGES

While the Teaching Council guidelines offer a valuable model for action, evidence was needed about the implementation, bedding down and impact of these policies and guidelines. To address these issues the Council commissioned this research. The project set out to document how the new policy is being enacted, to track how HEIs, in collaboration with schools, are giving STs access to high quality professional learning opportunities. As noted above the study set out to give an account of the implementation of the new arrangements with reference to the experiences and perspectives of the major players in the system: STs, HEI tutors, programme leaders and Directors of SP, CTs and school principals. The study reported here spanned four years and incorporates a review of relevant international literature, and interview and questionnaire surveys of the key stakeholders paced in a way to capture development and change.

1.5 PLAN OF THE REPORT

Following this chapter a detailed exploration of relevant literature is offered on SP within ITE. A wide range of empirical studies is examined here and particular attention is paid to aspects that shed light on how to ensure 'effective' practice and maximise the quality of the professional experience for the student teacher. In the course of this analysis, we focus specifically on the key roles, responsibilities and perspectives of the main actors in the SP component of ITE programmes: the co-operating teacher, the HEI tutor, and the student. The chapter highlights some issues for the further development of SP in Ireland and it informed the design and conduct of the fieldwork on which latter chapters are based.

Chapter Three illustrates different models of SP in the policy literature pertaining to some selected, relevant countries: Scotland, New Zealand, Singapore, Finland, and Western Australia.

As a research design chapter, Chapter Four details all elements of the scale and scope of the research. It describes the focus of the research, the methods used for data collection, sampling and analysis, ethical issues and quality assurance aspects.

Chapter Five, as the largest empirical chapter in the study, seeks to provide a detailed account of SP practices across the six case study sites. It addresses what is happening under the banner of SP and gives an account of the typical and diverse practices in operation. It presents evidence on nature and scale of SP, feedback templates and criteria, opportunities for critical reflection and observation, sources of guidance and feedback to STs, opportunities to observe teachers teach, variation in provision, assessment and feedback of STs on SP, roles of CTs and HEI tutors in all aspects of the SP and variation in practice, the role of the debrief, the perceived benefits of the extended duration, and quality assurance in interpretation of ST performance.

All parts of the study are about STs on SP and all chapters are inevitably about the experience of STs and about the nature of the partnerships that are evolving between schools and HEIs. However, Chapter Six attends more specifically to the issue of partnership between schools and HEIs and attends very directly to the issues associated with securing SP for STs which ultimately is the responsibility of the HEI. The data base for this chapter is primarily, but not exclusively, the HEI tutor and Director of SP interviews and surveys.

Chapter Seven extends this analysis by focussing more specifically, but again not exclusively, on the roles and experiences of the CT and school principal. It seeks to understand the perspectives and experiences of the CT about their 'co-operating' role and how this has changed (or not) for them under the new arrangements.

Chapter Eight foregrounds the STs perspective on the matters which concern them about SP. This chapter is based on the ST surveys and interviews, thus incorporating quantitative and qualitative evidence about their experiences and perspectives.

Throughout the chapters there are various portrayals and examples of practices that are highly regarded by participants and appear to be very effective in supporting the implementation and bedding down of the new policy. Where appropriate, these are described and analysed and links are made to some of the literature already reviewed in Chapter Two. However, it was decided that one chapter would be specifically devoted to presenting and examining some examples of good practice that have been introduced into some school-HEI partnerships. Chapter Nine therefore presents six case-based vignettes of effective practices that are in operation in various settings. This chapter, unlike others in the Report, is not claiming to represent developments nationally, rather its purpose is to illustrate some particular ways in which schools and HEIs are working together to support the student teacher. The evidence base for this chapter comes from settings within and beyond the case study settings of the empirical study.

Chapter Ten concludes the study with a summary of the main findings. It identifies some key conclusions and draws out their implications for future policy and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on teacher preparation in many countries highlights the importance of school placement (hereafter SP) for the effective formation of teachers. The SP or practicum is seen as hugely significant by student teachers, teacher educators and teachers as well as by policy makers. It is seen as vital for the growth of professional competence of the student teacher, has been referred to as the core of the teacher education programme (Tillema, 2007) and as 'the most powerful site of integration for student learning' (Waldron, 2014, 37). As we already outlined, the nature of the school experience in ITE in Ireland is changing in light of the new requirements from the Teaching Council. Most ITE programmes in the country are still in the early years of enacting these requirements. It is important to keep the process of change under scrutiny and this examination of relevant literature on SP is intended to support that process of policy implementation and review.

The move to greater involvement of the school in the development of the student teacher in Ireland extends the professional community for the student. Traditionally, Irish students on 'teaching practice' would have experienced mentoring relationships, to varying degrees, with classroom teachers. However, the policy changes in initial teacher education place a new, more interventionist emphasis on the role of the school and the role of the co-operating teacher in particular.

Systematic reviews of existing international research point to the limited evidence that is available on which to base firm recommendations for specific practices and models of SP (Moyles & Stuart, 2003; Menter et al, 2010; Zwozdiak-Meyers et al 2010). However, the more typical narrative reviews (e.g. Cochran-Smith et al 2015) along with empirical studies in different settings and jurisdictions provide insights and findings that are helpful in guiding and assessing our own policy and practice in Ireland, as well as in directing us to key elments to be probed in our empirical evaluation of policy implementation in the first years of the changes. There is a corpus of research now available describing and analysing experiences and practices of the various players involved in SP, including student teachers, co-operating teachers, university/HEI tutors and we review that below paying attention where we can to the most effective practices identified by the research evidence with a view to offering research-informed recommendations for future policy and practice. We begin the review by acknowledging some of the very recent research available in Ireland since the introduction of the changes.

A caveat is necessary at the outset – previous reviewers of research in the field of teacher education have commented on its lack of cohesiveness. Cochran-Smith et al (2015, 109) refer to what they call 'the sprawling and uneven field of research on teacher education'. Bearing in mind this lack of cohesion we have sought to focus our searches, reviewing and reporting on key elements pertaining to SP that we believe have particular relevance for the Irish situation at this time.

The review is structured into two main parts. This first and larger chapter reviews various empirical studies bearing on SP. Particular attention is paid here to aspects that shed light on how to ensure 'effective' practice and maximise the quality of the professional experience for

the student teacher. In the course of this analysis, we focus specifically on the key roles, responsibilities and perspectives of the main actors in the SP component of ITE programmes: the co-operating teacher, the HEI tutor, and the student. (The next chapter illustrates different models of SP in the policy literature pertaining to some selected, relevant countries: Scotland, New Zealand, Singapore, Finland, and Western Australia.) This chapter concludes by highlighting some implications of the international literature for the further development of SP in Ireland and for the design and conduct of the fieldwork which will yield an evaluation of how SP is enacted in Ireland.

2.1 RECENT IRISH RESEARCH

The scale of the changes and new initiatives in teacher education since the foundation of the Teaching Council in 2006 has been very significant and has been described in at least one publication as 'unprecedented' (O'Donoghue, Harford and O'Doherty, 2017). The conceptualisation of the type of 'partnership' required for SP has been critiqued primarily on the basis that it is loose and lacking in detail about roles and responsibilities (Harford and O'Doherty, 2016). As yet there is little evidence available of the implementation and impact of the new arrangements on SP. We note, however, some very recently published satisfaction survey results from 154 school principals of post-primary schools in Ireland (JMB, 2017) who were invited to offer opinion on the SP of students on PME programmes for the post-primary sector. The views expressed are mixed. Over half the respondents expressed satisfaction with the information they receive while the majority believe that the number of classes student teachers are required to teach is 'just about right' although the surveyed principals are unsure about the adequacy of SP visits from HEI tutors. Open-ended responses, while varied, demonstrate concerns about the resource demands of the new arrangements on schools. The survey concludes by saying that the mismatch of rhetoric and reality points to the need to keep implementation under review and they suggest that 'much needs to be done to make this provision fit-for-purpose'. In the same vein participants at two INTO-initiated seminars (INTO, 2014; INTO, 2016) reached similar conclusions in relation to the primary sector with the summary report of 2016 in particular highlighting concerns about the adequacy of the available resources to obtain a good fit between the new policy and practice (O'Doherty, 2016).

Very recently conducted doctoral research on the perspectives of CTs, school managers and STs in Ireland (O'Grady, 2017) has many parallels with research conducted in other countries (see the Scottish research reported later in the chapter). Sarah O'Grady's study concluded that school managers and CTs experienced an increase in workload as a result of the new SP arrangements although they perceived the changes as 'mainly positive'. The schools involved in her study called for greater guidance from HEIs especially in relation to observation and how to give feedback to STs. The issue of resources as a constraint was highlighted. CTs, in particular, perceived that time to engage with the ST is essential – structured time set within their schedules – to meet both STs and HEI tutors. Overall, this study argues that in the absence of better resourcing for training and partnership building that changes are at best 'superficial'. The findings of this research echo that of the survey conducted by the JMB and the conceptual evaluation of Harford and O'Doherty (2016). Another theme from O'Grady's study is the need for HEIs to engage more directly with CTs since currently it would appear the greater part of the communication occurs between HEI tutors and school Principals.

A study by Sugrue and Solbrekke,(2015) offers a conceptual policy and empirical analysis of the teacher education reforms with reference to placement and partnership, and links the developments with the wider context of shifts in higher education towards employability and the economy. Their analysis of the SP policy leads them to conclude that 'teachers' goodwill, the voluntary nature of their contribution, its informality, its non-evaluative nature' point to a disproportionate level of responsibility on the HEI for initiating and sustaining the expected partnership for SP.

The international literature on SP uses many different terms for what is now in Ireland called the co-operating teacher: mentor, school advisor, school associate, supervising teacher, sponsor teacher, and school-based teacher educator. For our purposes we use the label 'co-operating teacher' since that is the language used in current Irish policy documents. In Ireland (as in most other jurisdictions) the ultimate responsibility for the ITE programme, along with the SP component, is the HEI.

2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIP

2.2.1 BOTH HEI & SCHOOL NEEDED FOR INTEGRATING THEORY & PRACTICE

For many decades, there have been concerns about the lack of alignment of SP with its HEI component (see Bullough and Gitlin, 2010; Calvo and Wood, 2014). Concerns expressed by school staff/mentors, students and HEI teacher educators, are also related to the quality of mentoring and the timing of placements. Over time efforts have been made to obtain a better fit across both HEI and school-based components and in this regard the work of Cochran-Smith, 2005; Zeichner, 2010; Menter et al, 2010 are illustrative of various perspectives and practices designed to obtain a better integration of theory and practice. Fundamental here is the idea that schools are not just settings where student teachers do their teaching practice or places where the theory, learned elsewhere, can be applied, but rather that the school itself is a setting for theory building, for understanding practice, for learning about curriculum, assessment, learning, and pedagogy through working with a range of students and adults. This is a view that recognises that student teacher learning is not just an individual enterprise but is distributed across the school and HEI communities. Thus the school itself is perceived as a professional learning community (Stoll, 2010) and student teachers learn by participating in all activities associated with it: teaching in classrooms, observing others teach, participating in staff meetings and meetings about learners' progress with parents to name but some.

Knowledge of how learning happens, regardless of level, context or age of learner would suggest that learners need guidance on how best to participate, interpret and use their experience which in turn implies having the opportunity to reflect on those experiences, to discuss them with more knowledgeable others as well as share with peers (Wenger, 1998, Lave and Wenger, 1991, Eraut, 2004 and 2007, Boud et al 2009, Billett, 2002). How all this happens is far from straightforward. The way HEIs and schools work together, in other words, the nature of their partnerships, becomes a focus for dealing with some of the problems and concerns. A major message from the diverse, international literature we examined for this Report is that both the HEI and the school are fundamental to the professional development of the student teacher and that how they relate, share and integrate their various contributions matters.

The vast majority of the studies of SP that we found are based on programmes that involve both the HEI and the school, with most studies seeking to better understand and evaluate the manner in which responsibility is shared across both settings i.e. how HEI tutors and school staff share and experience their roles in shaping the next generation of teachers. Darling-Hammond (2006) is among many researchers who has shown through empirical evidence that linking practicum experiences with 'on campus' or HEI-based work is a most powerful and effective way of preparing student teachers to teach. She identified a number of ways of achieving a meaningful, coherent programme of initial teacher preparation through strong school university partnerships: well designed in-school experiences that strive to make explicit the links between theory and practice through action research and performance assessments.

It is not enough merely to have more time in school. What happens across both the HEI and the school is key and how work set for students in both settings is integrated into their SP would appear to be vital for the professional competence acquired by the student. Murray and Passy (2014, 502) note that SP is not just about 'immersion in classrooms with knowledge of how to teach positioned as easy to acquire through fundamentally apprenticeship modes of training'. These and other authors who have examined the extensive literature on professional learning demonstrate that for high quality learning and competence to be achieved the student teacher has to be viewed as a learner as well as a teacher. The necessary visibility of the student teacher on SP as learner pushes towards the need to recognise the school as not merley a work place but a learning place for the student teacher (Conway and Munthe, 2015). The notion of the student teacher as learner as well as teacher while on SP might seem an obvious and taken for granted principle but how that gets enacted in practice demands all of the following challenging dimensions:

> a communal learning culture within the school in which students are valued; a culture in which symbiotic relationships between the multiple discourses about theory and practice, teaching and learning in ITE can be facilitated; participation in a well-planned, rich and flexible variety of activities balanced between organisation and individual needs; the availability of time and space for quality learning opportunities and experiences to occur, and then further time to reflect upon them, and finally, teaching colleagues who undertake support roles and challenge learners. (McNamara et al cited in Murray and Passy, 2014, p 502).

All of this assumes a degree of expertise, resources and time on the part of the HEI and the school as well as careful organisation and communinication.

Contrary to some commonly held assumptions that they privilege the practical over the theoretical, student teachers appear to value equally the theoretical and practical components of their programmes (Allen, 2009; Allen and Wright, 2014). Allen and Wright (2014) found that they 'overwhelmingly' endorse the linking of university coursework to the practicum as a means of bridging university and school. The questionnaires and interviews in their research were based on Australian student teacher perceptions and experiences of the factors that hinder and inhibit the integration of theory and practice. Interestingly, students reported that what hindered their ability was assessment or assignments that had a strong demarcation between their course work and the assessment of their practicum. The students surveyed

reported that an embedded assessment approach would enable a better and more authentic linkage between theory and practice. Another element that emerged from that study is the importance of clear and transparent understandings about roles of the various stake holders: students, school mentors/co-operating teachers and university tutors. Where there was confusion regarding roles and responsibilities of university and school staff, students reported that they felt constrained in making links between campus-based and school-based work. Based on earlier evidence assembled in a review of international literature (Conway et al 2009) the recommendation was made that initial teacher education programmes carefully consider the links between components of programmes – foundation studies, teaching methods and teaching practice so that 'integrative modules' could explicitly focus on connections between pedagogy modules and the social contexts of classrooms and schools. That report also advocated clarity in relation to roles of HEI tutors and staff in schools.

A recent descriptive study of the development of partnership working in some initial teacher education programmes (van Velzen and van der Klink, 2014) is instructive in that it outlines some Dutch changes currently being government-funded (to varying degrees) and the Dutch policy context overall would appear to recognise some of the complexity of the entire process. A shift in practice in Holland is that teacher educators from the HEIs not only teach their student teachers at the university but also teach them in their school settings, the aim being for student teachers, teacher educators and co-operating teachers to work closely together to achieve alignment between theory and practice. Student teachers engage in teaching and non-teaching activities. In addition some teachers in the system have been trained to become 'school-based teacher educators' (SBTEs). This is a significant development. These professionals collaborate with the HEI and their main role is the development and assessment of the student teachers.

2.2.2 FOCUSSING ON THE SCHOOL AND CO-OPERATING TEACHER

In a narrative review of studies, mainly from North America and going back over a sixty year period, Clarke et al (2014) identify common constructions of the role of co-operating teachers. They identify a continuum of different levels of participation in teacher education preparation which resonate with the history, some very recent, of teacher preparation in Ireland. At one end of that continuum, with a minimal level of participation, is what they call the 'classroom placeholder'. This involves the student teacher taking the place of the classroom teacher who leaves the classroom and may take up other duties in the school for the period of the placement. In Ireland this might be described as a 'sink or swim' approach and was, until recently, quite common, especially at secondary initial teacher education. The assumption is that the student benefits from complete immersion in the practice of teaching, taking on all the main duties of the class teacher. Some student teachers and indeed some HEI tutors and teachers may firmly believe that the only way to learn about teaching is to have as much practice as possible as early as possible in their training. Such a view can lead to an impoverished experience for students and a narrow view of what it means to be a professional (see Hopper, 2010).

Further along Clarke et al's continuum of participation is the co-operating teacher as 'supervisor of practice' which involves the teacher as overseer of the student teacher's work: observer, recorder and reporter of the student teacher's work with the interaction tending to be mainly uni-directional from the co-operating teacher to the student teacher. At the other

end of the continuum is the co-operating teacher as coach, that is somone who works closely with the student teacher, co-constructing and co-interpreting events sometimes as they unfold in the classroom. This level of participation inevitably assumes the co-operating teacher is well equipped to support and mentor new learners and can appreciate the complexity and uniqueness of settings. As the researchers of these various studies note, in this case the role of the co-operating teacher is akin to that of the teacher educator albeit with different roles and responsibilities. In general, it would appear from the existing studies that teachers and school staff are willing to see participation in SP as part of their extended professional role.

However, as the involvement and the demand increase, teachers appear to be more reluctant to take on the additional responsibility. A study comparing 'discourses of partnership' in England and Scotland for instance (Brisard et al 2006) showed that a significant number of teachers feel strongly that teachers' professional goodwill can no longer be assumed as a guarantee of participation. This is so because of other tensions and demands in the education system such as pressure to raise pupil standards of achievement and demands associated with inducting and mentoring newly qualified teachers in the profession (Brisard et al 2006).

It is of note that in 2013 the Teaching Council hosted the EU Presidency Conference, the theme of which was the professional identity of teacher educators. Among its objectives was the following: to support policy exchange, learning and development, and to generate policy-oriented recommendations on the identity of teacher educators. In one of the keynote presentations at that EU event in Dublin, Professor Kay Livingston strongly argued that many teachers do not recognise or identify themselves as teacher educators, and as a result recognition and support for their development as teacher educators can be limited. Nearly two decades ago Weiss and Weiss (2001, 166) argued that all stakeholders involved in teacher education see co-operating teachers as 'the most powerful influence on the quality of the student teaching experience' but add that this depends on how the mentoring occurs.

Several studies and reviews of studies explore the actual roles and practices of co-operating teachers. A number of interesting findings emerge from those studies. Using a modified version of Clarke et al's framework, we analyse the main findings from that corpus of work in light of new developments in the Irish context under the following headings: i) feedback and summative judgement; ii) observation and modelling of practice; and, iii) relationship building and socialisation.

2.2.3 FEEDBACK: FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE

Providing feedback to the student teacher on all aspects of the placement experience is at the heart of the co-operating teacher's role. According to the literature (e.g. Hudson, 2010, 2014) providing feedback can be considered 'the linchpin for advancing practices' (Hudson, 2014, 63) yet it seems this aspect of the role is variable and therefore inequitable, with some students receiving lots of high quality input while others, perhaps on the same programme, getting very little. Consistent feedback to student teachers and summative judgement on students' growing competence in the classroom, specifically in relation to planning, range of pedagogical approaches, differentiation, and assessment, by co-operating teachers appears to be problematic and the existing research literature would appear to be at one on this point. It seems that even the best co-operating teachers typically struggle to give explanations of

practice to student teachers that go beyond the narrowly technical of the 'what' and 'how'; the tendency is to by-pass the 'why'. In reality this means that typically post-lesson observations tend to be limited to the affirmation of student teachers' existing pedagogical knowledge but offer little new sources of knowledge or meaning-making for students, thus limiting opportunities for reflection. In line with this, co-operating teachers tend to dominate in such discussions and closed-ended rather than open-ended questioning characterise the interactions.

Typically too, co-operating teachers struggle to match feedback to the changing needs of students and to individual student needs. They also find it difficult and are usually reluctant to offer summative judgements on student performance, although the research shows they sometimes do shoulder that responsibility. Some of the US research reported by Clarke et al showed that co-operating teachers are unable to discriminate sufficiently among students and that final judgements are often reduced to general impressions that give little or no indication of individual differences across performances. Research by Trish Maynard in the English context in 2000 suggests that the giving of feedback is also problematic for co-operating teachers because it may negatively impact working relations. She found that mentors were often reluctant to give feedback that might hurt their students' feelings.

It is important to recognise that assessment of work-based learning is complex. It is about assessing experiential learning which includes critical reflection on the student's own practice. We now know from the assessment literature generally that formative assessment is vital for learning and equally for professional growth. Hattie and Timperly (2007, 81) argue that feedback is one of the 'most powerful influences on learning and achievement' and can be positive or negative while Gipps (2002) has argued that feedback in formative assessment needs to enable the learner know what to do in order to bridge the gap between what they can do currently and need to be able to do (Gipps, 2002). This is captured well in the following quote from Sadler (1998, 84) who has been very influential in developing understanding of formative assessment and feedback:

> By quality of feedback, we now realise we have to understand not just the technical structure of the feedback (such as accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriateness) but also its accessibility to the learner (as a communication), its catalytic and coaching value, and its ability to inspire confidence and hope.

Co-operating teachers may not always be clear on what to assess and how to assess it. A doctoral study conducted by Leo Kilroy (2016) in Ireland strongly highlights this especially in the context of student teachers who are struggling on SP. His empirical study along with several studies he reviewed are in agreement that the co-operating teacher should be carefully selected and trained and that modelling of good practice and the provision of feedback should be central to their role. A key recommendation from his study is the need to properly resource the training of the co-operating teacher. Justifying his recommendation that funding for ITE in Ireland needs to be increased, he cites work conducted by the OECD (2005) and Sahlberg (2010) which highlight the link between teacher quality and government spending on ITE (and teachers' remuneration).

While University (HEI) tutors tend to have a more formal, summative, gate-keeping role in assessment than school mentors/co-operating teachers, the former also formatively assess students on placement. The research literature we have found for this review converges on

the tendency for HEI tutors to have a more judgemental role in assessment and to adhere to templates that incorporate the key dimensions of practice.

A recommendation that emerges from the literature is that universities and schools need to develop a shared view of what to look for during SP. What constitutes successful performance and how is this communicated to STs in the form of feedback? Our research is exploring this and we report on it below. In addition the literature would suggest that the nature of the mentoring, a major component of which is formative discussion and feedback, is a feature that requires ongoing support and evaluation.

2.2.4 OBSERVATION AND MODELLING OF PRACTICE

Some studies invited mentors or co-operating teachers to say what they thought they offered student teachers on placement. According to one such study (Edwards and Protheroe, 2004) which appears to be representative of others in the field, the major contribution they described as 'hands-on experience of daily practice'. Also a study by Moore (2003) showed that co-operating teachers valued the following practice aspects above all others: lesson planning, pacing and transitions, and classroom management.

One of the key emphases in the recent Irish policy literature from the Teaching Council is the importance of observation and practice of teaching in a variety of teaching settings. It is interesting therefore that some of the studies show that the modelling of practice for students tends to result in students mimicing the practices they have had modelled for them. In this sense practice is seen as 'reproducible'. This is problematic as it could result in students not learning to be adaptive and not being prepared to cope with complex and unpredicatable aspects of classroom life. Such an approach would also close down opportunities for critical thinking and more complex interpretations of classroom interactions. Some studies (e.g. Huffman et al 2003) showed that the socialising influence of the co-operating teacher results in the student teachers becoming 'more custodial and controlling over their pupils' (Clarke et al, 2014, 181-2) thus reinforcing in the student teacher values of conformity, tradition and buy-in to the current school/class cultural practices. There is strong evidence (Woodgate-Jones, 2012; Maynard, 2001; Sultana, 2005) that student teachers seek to fit in to what they perceive to be typical practice of their classroom teacher rather than introduce innovative practices themselves. Sultana (2005, 233) notes: 'Interaction with experienced teachers, while potentially fruitful, tends to lead ITE students to become conservative in their approach to the complex challenges of teaching. Instead of responsibility and reflection, acquiescence and conformity to school routines become the order of the day'. As these researchers observe, modelling themselves on the class teacher is not surprising to some extent since it links to their desire to be approved by their school.

What the latter shows, in a more positive sense is the power of the co-operating teacher to influence the repertoire of practices of the student teacher but also, and in a less positive sense, that the co-operating teachers may be unaware of the scale of their own influence in reproducing conventional and taken-for-granted practices.

A study by Sands and Goodwin (2005) for instance found that some co-operating teachers struggle to demonstrate the attributes of critical judgement that are so highly valued by

programmes overall. This finding from the literature fits with the point about feedback and summative judgements noted in the previous section. One study is especially interesting in this regard: Graham (2006) distinguishes between 'maestros' and 'mentors'. The former exemplify and model practice for the student but, in addition to this, the mentor discusses and analyses events and guides practice by providing time to reflect on what was observed. This shift in approach is not simple or straightforward and needs to be enabled with the help of the HEI tutor. Work by Stegman (2007) and others attempt to say what such a shift in approach could look like but overall the evidence about this is thin. Unsurprisingly, the research shows that where co-operating teachers got support and professional development to this end they were able to extend student teachers' reflective capacities and as a consequence be more reflective about their own practice, a point we return to later in this Report.

2.2.5 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The literature on SP and in particular on the role of the co-operating teacher is replete with references to the importance of relationships. Co-operating teachers themselves view the relationship they evolve with their student teachers as second only to their own skill as teacher. Thus, the research evidence shows that they put great emphasis on friendship, collegiality, flexibility, open-mindedness and a welcoming attitude. A study by Glenn (2006) for instance concluded that a focus on relationships is a major dimension of effective co-operating teachers. The evidence points to the need to 'collaborate' rather than 'dictate', and this requires a degree of 'handover' and a relinquishing of control to the student teacher. The importance of the personal relationship can't be overstated in the context of effective mentoring and advising.

2.2.6 FOCUSSING ON THE HEI AND THE ROLE OF THE HEI TUTOR

As we noted above, the ultimate responsibility for the ITE programme, including the SP element,lies with the HEI. This is a pattern we found across the studies. (As we show in the next chapter it is also a feature of policy in many jurisdictions). In Ireland the HEI is accountable to the Teaching Council for the professional accreditation and quality of its programme. It is responsible for evolving and mediating appropriate school partnerships and working relations with school staff who are involved with student teachers. The latter is a significant shift in relations and responsibilities for it requires that the HEI staff locally set up and locally manage nationally set expectations and requirements. Although they have such responsibility for the partnership between the HEI and schools, the HEI tutors remain as guests in the schools and so have to be highly diplomatic and sensitive to the priorities of schools while striving to meet nationally and institutionally set criteria for the ITE programme. Apart from the guidance and evaluation of the student teacher's work within the HEI and on the SP, the HEI tutor also has the task of ensuring the co-operating teacher understands all administrative procedures and HEI expectations and requirements of the programme pertaining to the placement.

The roles of both the co-operating teacher and the HEI tutor involve 'supervision' at some level. Interestingly, Stones (1984, cited in Ní Áingléis et al, 2012 p.22, our emphases) refers to the 'supervising tutor' as having 'super-vision':

First, *acute eyesight* to see what was happening in the classroom;

Second, *insight* to understand what was actually happening;

Third, *foresight* to see what could be happening;

Fourth, *hindsight* to see what should have happened but did not; and finally,

Second sight to know how to get what should have happened on the observed occasion to happen at a future date.

Whether and how all of this happens in practice depends on many factors and is hugely dependent on the expertise the different partners bring to the entire enterprise.

On the basis of our analysis of the available international research, it is reasonable to conclude that a most influential aspect that the co-operating teacher may afford student teachers is the modelling of practice, while one of the weakest aspects is the development of the reflective, critical, research and evidence-oriented practitioner. It is imperative therefore that the HEI tutor minimises the limitations and maximises the benefits of the school placement dimension of ITE. A key role of the HEI tutor has to be the support of reflective practice. Nearly two decades ago Andrew Pollard who has written extensively on this topic, said 'the reflective practitioner has emerged as the new Zeitgeist' in teacher education (Pollard, 2000, p.13). HEI tutors subscribe strongly to this since it is assumed it is reflection and critical engagement with practice that enables the teacher deal with the unpredictable, the complex and the ever dynamic nature of the social situatedness of classroom events. The establishment of REX, the Research Expertise Exchange, as an online social network which supports education research practitioners in Ireland to share research, seek support for their work, raise questions, and explore opportunities for research collaboration may have some potential in this regard. Initially funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education, this has been developed in partnership with Mary Immaculate College, NUIG and UL. In-service, newly qualified and pre-service teachers alongside teacher educators, higher education researchers, and other education professionals can seek support through activities including: posting a query; sharing a research paper or article. The establishment of this system holds promise for the facilitation of professional learning opportunities, particularly around support, mentoring and professional learning on School Placement. Very recently published research on research capacity in initial teacher education shows that teacher educators in Ireland see research as important for the promotion of teacher professionalism and critical reflection, being particularly enthusiastic about action research and the development of student teachers' practitioner-based research capacity (Gleeson et al, 2017). These authors note how this perspective aligns well with the stance adopted in the report on initial teacher education by the international panel (Sahlberg et al, 2012) who claim that teacher education entails 'relying on research knowledge on the one hand and focusing on preparing teachers to use and do research on the other' (Sahlberg, et al, 2012, 15). Of particular interest is the finding in Gleeson et al that teacher educators (especially in universities, where research productivity is vital for promotion) struggle with the dual demand of being research active on the one hand and engaging in formation of teachers with its associated school placement dimension on the other. As they note, this is

not just an Irish phenomenon but an international one and a theme we return to in the conclusion since it emerges as an issue given the new arrangments for SP.

Bearing in mind the notion of a reproducible practice, noted above, which pushes student teachers towards 'fitting in' to conventional practice of the classroom and the finding that co-operating teachers struggle with the reflective and analytic aspects of school practice, it is imperative that the HEI tutor is able to support and encourage students in thinking about and implementing innovative and different approaches. As Hopper (2001) and others have argued, the HEI tutor is best placed to encourage students to critique, examine, and reflect on their own and others work and to make links with college-based work. Pollard and Tann (1993) also argued this some time ago, and added that such discussions can be enormously beneficial to student teachers and co-operating teachers alike.

In addition to the above a vital role of the HEI tutor in relation to placement is the indepth evaluative role of the student teacher's developing professional performance. The reluctance of the co-operating teacher in the international literature to assume a major role in the formal assessment of student teachers is entirely understandable given their main priorities as teachers of pupils. HEI tutors have a much broader range of observational and assessment experience on which to base their evaluations of performances (Ievers et al., 2013). As a consequence, they have a more objective and generic position on a student teacher's development and can be more explicitly critical of their performances. Moreover, the HEI tutor tends to have a different relationship with the student teacher since s/he is not working alongside the student every day. All of these points on roles are well articulated and recognised in the literature.

An assessment development at Stanford University in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) is noteworthy although we have not found empirical studies of its effectiveness or even of its operation in practice. It is noteworthy because it may well illustrate one way of summatively assessing elements of student teachers' classroom performance in dependable ways. 'Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA)' is a multiple-measure assessment system aligned to state and national standards that can guide the development of curriculum and practice around the common goal of making sure new teachers are able to teach effectively. Having evolved the system, Stanford University engaged 'Evaluation Systems', a branch of Pearson, as an operational partner to the apparently wide educational audience that requested access to the system. It is intended to evaluate how student teachers plan and teach lessons, and how they adjust teaching to the needs of pupils. From what we understand it seems student teachers themselves digitally record their classroom performance against various standards and submit the evidence online for evaluation by tutors who do not have to physically go to the school to see them perform. It is quite an evolved and complex system that may be worth further exploration.

Overall, the research attests to the multi-dimensional role of the HEI tutor who is someone who works with and knows all of the following: the student teacher, the co-operating teacher, the principal, as well as a range of staff in the HEI institution itself. The literature shows how the HEI tutor has to balance a range of circumstances, responsibilities, relationships and institutional demands (e.g. Hopper, 2001). Depending on the jurisdiction and the different national policy contexts (see next chapter), various types of partnerships and models exist between HEI tutors/institutions and schools. For instance in England, a country which has

shifted the main responsibility for ITE from HE to schools, the HEI tutor may not even know the student teachers, adopting more of a facilitative role with co-operating/mentor teachers or with just a designated school co-ordinator who oversees the partnership between the school and the HEI. It would appear that the practice of HEIs in England is hugely variable in terms of range and effectiveness.

2.2.7 FORGING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIPS AND THE ROLE OF THE CT

An important feature emerging from the literature is the significance of partnership, collaboration, communication and inquiry across schools and universities (e.g. Menter et al 2010; Zwozdiak-Meyers et al 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2006). Traditionally, partnerships between schools and HEIs have not been formal although this informality has not been without criticism (Ní Áingléis, 2012). The latter study sought to evolve a more equal partnership between a HEI and local schools where teachers become much more involved in the support of student teachers on SP. A previous international review, commissioned by the Teaching Council, and conducted by some members of this team (Conway et al 2009) concluded that internationally it is common for formal partnership arrangments to be developed between HEIs and schools in order to provide structured support and a gradual increase in responsibility to the student teacher although such partnerships vary on a continuum from schools playing a host role to a school providing the entire training.

The call for more collaborative and inquiry-based approaches has been linked to the need to educate student teachers (and teachers) to work flexibly in diverse settings and to support inclusion. The studies assembled and reviewed for this Report point up a number of approaches and practices used within HEI-School partnerships. An account of some these is designed to illustrate ways in which, resources-permitting, HEIs and schools have sought to build working relations in the interests of the professional development of student teachers on SP.

2.3 STUDENT TEACHERS AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS RESEARCHING THEIR PRACTICE

For many decades teachers and student teachers have been encouraged to become more actively involved in researching practice. The notion of the reflective practitioner is one that envisages teachers as professionals who interrogate their own and others' practice to enhance the quality of their students' experience and to make decisions based on evidence and analysis. While the action research movement can be traced back to the 1940s, there is a renewed and revitalised emphasis on teacher action research in more recent times with benefits accruing to teachers professionally and to student learning (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). In Ireland (and elsewhere) we have seen a much stronger emphasis on systematic inquiry and action research in initial teacher education programmes in recognition of the increased complexity that characterises teaching. It is well accepted that technical skills alone and passed down experiential knowledge are no longer sufficient (if they ever were) for the kind of intelligent problem solving and analytic decision making that is needed in classrooms (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009; Willegems et al 2017). The current emphasis in Ireland on research and reflective practice at all stages of the teacher education continuum aligns with

this thinking. There is evidence in the literature that student teachers' inquiries into their practice on SP can be a mechanism for enhancing school-HEI links and that the relationship is two-way i.e. that partnerships are needed to enable student teachers on placement become reflective and research-oriented. Feiman-Nemser's (2001, 1042) captures this thinking well: 'Although teachers need access to knowledgeable sources outside their immediate circle, professional development should also tap local expertise and the collective wisdom that thoughtful teachers can generate by working together'. This more recent vision of teacher professional learning covers a range of inquiry approaches where teachers take responsibility for their own learning, the ultimate aim being the improvement of their practice and the enhanced learning of their students. In the Irish context ongoing teacher learning is now encouraged through the COSÁN framework so it's not surprising that at the initital stage of teacher education there is now a strong emphasis on establishing a disposition of research and inquiry and an appreciation of evidence-based practice. Again the REX initiative described above seeks to promote such a stance. Hence classroom-based investigation and the systematic study of one's own practice are a focus of the new programmes nationally and typically student teachers conduct a school/classroom based inquiry that inevitably involves some collaboration with mentors/co-operating teachers and possibly other school staff. The Teaching Council's Research Strategy (2015) and its CROÍ initiative together seek to place research at the heart of teaching and learning through promoting a culture of shared learning in which research is encouraged and applied within the classroom setting. The CROÍ Research Series of webinars, e-zines, various research meetings and events, electronic access to key research and professional journals for teachers and HEI tutors has the potential to support ST, CT and HEI tutor collaborations around inquiry in classrooms.

In the light of this new vision of the teacher we searched the literature for insights and guidance on the area of student teacher as inquirer and researcher that might further inform the Irish situation. We found little systematic evidence of the impact of teacher research but at least one systematic review of the state of the art of collaborative teacher research (Willegems et al 2017) yielded some important findings. Their analysis provides preliminary evidence of the benefit of collaborative teacher research (involving pre-service and in-service teachers) in relation to enhanced knowledge and attitudes towards: (i) collaboration, (ii) reflection, (iii) inquiry, and (iv) student-centred learning.

It emerges that pre-service teachers learn more when the collaboration between both student and co-operating teacher is a shared inquiry in a more equal partnership. A more equal shared partnership between the student teacher and the mentor provides more opportunities for joint ownership and also the student teacher appears to learn more when there are several actors involved in the research activity. This outcome aligns with the work of Darling-Hammond (2010) and Zeichner (2010) who talk about 'hybrid spaces' where several people meet in a 'non-hierarchical way' and this in turn allows for the merging of theory and practice (Willegems et al, 2017, 242). In those circumstances it seems collaborative teacher research involving pre-service and in-service teachers 'provides a perfect opportunity for ... co-creation of knowledge for teaching' (Willegems et al 2017, 242).

However, in this scenario mentor teachers are highly involved in the development of the student teacher – they are educative co-learners who support pre-service teacher learning and reflection, as models of teaching practice, and school-based teacher educators. In the Irish context a HEI tutor, not the co-operating teacher, has the key role in supporting the student teacher in mounting, implementing and evaluating their classroom-based inquiry. Clearly, the

involvement of the co-operating teacher as envisioned here would require more resources, expertise and time than are available currently in the Irish system but ideally the co-operating teacher could have a greater role.

Another message from the evidence would appear to be that for student teachers to really value reflection and inquiry and get the maximum from it in terms of dispositional and transfer to the new settings that they encounter, they need to have reflection and inquiry modelled for them by their mentors/CTs. Given the many converging theoretical perspectives on how people learn, especially how people learn in professional, experiential, work-based settings as noted above, this emphasis on modelling is not surprising. Where the supervising school-based mentor does not engage in an equal way in the reflection and inquiry process the student teacher's own 'inquiry stance' is not maximised. The important argument emerging from these findings is that the co-operating teacher ideally is part of the research team. This is of course a very complex issue as Willegems et al (2017) point in their systematic review of the field. On the one hand it is risky as it can threaten the student teacher's learning through negative modelling – indeed it seems some student teachers picked up negative attitudes from school staff and these students did not develop positive attitudes to school-based research and inquiry, feeling that it did not contribute to their practice. On the other hand, if the co-operating teacher is not actively involved the student teacher's project can become an isolated endeavour with little transfer into practice.

As our own empirical work shows (in later chapters) students on all programmes engage in inquiries into their practice while on SP which are written up for examination by the HEI. In the case of masters students, there is also a more indepth study of practice bearing on a chosen topic of interest and relevance to the student's practice that is approved by the HEI tutor. It is noteworthy that the Dutch study already mentioned (Van Velzen and van der Klink, 2014) describes 'academic school-university partnerships' where the student teacher has to connect their research questions and focus to the agenda of the school and they are encouraged to become members of a 'community of teacher-researchers who share the same research interests' (12). These teacher researchers along with the 'school-based teacher educator' support the student teacher in carrying out their study: 'teacher-researchers who conduct research and guide student teachers in their research activities are a new and emerging phenomenon in Dutch education and the launch of academic school-university partnerships promoted its emergence' (12). It is being recognised that working together in this way implies learning to understand each other's language, what Bullough and Draper (2004) and Wenger (1998) call 'boundary crossing' and certainly also involves a change of culture in schools towards the notion of 'inquiry as stance' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009).

2.4 PARTICIPATIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING: LESSON STUDY

Originating in Japan, lesson study is a systematic investigation of classroom pedagogy conducted collectively by a group of teachers rather than by individuals (Tsui and Law, 2007). There is compelling evidence that lesson study can have a positive impact. For instance, Kotelawala (2012, 85) in a study of early career teachers showed that engaging in a community of inquiry through lesson study 'provided a rich structured format for teacher

candidates to focus on the complexities that are a part of fine-tuning teaching practices in the classroom'. Two researchers from the University of Leicester (Cajkler and Wood, 2016) adapted 'lesson study' to investigate classroom pedagogy in ITE and examined student teachers' perspectives of the experience. Although small scale in scope, involving 12 student teachers in 8 secondary schools, we believe it is worth detailing in this review as it has potential for developing pedagogic expertise not just on the part of the student teacher but also on the part of the co-operting teacher.

Both student teachers and co-operating as learners here focussed on the improvement of pedagogies rather than just the training of the prospective teacher. Lesson study can contribute to the induction into a pedagogic team at departmental level. Drawing on the learning theorist Wenger (1998) these authors showed that lesson study offered a structured process of mutual engagement. While co-operating teachers led the process, student teachers experienced a growing confidence and competence as teachers. These researchers highlight the need for ITE to go beyond a list of teaching standards at an individual level and to consider what it means to be inducted into a team of teachers in a subject department. They point out the imporance of the school-based 'community of practice' and in this regard refer to the need for what they call 'pedagogic literacy' on the part of student teachers. It is worth quoting from their study as follows:

> Specific but interdependent professional skills, for example, lesson planning, use of questions and understanding of a huge variety of teaching approaches, contribute to pedagogic literacy as do attributes such as commitment to professional growth and engagement in reflection on practice ...Crucially, it also includes the ability to interpret what is going on in lessons ... through a heightened, sharp awareness of how learners respond to any teaching. This ability to read lessons is at the core of pedagogic literacy. (Cajkler and Wood, 2016, 15.)

Their evidence pushes them to conclude that adaptations of lesson study in ITE provides a sound interactive CPD opportunity for both student teachers and mentors to heighten awareness of what is going on during lessons (see section 6 below). What is key throughout in the case of their use of lesson study was the structured opportunities to discuss pedagogic processes. As they rightly point out co-operating teacher - student relations are typically characterised by observation and guided reflection where students and co-operating teachers operate in a 'parallel space' planning alone as individuals and quite removed from teacher members of the department. Lesson study, on the other hand, afforded opportunities for holistic collaboration and sharing of developing expertise: joint planning, team teaching approaches, observing, assessing and evaluating. As these researchers also noted, the adapted use of lesson study stands in stark contrast to initiatives that focus on gathering evidence of meeting lists of competences. In the latter they were referring specifically to the situation in England where the prevailing official culture sees teaching as a set of discrete, government-sanctioned competences (DfE, 2012). In an earlier paper by these same researchers (Cajkler et al, 2013) they note with regret how the the responsibility for teacher education in England is shifting away from university-led programmes towards school-led programmes for example School Direct (DfE, 2013). This is the case despite official evidence from OfSTED (2010) inspections that university-led teacher education is effective.

2.5 PARTICIPATIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING: PAIRED AND MULTIPLE PLACEMENTS

In their systematic review of evidence Moyles and Stuart (2003) found strong evidence for the role of constructive dialogue and found that placing two students together in a school could support professional skills. Also Nokes et al (2008) investigated paired placements and found that in such situations student teachers talked more extensively about pedagogy and planning. At the very least, this line of inquiry suggests there is value in having more than one student teacher placed in a school. Building on this research Sorensen (2014) examined the efficacy of placing two students with the same subject specialism in the same school for SP. This was an extensive mixed-methods study spanning four years and involving six HEI school partnerships in England and indepth case studies with 20 paired or multiple placements in a secondary school. Sorensen concluded that the use of peer placements supported the development of higher level thinking and criticality.

However, a caveat to this conclusion is that there are so many variables, and schools inevitably differ in so many ways, it is difficult to specify precisely the factors that actully cause success. For instance the official discourse in some schools meant that students and indeed teachers were not always free to exercise agency over matters of curriculum and pedagogy since the official curriculum was tightly controlled externally. One might imagine a similar scenario in Ireland especially in the upper stages of the secondary system when exams dominate and influence curriculum and pedagogy so strongly. It would seem that in the Sorensen study some teachers and student teachers were unwilling to consider alternative pedagogies or learning strategies thus limiting the potential for using transformative pedagogies. Where schools did not feel so bound by external influences and despite some individual students being overly conservative (didactic) about teaching approaches the fact that pairs of students were working together did encourage more experimentation pedagogically and students did overcome resistence to examining new practices. In terms of recommendations this research echos US-based studies (e.g. Darling-Hammond cited above) that the selection of co-operating teachers is extremely important and that HEIs need to work more closely with schools and especially with co-operating teachers to encourage the dialogue about and reflection on teaching and learning.

A related approach to this notion of participative dialogue is co-teaching as defined by Colette Murphy and her colleagues (Kerin and Murphy, 2015; Murphy, 2016). Co-teaching offers a model of shared practice and shared responsibility where the pair working together are on an equal footing bringing perhaps different expertise to the co-teaching act. This approach has been applied to various curricular areas including science and music. In an example of the latter Marita Kerin and Colette Murphy describe an initiative involving BMusEd student teacher and generalist primary teachers co-teaching for an hour per week for eight weeks. It was a collaboration between school and university which aimed to implement and evaluate a reciprocal professional learning model incorporating co-teaching of music. The central tenet of this approach is that student and teacher are both afforded the opportunity to be teacher and learner simultaneously. In this case the student teacher was positioned as expert musician and the teacher as expert pedagogue. Fundamental to its success was that three phases of co-planning, co-teaching and co-evaluating had to be incorporated and time

protected so these phases could be enacted. Tacit assumptions about the what, why and how of music education were rendered visible in the course of the initiative. The authors (Kerin and Murphy, 2015) show how there was a positive impact in four professional dimensions for the pairs involved: subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. Reflective journal entries that were a basis for its evaluation showed a movement from description to more critical, analytical engagement with how to teach music. Most importantly the initiative encouraged a movement away from merely solo class teaching and built confidence and competence for greater sharing and dialogue about practices.

2.6 PARTICIPATIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING: LEARNING IN NETWORKS THOUGH ENQUIRY

Recently completed PhD research in Ireland by Alan Gorman (2017) illustrates the potential of an online intervention programme to support reflection and enquiry on the part of the student teacher and is another example of how effective links might be developed across the HEI and the school. His study involved the design, implementation and evaluation of an online intervention (Learning in Networks of Enquiry, LINTE) based on constructivist learning theory and the notion of 'inquiry as stance'. It afforded the opportunity to student teachers to interact with peers, co-operating teachers and HEI tutors online. The evidence showed that the resultant 'hybrid space' provided a valuable learning context where knowledge of practice was generated and rendered highly meaningful to all concerned. Students were highly appreciative of the approach to reflection offered in this space, seeing it as more meaningful than what they perceived as the required extensive but isolated written reflection more typical of their course. Of critical significance was the interventionist and prompt responses of the HEI tutor here along with that of the co-operating teachers as 'online tutors'. The study concludes by offering a number of principles that could inform online work for student teachers, two key ones being i) that collaborative reflection and enquiry should be central to the experience and ii) that a partnership dimension should be central to the experience where HEI tutors, co-operating teachers, and student teachers are working together in a collaborative space. Of utmost important was the emphasis placed on cultivating a safe space, which students perceived as vital to their successful engagement. The approach provided an alternative to mentoring and blurred the hierarchies that are very much entrenched in existing models of supervision (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). Students valued this as a safe space and felt comfortable to raise questions in this online environment that they may not have raised with their teachers or supervising HEI tutors.

Finally, some students perceived this space as complimenting the mentoring that they were receiving in schools, while others felt that this was the mentoring space due to the lack of such support in their schools. The cultivation of such spaces are critical for professional learning for the following reasons: 1) it allows teacher educators to address perennial problems in learning to teach, which can manifest during the practicum and 2) at the gates of the profession, student teachers are engaging in making practice public through critical dialogue within a community of learners (the hallmarks or signature pedagogies of teacher professional learning, advocated by the Teaching Council).

However, to appropriately address the above, professional development for educators (co-operating teachers and HEI tutors) is required, and such professional development should

provide a space for students to address their own life history biases, including their apprenticeship of observation, alongside the challenges associated with learning to teach. It might be argued that existing professional development for co-operating teachers heavily concentrates on pedagogies of partnership or mentoring but fails to address pre-existing beliefs or teacher educators' lay theories.

2.7 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIPS

Forging effective partnerships is very complex work and the partnership agenda offers both opportunities and challenges. The majority of the initiatives surveyed by White et al (2010) require a shift in thinking as to who the teacher educator is, who they partner with and how they partner. As they point out it requires that communities, schools and classrooms have to be made ready for the change, it cannot simply be imposed. A few studies have described and evaluated different forms of professional experience for students on initial teacher education programmes. For instance the University of Sydney has evolved relationships with a wide range of different schools in which their students are placed while at Deakin University alternative professional experience models have been developed and trialled to place student teachers in a range of school and community settings with a curriculum model of 'place-conscious' education. At the University of South Australia, 'learning circles' are designed in which a group of student teachers, placed at the same school, meet regularly after school to engage in professional dialogue. The intention is that they share classroom experiences, listen actively to their peers and 'use enabling questions to encourage deep learning and understanding about teaching' (White et al 189). In this way they are taking more responsibility for their own learning and accepting that they have a role in the learning of their peers and in this process develop the skills of 'effective participation in learning communities' which is intended to stand them in good stead throughout their careers.

The value of using partnership in teacher education has a long history as described by Zeichner (2010) in relation to the US and Furlong et al (2000) in the case of England and Smith et al (2006) in the case of Scotland. We have already noted a number of different approaches in ITE from the separatist higher education and school work through to more overlapping approaches and yet more formal partnerships where school staffs have agreed to take on specified roles and responsibilities within the HEI-school partnership. In the latter case the complementarity of the different forms of professional knowledge contributed by the HEI and the school is acknowledged and given equal recognition (see Smith et al 2006). The existing research literature would suggest that there are some features that are important for effective school-university partnerships. These are summarised in (Bain et al 2017, 539): that the conditions for collaboration and partnership are clearly expressed and carefully negotiated; that there is appropriate recognition that the work norms for each partner are different and that account has to be taken of this; time has to be allowed for collaboration to develop; and, that the partner leaders work actively to sustain the partnership. Above all partnerships have to be resourced (Bloomfield 2009).

A recent comprehensive review of school-university partnership initiatives (Breault, 2013 cited in Bain et al) identifies several risks to their effectiveness and viability. One is the shrinking of resources and stakeholder change before good working relations can be established and consolidated. Another risk arises if teachers and lecturers who participate in

the partnership are not sufficiently valued by being given adequate time for their innovative work. On the other hand what would appear to enhace partnership working is when staff teams work jointly on course development and delivery so that a theory-practice distinction is no longer relevant.

A study of the development of school-university partnership conducted by researchers at the University of Aberdeen offers some useful insights in this regard. Following the Donaldson Inquiry in Scotland and the government's acceptance of its many recommendations along with additional funding, the School of Education at the University and the local authority were encouraged to work with schools to build 'better relationships over placement in ITE'. They also considered 'alternative ways of assessing placement' and 'more sharing of course delivery between school and university staff, as well as considering flexible school/university appointments (Bain et al 2017). This context was the starting point for the development of the partnership between the University and local education authority (LEA) with local schools. In this case it is interesting to note that while the LEA tended to look to the university to drive the partnership, the instinct of the HEI was to aspire to a collaborative approach anticipating (rightly) that teachers and their professional associations would be reluctant to assume wider professional responsibilities. On the basis of their evaluation of their own partnership, these researchers emphasise the importance of 'strength of purpose' and having shared medium and long-term goals and the importance of ensuring that funding is available to meet the purposes. A further lesson learned from their experience is the imporance of partnerships being stable 'involving a university and a consistent set of local authorities and/or chains of schools' (551). They found that this secures trust and confidence from personnel working together over a sustained period of time. This very point is well acknowledged in all studies bearing on school-university partnerships. For instance Kari Smith (2007, 290) notes:

> its implementation requires time, a thing which is not in surplus to school-based teacher educators and which university staff feel is spent at the expense of research, meaning less promotion opportunities. Time is not only required during the initial implementation, but after that, it is also a major factor in sustaining the model.

A qualitative study conducted on initial teacher education students' experience of SP in Scotland (Aderibigbe et al, 2016) places a value on the apprenticeship conception of mentoring and argues how this conception needs to be acknowledged better by teacher educators. The study argues for the importance of 'adequate guidance' to student teachers in order to strengthen their professional learning and career development. Overall, these Scottish authors note that while collaboration, partnership, joint working are held up as core aspects of the reform agenda in teacher education in Scotland, the empirical evidence unfortunately does not conform in that vision. Collaboration is not evident at the level assumed or hoped for by the policy makers. For this to happen the researchers call on HEIs and school leaders to initiate reorientation programmes promoting mentoring as a collaborative process and they recommend that clarifications of expectations of aims of partnership (between HEIs and schools) and expectations regarding roles of mentors, students, HEIs be communicated and shared.

A mapping of the existing research since 1980 sought to identify characteristics of well-functioning models of partnerships between universities and schools in teacher education (Lillejord and Borte, 2016) that coincide with the above. The authors conclude that models of partnership in teacher education require stronger academic leadership and more engaged

leadership from schools than is currently evident in the studies of partnership practice. Importantly, they conclude that if schools and teacher education institutions are to benefit from the partnership, they have to work together in ways that both parties perceive as meaningful. They say:

> Partnerships must be designed so that they support innovative and intellectual work. Partners must fully understand what the partnership expects of them and how they may contribute. Concrete, collaborative projects energise and strengthen partnerships and transparency alleviates tensions and distrust among partners (560).

Like other researchers, they emphasise that teacher education institutions and schools are basically different communities with different cultural and historical traditions and how this reality has to be understood and acknowledged. It is essential that both partners agree on principles and practices. Harford and O'Doherty (2016, 47) in similar vein, based on their analysis of relevant literature, and with more direct attention to the Irish context, call for partnerships that 'promote shared ownership of the process, agree pedagogic principles … and clear division of roles and responsibilities'.   In sum, there is strong convergence across the literature about the complexity and conditions for effective partnership working in initial teacher education.

2.8 RELATIONALITY, EMOTIONALITY AND COMMUNICATION

While research specifically on SP in ITE is limited, recent studies do show the significance of issues to do with relationships, emotionality and genuine dialogue and communication (e.g. Clarke et al, 2012; Conway et al, 2011; Dolan et al, 2009; O'Grady, 2017) in the professional development of students on initial teacher education programmes.

One feature common across many of those studies we found is the emotional aspect and allied to that the relational dimension of learning to teach on SP. This echoes work conducted in Ireland by Morgan et al (2010) and Kitching et al (2009) on beginner teachers and by Kilroy (2016) on student teachers. In the Dolan et al study students exhibited a range of positive and negative emotions including joy, happiness, satisfaction, pride, fear, uncertainty and frustration. More positive experiences in their study were linked to their growing capacity to motivate and encourage children, to hold their attention and to direct their learning, capacities. As the authors say these skills 'signify an emerging professional identity as teacher' (Dolan et al 2009, 29). Their study showed that 'conflicting expectations' appeared to be at the heart of negative experiences which translated to their sense of inadequacy in relation to subject methodology, flagging the need for student teachers, especially primary student teachers who have to teach the range of subjects, to have substantial training in domain-specific pedagogies. Arguably the extension of the programmes may have facilitated this though it is clearly an area meriting further research in the Irish context into the future.

What is key is that learning to teach is indeed an emotional journey where the relational aspects are very significant. Since part of the learning involves working with 'third parties' in an educational context, working relations with a range of professionals and parents, not to mention students, become pivotal. How student teachers are supported in the areas of

working with third parties like special needs assistants and other school staff will be examined later through the empirical component of the report.

An Australian qualitative study of the experience of the co-operating teacher documents the wide range of differing emotions directly related to the practicum role (Hastings, 2004). These include guilt, responsibility, disappointment, relief, frustration, sympathy, anxiety and satisfaction. The findings point to the importance of relevant players recognising and publically affirming that the practicum involves 'an expanded set of emotions' (144) for the co-operating teacher as well as the student teacher. Teachers in the Hastings (2004) study consistently noted the lack of time as the most significant factor hindering an effective practicum by which they meant lack of time to dialogue with the student teacher, meet with university staff and also meet with other relevant colleagues about the student. Indeed the study concludes by arguing that much of the negative emotions associated with the practicum from the perspective of the co-operating teacher stems from limited time for the co-operating teacher to effectively support the student teacher as they would wish. This issue is often exacerbated when there is also very limited time for the co-operating teacher to meet with university staff to develop their own mentoring skills and their own understanding the practicum. However, this study also highlighted the perception among the co-operating teachers interviewed that they rated the opportunity to mentor student teachers as a genuine professional development opportunity for themselves and staff in their schools.

The research, in general, emphasises the powerful role of emotions in teacher/co-operating teacher relations (mentee/mentor) where, in our case, mentor can be co-operating teacher and HEI tutor. Communication is most critical. The quality of the mentoring relationship is central to good teaching. A two-year study conducted in New South Wales and an Australian univeristy explored the experiences and perceptions of both mentors and pre-service teaching during SP (Sheridan and Young, 2017). The study argues that genuine conversation, defined as those conversations where partners are equal rather an one person leading, is an important enabler of professional learning. Such conversations need to happen between mentee, mentor and others in the school to share experiences, expectations and to negotiate responsibilities. Such conversations are essential to allow the student to feel accepted and a sense of belonging in the setting. They were deemed to be vital for building trust and reciprocal commitment. In such conversations students were able to make connections between personal learning, prior understandings, current experiences and their mentors' expectations of them. Understanding expectations and being explicit about them is unsurprisingly key and genuine conversations with mentors are needed for this understanding.

2.9. STUDENT TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

While this entire report focusses on the student teacher on SP, it is appropriate to consider some additional research that attends to the perceptions of student teachers more specifically. This is especially important in the context of our empirical work later which probes the experiences and perspectives of student teachers on different programmes in the country.

Students appreciate their SP experience and recognise the significance of the professional growth they experience. The literature, however, shows that there is considerable diversity in the nature of mentoring with limited opportunity for mentors/co-operating teachers to have

mentor training and as a result many lack the necessary skills to maximise the learning gains of students on SP.

As research in UCC has shown (Hall et al, 2012; Conway et al, 2010) over the past couple of years, the status of student teachers in schools is complex: they are at once teachers and learners; they are negotiating professional, academic and personal aspects; intellectual and emotional issues arise for them and have to be managed. The Irish research shows that students struggle with these tensions and the HEI tutor has to mediate in the interests of the student's learning. The co-operating teacher, on the other hand, has to privilege the learning of pupils which can, as we noted above, be a source of tension for the student teacher. The HEI tutor is tasked with enabling the various players appreciate the world from the perspective of the other, in other words to be a broker in the interests of maximising the professional learning of the student. The student teacher needs to have a range of different professional experiences in different schools. The research on their perceptions, concerns and challenges during SP is summarised now.

Within the complex professional and informal contexts of SP, the student teacher's own understanding and perception of his or her role can be problematic and negative, including feelings of vulnerability, conflict and confusion with regard to different teaching philosophies and a struggle for acceptance leading to possible withdrawal (Johnston, 2010); self-doubt and evaluation anxiety (including feeling over-assessed by cooperating teachers and under assessed by HEI tutors) (Kyriacou and Stephens, 2010; Kilroy, 2016) worries about the prospect of professional fading or fatigue (Poulou, 2007); and stress around what the student teacher perceives as unrealistic HEI tutor expectations (Stephens, 2006; Halford, 1998).

Research also highlights the variability of support students experience on SP and it questions the impact of workplace socialisation on the pedagogical learning of student teachers (Johnston, 2010). As an example, Johnston's study highlights the problematic nature of the traditional understanding of student teachers as apprentices who learn through productive interaction with more experienced colleagues as this leads to the unproblematic conceptualisation of the relationship between the participants in SP. Research completed with student teachers themselves reveals that aspects of their relationship with co-operating teachers which they find problematic include co-operating teachers relating to them as students rather than teachers; providing intrusive support when the student teacher is in control of the class; not accepting another teaching style as different rather than wrong; and generally just "hanging around too much" (Stephens, 2006). There are implications here for the nature of professional development of the co-operating teacher and a role for the HEI in supporting this process.

Research with student teachers themselves also highlights quite clearly the concerns and challenges student teachers face daily while on placement (Johnston, 2010; Kyriacou & Stephens, 2010; Maynard, 2000; Poulou, 2007). While these can be extensive and varied, for the purpose of this report, we summarise the main challenges they face as follows:

- the negotiation of social and professional interactions in school contexts;
- becoming accepted as a learner, a person, a teacher and a part of a profession;
- negotiating power and control and the handover of same;

- managing negative feedback and generally, being assessed;
- achieving adequate support within a general school culture of busyness;
- learning how to deal with and understand emotions and emotional responses, their own and those of others;
- negotiating the contextual issues such as finding classrooms, dealing with extensive paper work;
- uncertainty whether to imitate or invent teaching approaches in the classroom;
- general tiredness and coping with a heavy workload; and,
- confusion over how to do reflection on their school experiences.

In a study of sixteen student teachers Kyriacou and Stephens (2010) present the following pedagogic areas of concern to them:

- dealing with disruptive behaviour;
- becoming a disciplinarian;
- getting the teaching right;
- getting the planning right; and,
- teaching about sensitive issues.

It is also interesting to keep in mind that students can sometimes feel like neither students nor teachers and this can be very difficult. Positive school placement experiences include situations where student teachers felt welcomed and began to feel valued and a sense of belonging (Johnston, 2010). Accomplishments are seen in the research as taking responsibility, developing confidence and creating an orderly classroom (Kyriacou and Stephens, 2010).

This line of research has many implications for their experiences on SP and their development and negotiation of personal and professional identities. It would seem that the kind of relations that students forge on SP with their colleagues significantly affects their capacity for professional growth in a range of ways. These insights on the role and concerns of student teachers remind us again that schools are complex sites of and for learning and a student teacher's sense of identity is affected through the different patterns of interactions experienced in and around the SP. Emotions are the basis on which many student teachers' decisions are made and the kinds of interactions experienced by them influence whether these emotions are positive or negative. Student teachers need social and professional scaffolding on SP, and where they do not develop a sense of belonging, there is a lack of loyalty, commitment, confidence and self-efficacy.

For student teachers SP is not only about skills and competencies but also about learning how to develop productive working relationships with trusted colleagues, something which could be reflected more in ITE programmes. Allowing student teachers to share their experiences of placement with each other can also alleviate stress (Gorman, 2017). Just as it takes an entire village to raise a child, it takes an entire school to educate a student teacher (Ussher, 2010) and some research indicates that a range of support from a variety of colleagues and sources would be beneficial for students (Johnston, 2010). Recent research (Trent, 2013) also calls for a critical perspective on SP grounded in identity theory to reveal and address problems around the relations and interactions within schools that may interrupt, in ways described here, an appropriate identity development of the student teacher.

2.10. RECOGNISING TENSIONS AND THE NEED FOR CPD FOR ALL

In general co-operating teachers/mentors say that they benefit broadly from the experience of being involved in supporting student teachers on school placement and we found many studies which show that co-operating teachers value highly their own engagement with colleges and universities as a result of working with student teachers (e.g. Edwards and Mutton, 2007). Yet tensions can arise not least between the role of the co-operating teacher as teacher of pupils and as mentor of student teachers. This is one tension that requires recognition: the research evidence is compelling about acknowledging this reality when HEIs invite co-operating teachers to work with students on placement. The fact is that ITE is far from the main focus of the work of a school and this is of particular note in the context of co-operating teachers' repeated claims about lack of time and resources. In addition, the obvious positive commitement in the literature on the part of the co-operating teacher to the role is matched by a recognition that the role involves emotional as well as intellectual labour and that the former is often not sufficiently acknowledged. Bullough and Draper (2004) argue that the emotional investment of the teacher needs to be foregrounded in any discussion and arrangements around the role in order to ensure warm, working relations are sustained over the period of the placement. This also has implications for how co-operating teachers are chosen for the role – whether on the basis of suitability or availability. A further tension is that which arises between the student teacher as learner and teacher. In additon there are the various bureaucratic demands of the HEIs which challenge traditional relations between HEIs and schools e.g. the need for student teachers to observe practice to mention but one.

While contradictions and tensions should be recognised and made part of discussions with tutors and co-operating teachers (and indeed students, as appropriate) there is also potential within those same tensions for growth and professional development for all concerned. Meetings between HEI tutors and co-operating teachers allow for linkages and networking, articulation of within-class and within-school practices that 'deprivatise practice' (Cochran-Smith, 2012) in a way that extends professional dialogue, inquiry and thinking. On the basis of their research with some 60 school mentors in England, Edwards and Mutton (2007, 517) suggest the focus on student teachers as learners poses new opportunities for schools to be more outward-looking and oriented towards 'mutual engagement' than is normally the case. Other possibilities include deeper pedagogical discussions about effective teaching (Douglas, 2012; Hattie, 2012) such as the use of specific tools for interrogating shared (perhaps videoed) lessons e.g. lesson study as already noted (Cajkler, et al 2013).

Research at the University of Nottingham's School of Education (Youens et al, 2014) shows that the use of video capture as a tool for reflection on and analysis of classroom practice with an increasing focus on pupil learning can benefit learning and working relations across mentors, HEI tutors and of course student teachers. The Nottingham research demonstrated the 'systemic benefits to the partnership to the quality and nature of relationships between university tutors, mentors and student teachers' and has a 'transformative effect on the quality and nature of school-based discussions'. (p108). It seems too that discussions between mentor, tutor and student disrupt perceived 'hierarchical boundaries' and enable more genuine learning partnerships.

A very interesting study conducted in the Netherlands (Coninx et al, 2013) about giving performance feedback on teacher competence to pre-service teachers offers valuable guidance that would benefit both co-operating teachers and HEI tutors alike, especially if they were to collaborate in such an endeavour. In the Dutch study the authors explain the importance of performance feedback that is immediate, specific and goal-oriented and they describe a system of 'synchronous coaching' – a mechanism for giving immediate on-the-spot feedback about actions and decisions of the pre-service teacher. Their intervention study with 30 student teachers outlines and evaluates the process of using keywords to give immediate feedback to students. We mention this study as an example of the potential basis for professional discussion that might usefully occur among tutors and teachers about how to provide effective feedback on performance. Hudson and others, on the basis of their own empirical findings, point to the need 'to teach co-operating teachers and HEI tutors skills and strategies to facilitate professional conversations that lead towards improving teaching practices' (Hudson, 2014, 71). Peter Hudson refers to the scene of an event like a road accident and the many different observations that can be reported by onlookers requiring independent assessors to determine the reality. The implications of such inconsistencies highlight the need for more than one person providing feedback on the student's pedagogical practices in order to obtain a more balanced view of performance. Several researchers, including the Dutch authors noted above, call for a bank of research-tested mechanisms to assist in the more consistent, valid and equitable provision of feedback.

As far back as the early 1990s researchers advocated that teachers view themselves as co-constructors of knowledge and co-enquirers into practice. Maynard and Furlong (1993, 82) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2000, 55) have argued that mentoring should move away from the uni-directional dispension of wisdom towards shared investigations into pedagogical practice. With particular reference to the US, Zeichner (2006 and 2010) argues for close integration of the SP within ITE programmes and the need for mentoring programmes based on this principle. This attunes well with the Donaldson Report (2011, 90) in Scotland which says that the school experience should do more than merely provide opportunity to acquire classroom skills but should provide 'the opportunity to use practice to explore theory and examine relevant research evidence'. It also attunes well with the policy context in Ireland.

Research by James Conroy and others at the University of Glasgow (Conroy et al, 2013) points to the significance of the 'cultural shift in professional practices' that is needed if theory and practice are to be properly integrated in school placement. They recommend a systematic programme of professional development for all involved in order to maximise the potential of the school placement. This is interesting as their evidence points to the need, not just for professional development for co-operating teachers, but for the HEI tutor as well, since roles, relationships and identities of all are involved in and are pivotal to the coherent support of the student teacher.

2.11. CONCLUSION

Research internationally highlights the importance of SP. Increased time in school, appropriate mentoring, feedback and constructive dialogue would all appear to be important. Good working partnerships between HEI and schools are also vital for the success of the student teacher on SP but the development and sustaining of effective partnership is complex, resource-intensive work.

Having diverse and extensive opportunities to learn the art, craft and science of teaching is important. The extension of the Irish ITE programmes along with the emphasis on contrasting experiences would appear to align very well with the literature. Having the opportunity to work in different settings and with different teachers including co-operating teachers and non-teaching staff exposes students to a range of ideas about learning and being an effective professional and extends their community networks. The opportunity to explore the wider context of the placement setting (Ussher, 2010) encourages student teachers to learn from all of the following: peers, students, school-based staff, parents and university tutors. The diversity of contacts and settings maximzes chances for observations, reflection, theorising and co-constructing knowledge. In addition student teachers need to feel a sense of belonging in the practice school, they need to feel integrated into the culture of the setting which in turn suggests the importance of an extended placement that allows for building strong working relations both with pupils and with staff that can be sustained over a period.

A major message from the diverse, international literature is that both the HEI and the school are fundamental to the professional development of the student teacher and that how they relate, share and integrate their various contributions matters hugely. Both the HEI and the school are needed to enable the integration of theory and practice and the notion that theory is associated with the HEI and practice with the school is totally outmoded since both settings involve both theory and practice. It is vital that assignments and assessments of student teachers are not demarcated as HEI-based or school-based – work set for student teachers should ideally link with both settings.

Opportunity to observe teachers teach is vital but the literature would suggest that on its own it is inadequate. Observation needs to be balanced with opportunities to reflect on and discuss observed practice. This is the hallmark of the reflective practitioner. The literature reviewed would suggest that to be a reflective practitioner, reflection needs to be modelled by the school staff as otherwise it is simply not valued by the student and not taken with them as part of their identity into their future practice.

It would seem that while co-operating teachers tend to have strengths around the 'what' and 'how' of practice, HEI tutors tend to address the 'why'. One recommendation for the development of partnerships is that professional development of the co-operating teacher would focus also on the 'why'. Such work may involve, as in the Dutch example, greater presence of HEI tutors in schools working alongside teachers and student teachers. Any such development would of course have resource implications and the question of resources crops up throughout the literature since quality mentoring inevitably requires investment in those tasked with doing it and it cannot be assumed that good teachers are automatically good mentors for student teachers. Co-operating teachers need ideally to be carefully selected and trained for their roles. Training in mentoring is important but clearly training in matters of research/inquiry and innovative practices would also appear to be relevant in view of tendency of student teachers to want to mimic the practices of their co-operating teachers.

This review highlights significant aspects that are probed further in the fieldwork and reported in later chapters. The next chapter looks in more detail at specific models of placement, drawing on both empirical and policy literature in a number of selected countries. This also helps to examine policies and practices in Ireland.

CHAPTER 3: MODELS OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT: FEATURES OF INTEREST

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In any comparison of models of school placement from other countries, the aim is not to impose ideas in any way, but to consider how aspects of the models might apply in the Irish context. Although we have selected countries and jurisdictions of similar population size to Ireland, we avoid presenting exact comparisons of each case. Rather, we focus here on selected details of policy and practice that we consider to be innovative or of interest, and especially in light of the forthcoming fieldwork aspect of this study. While population size is one starting point for comparison, a second is that the education systems in question are already somewhat familiar to those in the teacher education sector in Ireland for various educational, cultural, historical and linguistic reasons. These are: Scotland, New Zealand, Singapore, Finland, and Western Australia. All have population sizes of 4-5 million, although Western Australia is approximately half of that.

The features of various models regarding school placement that we have chosen to highlight in this chapter are (i) the level of regulation; (ii) the locus of decision-making (iii) details of requirements; (iv) duration, sequence and progression of placement blocks; (v) student teacher tasks and responsibilities; (vi) supervision, assessment and feedback; (vii) roles of co-operating teachers, HEI tutors and others; and finally, (viii) idiosyncratic features of SP that may be relevant to our research.

3.2 REGULATION, LEGISLATION AND AUTONOMY

As the impetus for this research has begun with the regulatory authority for teacher education in Ireland, we sought to ascertain the nature and level of regulation in each of these countries and jurisdictions in the first instance. In light of increased calls for accountability and professionalism in teacher education, regulatory bodies have emerged in many education systems across the globe. With this has come the standardisation and accreditation of programmes of ITE in general, together with specific requirements for school placement in particular. From Scotland's General Teaching Council established in 1965i to the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education in British Columbia, Canadaii, established in 2012, regulatory authorities are a response to public demand for a need to reform, foster, maintain and promote public trust in the teaching profession. Models of school placement lie at the heart of such demands where the theory-practice nexus is played out according to the desired reform of particular times and places.

Many of the teaching councils identified operate within a legislative mandate, such as an education act (e.g., New Zealand, 1989), a teachings act (e.g., British Columbia, 2012iii), a teacher registration act with subsidiary legislation to address the accreditation of initial teacher education (e.g., Western Australia, 2012iv), and relevant updating regarding qualifications (e.g., Finland, 2005; Scotland, 2012v). While specific legislation does not govern ITE in Singapore, the model of practicum is based on a tripartite partnership between

the National Institute of Education, the Ministry of Education and the schools (Kwong, personal communication, 17 Dec 2014)

3.3 LOCUS OF DECISION MAKING IN RELATION TO SP

Models of school placement generally emerge from a process whereby the regulatory authorities accredit the ITE programmes offered by the various providers through validation and review. Typically then, the regulatory authority proposes the broad outline while the provider—a university—presents the detail according to the programme's rationale. The number of providers varies in proportion to the population depending on the country or jurisdiction. In Scotland (5.3m), for example, there are 8 approved providers in the university system for primary and secondary teaching, and 1 approved university from outside Scotlandvi, in New Zealand (4.47m) there are 16. Singapore (5.3m) has just 1 HEI for teacher education while Finland (5.4m) has 8, and Western Australia (2.5m) has 5. The extent to which the frameworks proposed by the regulatory authorities are interpreted by the ITE provider and in turn, interpreted by the main actors: student teachers, co-operating teachers and HEI tutors, is a function not only of the number of providers within the jurisdiction or country, but as we have already emphasised, the particular social and cultural norms of the society in question.

The idea of setting up a Teaching Council first emerged in Scotland in 1961 and this was formalised in the passing of the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act in 1965 when concerns were expressed about unqualified teachers working in schools and the lowering of entry requirements to the profession. Over the years, the powers, remits and duties of the Council have progressed through the passing of other legislation relating to higher education as well as standards in schools. In Scotland, it is a legal requirement for all teachers to be registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland (The Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005)vii.

The National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore is the sole teacher preparation institute in the country. Singapore is a centralised city state where high-stakes examinations provide the main driver for student success. Morris and Patterson (2013) report that teachers are selected from the top third of the academic cohort and only one in 10 applicants are admitted. Teachers are valued by Singapore society and successive policies have built on this culture. To this end, teachers are paid during their studies and 75% of course fees are subsidised for those studying for a master's degree. Teachers are also paid some stipend every five years.

In contrast to Singapore, external standardised student testing does not drive the education system in Finland and neither does it employ a rigorous inspection system; rather, the Finnish system relies on the expertise and accountability of teachers who are knowledgeable and committed to their students (Sahlberg, 2010). However, similar to Singapore, the work of teachers is highly valued and respected in Finnish society. The national administration of education and training has a two-tier structure: the Ministry of Education and Culture is the highest authority and is responsible for all publicly funded education in Finland while the Finnish National Board of Education is the national development agency responsible for primary and secondary educationviii.

The Education Council New Zealand (New Zealand Teachers Council until July 2015 [])was established as a Crown Entity in 2002 and although teacher educators are not represented on its governing body, they have played active roles in the development of the Council's Code of Ethics (2004) and the Graduating Standards for Teachers (2007/2015). It is with respect to this latter document that new and existing programmes are approved, monitored and reviewed. Within this, seven major standards under three broad headings (professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional values and relationships) are identified. Institutions are required to demonstrate how their programmes meet these standards within the conceptual frameworks of their individual programmes. Alcorn (2014) reports that there has been ongoing tension around the cost and prescriptiveness of the approval processes and efforts by the NZTC to control issues such as student selection and practicum organisation (NZTC, 2010), creating a perception that institutional quality assurance processes are less relevant (Alcorn, 2014).

3.4 DETAILS OF REQUIREMENTS: FROM GENERAL TO PARTICULAR

In Scotland, the Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR) specifies what is expected of a student teacher seeking provisional registration with General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS). The SPR draws from the standard for (full) registration and is differentiated according to expectations of student teachers. The SPR is presented as three broad, intersecting areas that address: (i) Professional values and personal commitment; (ii) Professional knowledge and understanding (comprising curriculum; education systems and professional responsibilities; and pedagogical theories and practice) and (iii) Professional skills and abilities (comprising teaching and learning; classroom organisation and management; pupil assessment and professional reflection and communication). These requirements are prescribed in a very detailed way in the guidelines for approval of programmes of ITE.

In Australia, professional standards for teachers are provided at state and federal levels. In Western Australia, the standards encompass three broad areas: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. Similar to Scotland, each of these is subdivided into more specific standards that address planning, preparation, relationships, and teaching and learning. An example of the further subdivision of this document may be found in the handbooks of one of the university providers, e.g., the University of Notre Dame. Here the Professional Experience Programme (school placement) is structured in such a way as to ensure that student teachers develop the domains of knowledge, practice and commitment documented in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (University of Notre Dame, 2014ix).

In New Zealand, the Graduating Teacher Standards are specified by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2015). Again, similarities with Scotland and Australia can be observed in the structure which is presented as: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Values and Relationships, encompassing seven specific standards that are presented in poster format and are therefore readily accessible for teachers

In Finland, while there are no prescribed standards for trainee teachers, there are three national curricula: Core curriculum for pre-school Education (2003), Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) and Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School (2003) which

schools adhere to very closely. At the same time, teachers have a high degree of autonomy in Finland and are trusted to deliver the best possible education for their pupils. Nevertheless, universities collaborate to some extent in establishing agreed criteria for school placement (e.g., the Finnish TTS network [FTTS, 2011]). As Raiker (2011, p. 6) observes:

The general view in Finland is that teacher education is best delivered through universities organising and controlling teaching practice through on-site or proximal TTSs. This approach is underpinned by a philosophy based on social metapractices evolving from European traditions of education and socio-political developments in the Nordic countries…

Thus, we see in this example from Jyväskylä Teacher Training Schoolx, the thrust and detail of the SP programme lies with the university. Here, as in other TTSs in Finland, emphasis is placed on the application of theoretical knowledge to practice in a functional connection between the teacher training school and the department of teacher education. Teaching practice follows an experimental approach where the teacher trainees research their own work and the process is supported by well-qualified and experienced supervisors. As stated in Jyväskylä Teacher Training School (2012):

The three central elements in teacher education are theory, practice and experience. That is also why constant self-reflection is an important part of the studies. The purpose of the academic teacher education is to examine these elements and their relations. These relations form the core of the studies on all courses, especially in the instructed practices.

In Singapore the NIE provides formal teacher education within an academic setting, and schools take on a more active role in practicum, school connections, and other collaborations that strengthen the link between university-based learning and real classroom settings (Tan, Liu & Low, 2012). The other critical and essential feature of this model is that it is more research-driven and evidence-based, and is therefore more responsive to school and practitioner needs in terms of key concerns within the school setting. The NIE's enhanced practicum model is built on five key tenets which state that practicum is: an integrated part of a coherent program; provides opportunities for purposeful mentoring from experienced teachers and university supervisors; allows preservice teachers to develop their teaching competency through graduated responsibility and opportunities for practice; assessed through clearly defined standards that go beyond pedagogical content knowledge; and, strives to develop thinking teachers with the use of planned and structured reflections, and focused professional conversations.

3.5 DURATION, SEQUENCE AND PROGRESSION OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Aside from Finland where the standard qualification for initial teacher education is at master's level in a 5-year programme, the standard entry to teacher education qualification is largely through undergraduate (3 or 4 year) programmes and postgraduate (1 or 2 year) programmes at primary and secondary levels. Several countries require up to 30 weeks of school placement over the course of four-year programmes. In postgraduate programmes, the specified number of weeks ranges from a minimum of 7 weeks (in Western Australia), to 14 (in NZ) or up to 50% of the programme (i.e. 18 weeks in Scotland). Generally speaking, SP experiences are designed to be progressive in nature with task expectations moving from

observation in the first experience to later, working in small groups. Midway through the placements, a teaching load of 50% may be expected and this progresses to 90% of the teaching load in close collaboration with the co-operating teacher by the end of year 4. Graduate programmes typically present a more compact version of this model. The assumption of responsibility for 100% of the teaching load does not appear to exist in the models studied, even if student teachers are prepared to assume such responsibility on completion of their programmes.

In Scotland, for four-year programmes, it is required that at least 30 weeks be devoted to school/educational placement experience, and further, that more than half of this experience occur in the final two years of the programme, with a substantial block taking place in the last year. Blocks of practice are also required for the 36-week full-time postgraduate programme, where a block of at least four weeks is required to take place towards the end of the programme.

Blocks of placement also prevail in Finland as the example from the University of Jyväskylä (Table 1) illustrates below. Since 1979, the standard qualification for teachers in Finland is a master's degree completed over five years, and thus school placement reflects this model.

Table 3.1: Finland: University of Jyväskylä 4-year programme

Example of a 4-year programme	
Year 1:	108 hrs = c20 days = c4 weeks
Year 2:	81 hrs = 15 days = 3 weeks
Year 3:	81 hrs = 15 days = 3 weeks
Year 4:	270 hours = 50 days = 10 weeks
Year 5:	162 hours = 30 days = 6 weeks
Total:	26 weeks

New Zealand specifies a minimum of 20 weeks of practicum across a 3 or 4 year programme, and a minimum of 14 weeks of practicum in a one-year programme. Block placements are again specified for ITE providers where they are required to include at least one, 3-week (minimum length) block of practicum in the first two years of 3 or 4 year programmes. To enable student teachers to demonstrate sustainability in their final teaching practicum, there must be a minimum block of three weeks, with a total practicum time of five weeks all in the same school or centre. This enables a model of single whole days spread across a number of weeks in conjunction with a three week block (NZTC, 2014).

For accreditation at state level, Western Australia requires programmes at graduate or u/g level to have at least 45 days satisfactory supervised teaching practice undertaken at a primary or secondary school, or other recognised educational venue in order to meet accreditation requirements. This is interpreted differently by the university providers however, as can be seen from the examples of the University of Notre Dame and Edith Cowan University (Table 2). In both cases, the placement duration is well beyond the minimum requirements.

Table 3.2: Western Australia: 4-year programme

University of Notre Dame	Edith Cowan University
1st yr – Semester 1: 1 week	1st yr Semester 2: 3 week block
2nd yr – Semester 2: 9 week block	2nd yr Semester 2: 5 week block
3rd yr – Semester 2: 10 week block	3rd yr Semester 2: 6 week block
4th yr – Semester 2: 10 week block	4th yr Semester 1: 10 week block
Total: 30 weeks	Total: 24 weeks
Graduate Programme: 10 week block	Graduate programme: 7 week block

In Singapore the practicum at NIE generally takes the form of a shorter period of placement in schools for "school experience" and "teaching assistantship", and longer durations for block teaching. The duration of each component varies from programme to programme and at different stages of the initial teacher preparation (Kwong, 2014) (See Table 3 below). Student teachers are attached to schools for blocks of time so that they can develop teaching competencies in a variety of contexts and at different levels.

Table 3.3: Singapore: Example of a 4-year programme at NIE

Year	Detail
1st yr: School Experience (SE)	1 week in a primary school, 1 week in a secondary school, both after the first year of study; no teaching is involved Purpose: to provide student teachers opportunities to observe lessons in the primary and secondary classrooms
2nd yr: Teaching Assistantship (TA)	5 weeks in either a primary or secondary school depending on specialisation track; assisting school teacher in doing some teaching Purpose: to provide student teachers opportunities to observe their Cooperating Teachers (CTs) teach and to reflect on the roles and responsibilities of a teacher. They will also be given the practical experience of helping their CTs plan lessons, prepare resources, manage pupils and to do some assisted teaching.
3rd yr: Teaching Practice 1 (TP1)	5 weeks; independent teaching begins Purpose: to help student teachers to begin to teach independently. They learn to plan their own lessons to teach, prepare relevant resources and to manage pupils independently while still being able to consult their CTs and to observe their CTs teach.
4th yr: Final Teaching Practicum	10 weeks in the second semester in year 4 Purpose: Besides focusing on independent teaching, TP2 allows for a more holistic school attachment experience which includes exploring other aspects of a teacher's life, such as, the management of CCAs.
	Total: 30 weeks

Liu, Tan & Salleh (2014) report that

> Although the term 'teaching practice' is in use in NIE, the NIE practicum model sees teaching as a complex 'professional thinking activity (Calderhead, 1987), where emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice, and at the same time reflect about their practice and their profession. The practicum provides a platform for inquiry, for trying ideas, and for talking about teaching and learning with their peers and their mentors (e.g., Shultz, 2005).

3.6 RANGE AND DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES

The New Zealand Teachers Council specifies that student teachers must experience practicum placements across a range of socioeconomic, cultural and (ECE/school) learner age settings. The extent to which this objective is realised in other settings is unclear.

According to Raiker (2011), the concept of diversity is relatively new in Finnish pedagogy. However, with the changing demographics in Helsinki and the more densely populated South West of Finland has seen increasing immigration. As a result, faculties of education have begun to use municipal schools as well as university teacher training schools for placements to ensure that student teachers have experience of teaching pupils from diverse backgrounds. Thus, there appears to be a move, at least at policy level, to partially "outsource" school placement to schools other than those connected directly with the Teacher Training colleges to locally run schools. According to the Ministry of Education, Finland, (2007) partial outsourcing of teaching practice is seen as desirable in bringing increased diversity to the placement experience.

3.7 STUDENT TEACHER TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The breadth of student tasks and responsibilities is specified by many of the regulatory authorities. The General Teaching Council Scotland for example requires ITE programmes to develop in student teachers broad knowledge of the nature and range of additional support needs, effective ways of supporting those with such needs and knowledge of inclusion and equalities legislation in Scotland. Specifically, it states that school experience placements must provide the practical context to illustrate and develop the skills, understanding and content being developed in the ITE programme.

In New Zealand, the NZTC (2014) requests that practical teaching experiences must provide evidence that the student teacher has been actively supported to: integrate theory and practice throughout the programme, to plan, implement, assess, evaluate and reflect on their teaching practices, to analyse and interpret practices they observe in schools or ECE centres in relation to research, theories and other knowledge gained throughout the programme, to reflect on their own learning and practice to develop personal and professional goals.

In Singapore, student teachers at the NIE are given specific observation and reflection tasks in the newly-enhanced programme to help them make theory-practice connections (Kwong, 2014).

Student placement handbooks from the University of Notre Dame, Western Australia, illustrate the detail of tasks required by students in the first days of the first week of placement, and thereafter for each week of each placement. Guided observations, analysis and reflection support the student teacher in assuming ownership of and responsibility for their learning, even when placed up to 3,000km from their home ITE institution.

3.8 SUPERVISION, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

In New Zealand the Teachers Council's (2014) requirements are that a student teacher be visited on a number of occasions in the first two years of a 3-year programme, and the first three years of a 4-year programme to observe the student teacher teaching and across transitions in the programme/day routines. In the final year of the programme visits are normally expected to be of a longer period of time, on at least three occasions.

NZTC also specifies that the major proportion of visits on school placement be conducted by teacher educators who teach in the ITE programme in which the student teacher is enrolled, and that all visiting lecturers/staff must be ITE staff who are teachers registered in New Zealand. Furthermore, in order to underline the importance of the partnership model of school placement, and to establish meaningful and genuine dialogue with the associate (co-operating) teacher, the ITE provider is required to provide a briefing on the focus and context of the practicum for the associate teacher/s involved in the practicum. A focus on working effectively with adult learners is required as part of this advice.

In Western Australia, the specific roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in SP can be found in the university handbooks, for example, the University of Notre Dame's Professional Experience Handbook (2014). Here the roles of all personnel are outlined in detail: the Preservice Teacher, the Supervising Teacher (co-operating teacher), the Tertiary Supervisor (HEI tutor), the Head of Professional Practice (HoPP) and the Professional Experience Office. Aside from the usual matters of planning, teaching and learning, and professionalism, the co-operating teacher is expected to provide timely oral and written feedback to the Preservice Teacher regarding teaching and learning outcomes and recommendations for development; communicate with the HoPP or Tertiary Supervisor and advise him/her about the Preservice Teacher's performance, especially where there are concerns about unsatisfactory progress (At Risk) in terms of meeting Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – (Graduate); and complete Interim and Final Evaluation Forms of the Preservice Teacher's performance (University of Notre Dame, 2014, p. 7)

The role of Head of Professional Practice or HoPP fulfils the function of the HEI tutor when a school is located at considerable distance from the ITE. The HoPP plays a pivotal role in enhancing the learning, teaching and professional development of the student teacher and is the first point of contact for co-operating teachers. As well as coordinating the induction of the student teacher into the school, the HoPP liaises with the co-operating teacher regarding the progress of the student teacher and supports the co-operating teacher in arriving at a consensus decision for the student teacher's final grade and the compilation of the written final evaluation form (UND, 2014).

In Finland the work of the supervisor draws on one's own profession as a teacher; on the

aims that are strived for in the classroom, and on how the work takes place (Kalaja, 2012). In terms of role, the supervisor is expected to know himself/herself and to be conscious of his or values and ideals in order to be able to guide others objectively. The task is part of a national educational endeavour which is mindful of the potential of the new teacher and the influence he/she will have over the course of a career.

The supervisory relationship is defined by common values and aims of the community as well as those of the curricula. The supervision is based on each student's individual starting point and capabilities. It is considered dialogic in nature, respectful of matters of confidentiality, and consists of reflecting and reasoning together. Guidance is offered in a manner that mirrors learning in the classroom, where reflection and thinking are considered essential for one's personal growth. It is believed that the notion of "a good teacher" cannot be taught or imitated, rather is co-constructed in the dialogic space between the supervisor and student. In this process, the student teacher receives feedback before, during and after teaching. He or she can also give feedback on his/her experience and this feedback is reclaimed in developing future actions.

In the NIE in Singapore, feedback is offered by NIE supervisors, co-operating teachers, co-ordinating mentors, and other experienced teachers. Here, the provision of frequent formative feedback is considered to be at the heart the NIE practicum model. The feedback model is a three-stage clinical one involving a pre-observation conference, an observation of the lesson itself and a feedback conference. Supervisors use the Assessment of Performance in Teaching (APT) form to guide their observations. The purpose of the APT form is to provide student teachers with "an objective and accurate account of the lesson under observation" which then forms the basis for further discussion in a post-lesson conference (Liu et al, 2014, p. 117).

3.9 ROLES OF CO-OPERATING TEACHERS, HEIS TUTORS AND OTHERS

The most recent policy developments in Scotland reflect a renewed commitment to partnership models between schools and education authorities. The GTCS (2014) notes that within partnerships, placements must be jointly planned with the roles and responsibilities of staff clearly defined. It is recognised that each of the partners has particular priorities, roles and responsibilities and these are delineated in documents such as Teaching Scotland's Future (Donaldson, Scottish Government, 2011) and Teaching Scotland's Future – National Partnership Group: Report to Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Scottish Government, 2012). In the latter document it is envisaged, for example, that school based staff would have "the prime role in the assessment of students while on placement". The report goes on to say that "local partnerships will determine whether this role should be given to teachers or university staff embedded within schools or an authority". Ultimately, the GTCS and the Scottish Government are committed to keeping the quality of arrangements for partnership under consideration (GTCS, 2013).

Similarly, in New Zealand, the school placement is underpinned by a partnership model between the ITE provider and a fully registered associate teacher. Roles are made explicit, and throughout the experience, the student is actively supported to achieve the aims of the programme. Student teachers are assessed by the visiting lecturer (HEI tutor) in consultation with the associate (co-operating) teacher. To enable associate teachers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, CPD is provided by the ITE institution.

In the NIE's enhanced practicum model in Singapore, school-based mentors play a significant role in helping to prepare and develop the pre-service teachers. During practicum, student teachers are supported by purposeful mentoring from experienced teachers, known as cooperating teachers (CTs) (who are not paid for their work), through modelling, co-planning, systematic observations, repeated opportunities for practice, and frequent feedback. Student teachers are also guided by School Coordinating Mentors (SCMs) through structured reflections and professional conversations. In addition, their university-based supervisors provide focused supervision, systematic observations, and regular feedback.

3.10 OTHER IDIOSYNCRATIC FEATURES OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT

COORDINATION OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT

In the University of Notre Dame (2014xi), Australia, the Professional Experience (School Placement) Office Staff are delegated by the Dean of Education to organise placements for Professional Experiences. Preservice Teachers are not permitted to approach Schools/Principals/Teachers independently. Preservice Teachers are given the opportunity to list preferences and conflicts of interest. Preservice Teachers are required to complete a Preference, Conflict of Interest and Subject Form (PCS Form) on enrolment.

In June 2012, GTC Scotland assumed responsibility for the system of placing students undertaking Initial Teacher Education courses into schools. For the past eight years this has been done through the Practicum system. Practicum has now been completely replaced by the new Student Placement System (SPS) which went live on 19 May 2014xii. The new system incorporates:

- The facility to calculate journey times by both private and public transport
- Ability to match students to suitable schools according to University set criteria
- A set of processes and procedures which will ensure that Local Authority Coordinators maintain control and management of their placements
- A number of automated processes within the system to facilitate efficient and transparent communication through the use of automated emails
- The facility to run statistical reports allowing for analysis and trend spotting
- A dedicated training environment for users
- The creation of dashboard style interfaces for different user roles to facilitate data management and system processes

SPS is designed to be intuitive and highly user-friendly, able to integrate with other GTCS systems and processes whilst coping with new models for placing students which are important because of the changing landscape within Scottish education, post-Donaldson (2011).

PRE-PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

In the one-year Postgraduate diploma (PGDE) in Singapore, there is only one block of teaching. However, student teachers in the PGDE programme are attached to schools for the

'Enhanced school experience' before the formal teacher education programme commences. This experience, which is structured like an early clinical experience, provides an image of what teaching involves and requires. It also helps the student teachers make sense of how the theories they learn subsequently in their coursework fit in the process of developing their practice.

SCHOOL PLACEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Australia, Supervising Preservice Teachers is a nationally delivered, online professional learning programme for Australian teachers. It aims to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively supervise preservice teachers. The Supervising Preservice Teacher program was developed in partnership with the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) and the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) and launched in April 2013. Registration is free for Australian school education professionals. Supervising Preservice Teachers is made up of 4 online, flexible learning modules which gives teachers the knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively supervise preservice teachers (AITSL, 2014xiii). In 2015, an independent evaluation of this project reported that respondents found that the online medium was an accessible and appropriate format to deliver consistent training nationally. Moreover, teachers reported that the programme improved their capacity to support preservice teachers and provided them with greater confidence to do so (AITSL, 2015)xiv.

In Singapore the NIE works closely with the School Coordinating Mentors, CTs and NIE supervisors through orientation, workshops, learning forums, focused group discussions and on-going interactions to ensure that the school-based mentors and university–based supervisors share the philosophy of NIE's teacher education programme and the vision of developing a thinking teacher, and that they are clear about the goals of the clinical experience and understand the structure and process of practicum. In fact, many school-based mentors are senior teachers who have gone through a six-week full-time Senior Teacher Course, which provided them with an in-depth understanding of what their pre-service teachers are learning in the teacher education programme. The theory-practice link is strengthened when these mentors are able to impart theoretical understanding of practice that is consistent with what their pre-service teachers have learned in their courses" (Liu, Tan, & Salleh, 2014).

3.11 SUMMARY

This section drew attention to issues of regulation of school placement, the implementation of requirements, the duration, sequence and nature of programmes, expectations of student teachers and the roles of co-operating teachers in the process. Common features that are evident across various jurisdictions are:

- Regulation of teacher education that is underpinned by specific legislation;
- Extended programmes of initial teacher education with concomitant, extended block placements;
- Expectations of teachers as supporters and supervisors of student teachers, and as enablers of professional conversations as part of their duties and responsibilities;
- Partnership between schools and HEIs as an essential element in realising the aims and ambitions of SP.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research design for the School Placement in Initial Teacher Education (SPITE) study. It starts by offering the reader an overview of the scale and scope of the study. This takes the format of two large tables, one prose-based, detailing the various questions and issues the research sought to address alongside their associated research objectives and research methods; the second table offering a sense of the scale of data collected. The chapter then goes on to describe the components of the study: the desk-based review of literature; rounds one and two fieldwork; and cases/samples of good practice. The chapter explains the sampling process, the data gathering and analysis methods, including piloting and revision of instruments. It provides some information on the background of participants and finally reports on quality assurance and ethics.

4.2 SCALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Table 4.1 shows the key aims and tasks of the study, along with the objectives, and questions to be addressed. The nature and scale of the evidence sought to address these issues is also indicated. Table 4.2 indicates the scale and scope of data collection but see the description for additional fieldwork later in the chapter. Table 4.3 summarises the samples and scale of evidence by each case setting separately. This duplicates detail in Table 4.2 but it provides an overview regarding each case over the period of the project. A rationale and description of the key elements of the study follow on from these tables.

Table 4.1: Aims, Objectives/Questions, Evidence and Research Methods

Key Aims/Tasks	Objectives	Source of Evidence	Research Methods
1. Review existing documentary and research literature **(e.g. Teaching Council documentation as well as international published literature on school placement)**	To examine and synthesise existing policy, empirical, and theoretical literature, from national and international sources, relevant to the placement component in initial teacher education, including studies that would illuminate good practice.	Lit Review and Documentary Analysis	**Searching, assembling, analysing and synthesising existing, relevant policies, perspectives, and empirical findings relevant to school placement.**
2. Investigate evidence of current practice of school placement	To describe and analyse practices used in schools (e.g. time spent on placement; number of visits from tutors; nature of feedback from tutors and co-operating teachers; nature of relationships between supervisors and co-operating teachers; HEIs and schools more broadly?) To provide evidence of how practice aligns with TC policy specifically in relation to opportunities to observe and participate in wider aspects of school life. To evidence experiences students have on placement and to compare this across settings e.g. primary/post-primary. To track any	Rounds 1 (2015/16) and 2 (2017) Fieldwork: Surveys, Interviews, Observations	**Interviews and questionnaire surveys with student teachers, HEI tutors, co-operating teachers, and school principals; where possible the same HEI tutors were interviewed twice over the period of the study to track any changes. Other groups were interviewed / surveyed twice over the period of the study. Observations of supervisory/feedback sessions with students. Interviews with students and tutors and co-operating teachers.** **Focus group interviews were convened as far as possible with the same participants one year later to track attitudes and experiences over time.**

	changes in approaches and practices and to identify the main factors influencing change, development and sustainability issues.		**As above.**
3. Examine the range and type of professional development experiences made available to tutors and co-operating teachers	To provide data on CPD to promote effective supervision and support for the student teacher on placement and to explore extent to which such provision is offered to tutors and co-operating teachers together.	Rounds 1 and 2 Fieldwork (Surveys, Interviews)	**Mainly semi-structured interviews and surveys of stakeholders.**
4. Investigate how different key groups i.e. students, co-operating teachers, tutors, including Directors of School Placement, and principals experience the new arrangements for placement.	To provide evidence of the attitudes, understandings, views of these groups about their particular experience of the new practices, in particular evidence of how effective they felt their experience of placement (or supporting placement) was. To provide evidence of the nature of non-teaching activities which student teachers experience To track the extent to which these experiences, attitudes and views change over the phases of the study.	Rounds 1 and 2 Fieldwork	**Interview data primarily but some evidence from Questionnaire Surveys also** **Comparative analysis over the period of the study. Focus group interviews with mostly the same participants enabled tracking of attitudes and experiences.**

5. Identify examples of good practice that might usefully be shared across HEIs and schools paying attention to harmonised approaches that can take account of the diversity of providers.	To examine practice in light of TC policy guidelines, in light of existing research literature, and in light of current school and HEI realities and to provide portrayals of effective practice across the sectors that could be used as case study material for professional development.	Rounds 1 and 2 Fieldwork + Case Based Additional Component	**Based on analysis of fieldwork data and examples sought / offered**
6. Examine the effectiveness of the new partnership model of school placement as it evolves and the extent to which there is a harmonious approach nationally or regionally	To establish how schools and HEIs have adhered to the TC requirements and guidelines. To establish the degree to which students, co-operating teachers and HEI tutors believe student teachers are well prepared for their chosen career.	Rounds 1 and 2 Fieldwork	**Focus group interviews, questionnaire survey data and evidence from observations.**

7. Make recommendations to Council in the context of review of policy with particular reference to specified aspects: minimum duration of the extended placement in the second half of the programme; minimum period of time on direct teaching; nature of non-teaching activities; appropriate settings; practical innovations to improve placement experience and process.	**To provide evidence of stakeholder perceptions on these particular issues.** **Based on the systematic evidence assembled and analysed, provide empirically-grounded recommendations to the Council.**	**All components**

Table 4.2: Breakdown of Evidence by Case Settings: Round 1 (R1) and Round 2 (R2) Fieldwork

Cases	Prim	Post Prim	Consec	Concur	N Interv's N of tutors represt'd R1(R2)	N Interv's N of STs represt'd R1(R2)	N Interv's N of CTs represt'd R1(R2)	N Interv's Prins R1(R2)	N Q's HEI tutors R1(R2)	N Q's STs R1(R2)	N Q's CTs R1(R2)	N Q's? Prins/DP R1(R2)
1 A	√			√	2 (2)	11 (6)	6 (4)	2 (2)	54 (44)	60 (149)	6 (*)	1 (2)
2 B	√			√	13 (6)	12 (0)	8 (6)	3 (1)	13 (6)	11 (25)	5 (*)	2 (0)
3 C	√		√	√	12 (2)	14 (8) +13****	2 (6)	2 (3)	14 (6)	40 (58)	0 (*)	0 (0)
4 D		√	√***	√	6 (4)	34 (10)	3 (2)	1 (1)	18 (1)	24 (10)	1 (*)	1 (0)
5 E		√		√	7 (13)	12 (16)	3 (4)	2 (2)	1 (13)	34 (94)	2 (*)	0 (2)
6 F		√	√		12 (10)	12 (12)	14 (6)	1 (1)	12 (10)	66 (74)	3 (*)	2 (0)
Totals					51+36	95+65	36+28	11+10	112 (80)	235 (410)	17+50	6+4
Grand Totals					**87**	**160**	**64**	**21**	**192**	**645**	**67**	**10+18****

* In total 50 CTs completed questionnaires in Round 2, the majority of whom took students from more than one ITE provider though all six of our sites are well represented in the sample.

**18 Principals/DPs completed questionnaires but these respondents were not specifically chosen because they were attached to these case study programmes. See full explanation below.

***The ST evidence from this site is from students on a concurrent programme in both rounds of fieldwork. However, the tutors typically worked on their consecutive and concurrent programme and thus commented on both as appropriate in interviews.

****13 student interviews were from PME Primary

Table 4.3: Overview of Samples and Evidence

	Represented Programme	Interview Data	Questionnaire Data
Case A	Primary Concurrent		
HEI tutors		4	98
STs		17	209
CTs		10	6
Prins/DPs		4	3
Case B	Primary Concurrent		
HEI tutors		19	19
STs		12	36
CTs		14	5
Prins/DPs		4	2
Case C	Primary Concurrent and Primary Consecutive		
HEI tutors		14	20
STs		35	98
CTs		8	0*
Prins/DPs		5	0
Case D	PP Concurrent and Consecutive		
HEI tutors		10	19
STs		44	34
CTs		5	1
Prins/DPs		2	1
Case E	PP Concurrent (and PP Consecutive)		
HEI tutors		20	14
STs		28	128
CTs		7	2
Prins/DPs		4	2
Case F	PP Concurrent		
HEI tutors		22	22
STs		24	140
CTs		20	3
Prins/DPs		2	2

*see first footnote to Table 4.2

4.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted to inform all aspects of the fieldwork but also to establish what was known internationally (and nationally) about the importance, nature and approaches to school placement in initial teacher education. Research that would shed light on effective practice was particularly relevant to the searching and analysis of studies. Thus, existing policy, empirical, and theoretical literature, from national and international sources, relevant to the placement component in ITE, including studies that illuminated good practice, were examined and synthesised. The review started in 2014, early in the life of the project, and was developed over time. Chapter 2 represents an up-to-date synthesis of the current state of the evidence on SP, with particular reference to influences on the success of the placement experience. To illustrate some of the policies on SP in other countries a documentary analysis of policies on SP in a selected number of countries was also undertaken and this is reported on in Chapter 3.

4.4 ROUNDS 1 AND 2 FIELDWORK: SAMPLING, INSTRUMENT DESIGN, PILOTING

Given the aims and objectives as outlined in Table 4.1, we sought to represent the range of ITE provision across Ireland. We sought to do this in a way that would be manageable in terms of data analysis within the timescale and resources of the project, and sufficiently representative to enable us to draw reliable conclusions based on the evidence assembled and analysed. The intention was to provide empirically-grounded recommendations to the Teaching Council on these on various aspects of SP.

Clearly, it was important to include the key participants associated with SP in the study, namely, student teachers (STs), HEI tutors, co-operating teachers (CTs) and school principals. Their views and experiences were central to addressing the issues and questions listed in Table 4.1. It was decided to use case study methodology to investigate the perspectives and experiences of these groups and to capture data from them on two occasions over the period of the study, with a view to assessing the extent to which the new arrangements on SP were bedding down. What we did not, could not, set out to do was conduct separate case studies of particular programmes with a view to profiling each programme as an entity. Practically and ethically this would have been very problematic, a point returned to below.

Six different programmes in six different HEIs were finally selected on the grounds that, while all providers were at an early stage in adopting the new changes, these programmes had a sufficiently developed structure for us to expect continuity of commitment to the project over the study period. We also targeted a seventh programme as security in the event of one of the six programme sites not being able or willing to continue through with both rounds of fieldwork. Initially leaders associated with that seventh programme agreed to participate but despite high levels of contact with it subsequently, that provider did not participate in any round of fieldwork. Another important criterion in selecting the participating programmes was that the main settings in which ITE occurs should be represented: primary/post-primary; consecutive/concurrent; undergraduate/postgraduate, specialist/mainstream; Dublin/outside the capital. We aimed for a range of types of providers and a geographical spread. Thus, a sample with a diversity of settings was secured which represented the range of provision nationally. The identity of ITE programmes finally selected remains confidential to the

research team. Their main characteristics for the purposes of the study are summarised above in Table 4.2.

As the fieldwork progressed it became clear that while we had identified 6 programmes (3 primary and 3 post primary) we had the opportunity to represent additional programmes since HEI tutors in particular (but also school staff) had experience of taking students from that setting who were on consecutive and concurrent programmes. In those cases (see Table 4.3) we took advantage of the additional information that was offered by HEI tutors, most of whom appeared to tutor consecutive and concurrent STs on SP. So for instance, Case 3 allowed us to collect data bearing on primary consecutive and primary concurrent programmes and in this case we interviewed samples of STs on both programmes.

Within each of the six settings agreement was forthcoming from leaders and directors of SP that access to the key groups noted above would be feasible. The perspectives and experiences of these groups would be the major, but not the only, source of information in the study.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were prepared and piloted in the light of the ongoing literature being reviewed, the new policy on SP in Ireland, and feedback from members of the Teaching Council and from volunteers who formed part of the pilot studies of the instruments but who were not part of the main study. Data collection instruments went through several iterations and with some changes introduced in the second round of fieldwork, mostly changes to better clarify questionnaire items but also to add some new items such as whether or not student teachers were doing extra teaching in schools beyond the requirements of their HEI and being paid for same.

Major areas featuring in all instruments adhere to the aims and objectives noted above in Table 4.1, for example the following:

- Securing School Placements
- The 10-week block (extended SP)
- Feedback and Assessment
- Observation of Practice
- Reflective Practice
- Contribution to the school
- Links between HEI and schools (Partnerships)

4.5 ROUND 1 AND 2 FIELDWORK: DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE IN MAIN CASE SETTINGS

Fieldwork began towards the end of the 2014 calendar year and ended at the beginning of the 2018 calendar year. Table 4.4 reveals the sequence and nature of data gathering in each round of fieldwork. In the case of each 'visit' (with the exception of the courtesy visit) for round

one fieldwork, we aimed for two members of the research team to do the fieldwork together. This happened in most cases and it proved helpful in checking consistency, in ensuring quality in our procedures, and in conducting preliminary analysis. Some visits involved the teams in several days of fieldwork. In round two fieldwork it was not feasible to always have pairs of data gatherers working together and in any case the need for such checking could be done within our own research meetings at that stage.

The timing was of fieldwork was designed to understand experiences and to capture any changes and developments over the four year period of the study. The research team met to discuss emerging issues and to identify themes to be explored in subsequent interviews. The repeated cycle of data collection and analysis is characteristic of an interpretive approach to research (Mertens, 2005). The semi-structured format ensured consistency between interviewers, whilst allowing individual issues to arise and be followed up. Typically interviews were extensive and in-depth, taking up to an hour to conduct, especially in the case of HEI tutors and STs. As in the case of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were also piloted with small groups who were not then part of the main study.

Table 4.4 Data Gathering Schedule in Each HEI / Programme for each of the two Rounds of Fieldwork

Visit 1 (Year 1 only, 2014)	Courtesy visit Explained the purpose of the study and negotiated access for all the relevant data gathering including questionnaire surveys Liaised with the contact person in the HEI, in all cases the Director of SP Agreed provisionally procedures with relevant staff, including the ethical procedures
Visit 2: 2015/16 (HEI setting)	Conducted interviews with HEI tutors Conducted interviews with student teachers Administered survey questionnaires to student teachers Distribution and collection of survey questionnaires (HEI tutors) Collected programme documents
Visit 2 2015/16 (School setting)	Conducted interviews with co-operating teachers Conducted interviews with school principals Conducted school observations visits / de-briefs Collected any relevant school documents relating to SP
Visit 3 2016/17 (HEI setting)	Conducted interviews with HEI tutors Conducted interviews with student teachers Distribution and collection of survey questionnaires to various cohorts on ITE programmes Distribution and collection of survey questionnaires (HEI tutors) Collected programme documents
Visit 4 2016 through end '17 (School setting)	Conducted interviews with co-operating teachers Conducted one-to-one interviews with school principals Conducted school observations visits / de-briefs Collected any relevant school documents relating to SP

4.6 RESPONSE RATES AND ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

As indicated in Table 4.1, a vast amount of qualitative and quantitative data was collected, considerably more than initially planned in some respects. In addition to interview and questionnaire surveys, 7 debriefing sessions were observed by two researchers in each case – this and other lines of data are not listed in Table 4.2 but see below. There are various reasons for seeking additional sources of data. In the case of round two fieldwork it proved extremely difficult to get access to some groups. The team was dependent on their contacts in the HEIs to gain access to relevant schools for data gathering from CTs and principals and on occasions when nominations were made and particular schools contacted by the team, permission was not forthcoming for the conduct of interviews at school level. There is no doubt that participation in round one fieldwork involved intensive negotiation and work on our part but more importantly on the part of our link people at the HEI. Participation in interviews involved a good deal of time on their part. Our contact HEI tutors were somewhat less accessible for the kind of in-depth, insightful face-to-face fieldwork they had facilitated in round one and where that was the case we were more dependent on other sources of information such as the questionnaire surveys which were not as rich in evidence. Some HEI tutors were also of the view that there were no significant changes, from their point of view, and weren't easily persuaded as to the merits of being re-interviewed or surveyed one year later.

A number of additional measures were taken to better reflect the perspectives of the different groups and in particular to enhance our evidence from CTs and Principals. One strategy was to seek interviews with a sample of CTs and Principals/DPs who had participated in a Teaching Council event about SP. Following permission from the Council to contact this group, 3 additional interviews were conducted with school staff who did have STs on SP in their schools but whose students were not necessarily part of those surveyed in our main case study settings listed in Table 4.2. Secondly, 18 post-primary Principals/DPs who were not associated with the six sites completed the Principal/DP questionnaire. Thirdly, additional interviews were conducted with primary Principals and CTs who had students from several providers including two of our case study programmes. The latter are included in the count in Table 4.2.

Finally, and very importantly, further school-based evidence beyond the six case study settings was collected involving visits to schools for interviews with staff. All bar one of the vignettes of good practice in Chapter 9 are based on this additional line of inquiry which involved contact with a range of schools and Principals. While these additional data sources were useful in terms of extending the evidence base, a limitation overall of the study is the balance of HEI and school data that could be deemed representative nationally, with the latter not as strong, scale-wise, as the former.

A further point is also necessary about representativeness. As is clear from Table 4.2 Case A makes up half the population of HEI tutor questionnaires returned, and a third for ST returns, thus potentially injecting some imbalance in the data. However, it is noteworthy that our case study settings varied in terms of scale and overall numbers of STs on programmes so some differences in the obtained numbers are to be expected given the size of different providers in the study. This highlights the value of employing a variety of data collection procedures. The analysis of qualitative interview data along with the documentary data from SP Handbooks

allowed us to ensure that no one source of data, or indeed no one provider, dominated the claims made and the conclusions drawn.

We would also suggest that because of the scale, depth and diversity of the data assembled and analysed, the claims made in subsequent chapters of this Final Report are valid and trustworthy. The scale of evidence is large and comprehensive and we argue reflects the variety of approaches to and perspectives on SP found nationally. This design overall allowed the research team to gather quality data that offers accounts of current practices and accounts of why practices are as they are and the factors influencing them.

4.7 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Different methods were used to manage and analyse the data, depending on its format. In the case of qualitative data, specifically interviews, transcripts were prepared based on what were normally digital recordings. In a few cases a digital recorder was not used and notes had to be handmade throughout. Open-ended items on the questionnaires were also transcribed and all these qualitative data were then annotated by the team to highlight key issues, trends, typical and atypical responses pertaining to the issues noted in Table 4.1. This is a conventional approach to content analysis of qualitative data. By its nature it was an iterative and time-consuming one, made more complex by the fact that there were several sources of data to be mapped and triangulated.

In the interests of efficiency the use of a computer software package such as NVIVO was considered but decided against on the grounds that deep familiarity with the data on the part of each member of the author team could be assured through regular meetings and interim work throughout the period. The quantitative analysis was a different matter. Here it was decided that the most efficacious management strategy would be to input all questionnaire data into SPSS which would allow the conduct of statistical analyses and some relevant comparative work. Once again a content analysis using key themes and issues pertinent to the aim and objectives noted in Table 4.1 was conducted.

4.8 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANTS

A brief profiling of some of the key groups is appropriate in this chapter. Student teachers were selected for the questionnaire surveys who were at various stages in their course so as to capture experiences over entire programmes although there was a preponderance of students in their final years. ST interviewees were usually in the final years of their course but PME post-primary students were from both years. The vast majority of STs were female. For instance in the Round 1 survey, 84% were female. There were also more primary than post primary students in the surveys and in interviews. Again in the Round 2 survey 63% of respondents were on primary programmes and 37% on post-primary programmes. Participating students were engaged in SP in all four provinces of the country. In the case of post primary STs the entire range of secondary school subjects were represented in their teaching.

In primary schools STs teach a range of classes and also at post-primary level students teach across the range of the system. 69% of post-primary respondents reported teaching across the

range of junior and senior classes, with two student teachers in one case teaching only (unusually) at senior cycle.

HEI tutors were more evenly split on gender grounds than their STs, with 48% and 52% female and male respectively, in the Round 1 survey, and the corresponding statistics for the Round 2 survey being 61% and 38%. In terms of their years of experience of supervising STs on placement, just over half (51%) reported having up to 5 years experience while 30% had between 6 and 10 years experience, the remainder (20%) having in excess of 10 years experience.

STs are doing their SP in all four provinces of the country as indicated by the HEI tutor participants reporting that they visit STs all over the country. For instance in the Round 1 survey, 35% reported that their schools were in more than one province; 35% reported to be currently visiting in Munster; 17% Leinster; 13% Connaught and just 1% Ulster.

Co-Operating Teachers and Principals ranged in experience of having STs on SP. This was linked to their experience and history of their schools in hosting students. The schools nominated by HEI programme leaders all had a tradition of taking students from that provider although CTs interviewed in those settings varied in their experience of supporting STs.

4.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE, ETHICS, DILEMMAS

A NUMBER OF APPROACHES WERE USED TO MAXIMISE THE QUALITY OF THE CLAIMS/FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY:

- Training of fieldworkers to ensure consistency of approach especially in relation to the administration of semi-structured interview schedules.

- Regular team meetings of the core team to discuss emerging themes and issues.

- Fortnightly (usually) meetings of the PI and RA within UCC to monitor progress and plan.

- Use of multiple data sources which allowed the cross-checking of evidence.

- Careful preparation and piloting of data gathering instruments.

- Meetings with the Teaching Council along with the production of interim reports and presentations showing progress and identifying issues and trends.

The fundamental principle of ethical research is that research is more than a matter of collecting information: it is also concerned with rights, dignity and the well-being of those taking part. All participants were assured of anonymity and consent forms were prepared and completed by all informants as is now recommended practice in all social science research including education research (cf BERA ethical guidelines). However, anonymity and confidentiality proved to be more significant than anticipated in the study. Ethical clearance, based on full details of the rationale and research design, had to be obtained from both UCC

and the then St Patrick's College Ethical Committees, as expected. In the case of UCC this was a relatively straightforward process. It was a very protracted process in the case of the then St Patrick's College. No fieldwork could begin until ethical approval was granted. Unexpectedly, two HEIs who had agreed to participate in the study withheld full approval until their own respective ethical boards had seen and approved the proposed research design. This took time and in one case was denied on the basis of concerns about anonymity. The research design, in terms of analysis, was clarified and the application submitted once again for approval. It was granted on this occasion. An issue of concern for the two institutions in question was the potential for exposure and identification through the reporting of the evidence. It did not feature as so sensitive an issue for the other institutions. The clarification was that every effort would be made to ensure identities would not be revealed and one of the mechanisms for doing this was that there would be no profiling (beyond what appears in this chapter) of individual programmes.

Extra care was taken in the use of documentary evidence which had been submitted to us which could be so specific to that particular institution that identity would be compromised. The sensitivities expressed about confidentiality and anonymity are understandable, arguably, in the context of the new culture in ITE in Ireland where programmes have to be accredited by the Teaching Council, the result being that senior colleagues in the sector are more aware of accountability and competition in the system. Another factor, especially at the outset of the study, was the fact that some institutions were themselves in the process of developing various partnerships and mergers with other HEIs and this added a layer of complexity to the social and political context of this research. In sum extreme vigilance was exercised in the reporting of evidence to guard against individual or programme identities. In reality this would be the norm for participants. In reality, too while anonymity protects their privacy, it also hides their hard work and expertise.

CHAPTER 5: GUIDANCE, OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT, GRADING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the review of literature, assessment, incorporating feedback that is meaningful to the learner, is vital for the development of the novice regardless of the sphere of learning in question. In the case of professional learning on SP student teachers need opportunities to discuss their performance with more established teachers who can focus their attention on critical dimensions of their practice, negotiate targets with them for their improvement, and consider with them the impact of their teaching on pupils. They also benefit from opportunities to discuss their practice and their progress with peers as well as opportunities to be assessors of their own development as practitioners.

What elements of practice are focussed on in observing and evaluating STs' teaching and in offering them feedback? What are the opportunities for student teachers to observe teaching? What are the sources of feedback for the ST? To what extent do CTs observe and offer guidance? How does the feedback from the HEI and the school align? What is the balance between feedback/formative assessment and the more formal summative assessment that results in a grade? How is quality assured? These and other issues are considered here, drawing on interview and questionnaire data from HEI tutors, CTs and STs, along with documentary evidence from SP Handbooks, plus direct evidence from de-briefing sessions between the HEI tutor and ST. This chapter has the following major themes:

- Overview of Time on SP, Number of Lessons Taught and Tutor Visits
- Feedback Templates, Rubrics and Criteria
- Critical Reflection and Links with Observation
- Opportunities to Observe Teachers Teach
- Sources of and Variation in Guidance and Feedback
- HEI Tutor and CT communication about ST Progress
- The Debrief as a Pivotal Vehicle for Integration
- Role of the CT in Summative Assessment and Grading
- Benefits of Extended Period of Training and Contrasting SP
- Quality Assurance: Consistency in the Interpretation of Student Performance

5.2 OVERVIEW OF TIME ON SP, NUMBER OF LESSONS TAUGHT AND TUTOR VISITS

This section describes some of the basic aspects of SP as a foundation for an examination of the more complex elements later in the chapter. Table 5.1 offers an overview of the number of weeks in total that STs spend on SP during their programme of initial teacher education. It also indicates the number of lessons they are expected to teach with particular reference to their extended placement along with the number of visits from their HEI tutors on that extended placement. This evidence was gleaned from Handbooks and interviews with Directors of SP. It describes the current state of play at each site.

Table 5.1: Time on SP, Number of Lessons and HEI Tutor Visits

Cases/Sites	Time in School in each year of programme (slight variation in totals due to observation days, school visits for planning)	N of lessons STs are expected to teach on extended SP	N of visits from HEI tutors on extended SP
Site A (Prim) Y1 BEd Y2 BEd Y3 BEd Y4 BEd	 3 weeks 6 weeks 0 weeks 12 weeks (+2 weeks assisting in Infants while planning cross school/curricular work)	 Teach all day	 Min. 4
Site B (Prim) Y1 BEd Y2 BEd Y3 BEd Y4 BEd	 6 observation days and 3 weeks SP 2 weeks school experience and 3 weeks SP 6 weeks (2 blocks of 3 weeks) 10 weeks	 Teach all day	 Min. 4
Site C (Prim) Y1 BEd Y2 BEd Y3 BEd	Additional school visits/assisting, planning 3 weeks 15 school days 15 school days	 Teach all day	 Min. 4

Y4 BEd	10 weeks		
PME Y1	6 weeks + 9 days in Sem1	Teach all day	
PME2	10 weeks + days for visits		
Site D (PP)			
Y1 BA	3 weeks observation in primary school+ Jan-March(incl.) 2 hrs per week pp school 8 weeks (pair/team teaching)		
Y2 BA	15 classes in main subject+2 classes per week in resource support setting	Range of levels 12-15 lessons pw	Min. 3 and 50% of STs have 4 visits in Y4
Y3 BA	11weeks (individual/independent)		
Y4 BA			
Site E (PP)	3 weeks, 2 subjs; jn cycle		
Y1 BEd	4 weeks, 2 subjs, jn cycle		
Y2 BEd	4 weeks, 2 subjs, sn focus		Min 3 but almost half get 4 visits in Y5
Y3 BEd	4 weeks in non-mainstream e.g. PLC/FE	10 hrs (under review)	
Y4 BEd			
Y5 BEd	10 weeks, 2 subjects, all levels		
Site F (PP)			6 in Y1
Y1 PME	2 days per week all year	6 per week	4 in Y2, one with 2 tutors
Y2 PME	3 days per week all year	9-10 pw Y2	

As is clear from Table 5.1 all STs in our sites have an extended placement towards the end of their programme with varying but shorter periods of SP throughout the programme up to then.

It does not follow that they are in the same classroom for all the time on their extended SP although they are in the same school over the block. It is a continuous placement and all certainly have the opportunity to build working relations with learners and get to know them as learners which is essential given the Teaching Council Criteria and Guidelines for

Programme Providers as well as the guidelines on SP. There are educational / professional reasons for not being in the same classroom for the entire extended SP as well as practical aspects to do with not imposing too much on any one teacher's class. Here is how one focus group with HEI primary tutors described their practice:

> Interviewer: Can I just clarify, is it broken into two four weeks and two weeks, is it broken up or is it one continuous 10 week? In a classroom or school?
>
> Interviewee: No, in a school.
>
> Interviewer: Oh in a school, okay so in the same school for 10 weeks in different classrooms.
>
> Interviewee: Yes, in different settings in the school. We start on a very positive note in September by allowing the student to spend two weeks with the infant teacher who has new infants; they're only in the door so they're the classroom assistant for two weeks. It's a mixture of observation and assistance for discrete teaching, strand work which is working in a selected area the student will look at and define themselves, learning support and special educational needs settings so, you know, it's a diverse enough placement.

While most of our case study sites operate an extended placement whereby STs are in the same school for its duration, site F's post-primary PME is different in that its structure requires students to be in the same school throughout the year for three days per week in the second year (and two days per week in the first year) while the remaining two days of the second year are spent on HEI-based work. The Director of SP explained how this approach is very effective for student teachers:

> They get the rhythm of the school year in both years so they might not be in school every day but being in school three days a week for the whole year is a very substantial block of time that they spend in schools and they get the experience at the start of the year, midterms, Christmas assessments, the various events that take place during the year.

The point is made by this interviewee that some schools do not like this model but that it works because it makes visible that STs are learners, needing a co-operating teacher, and as such should not have full responsibility for the class:

> We get mixed reviews about the students being in the school from induction at the beginning of the school throughout various events. We do get some criticism, some don't like our model because they're not there the following week; certain teachers will be covering them some days of the week and other teachers will be covering them other days… We see them as student teachers not as classroom teachers, so they should not have sole responsibility for the classes under their charge. So by having

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them out only certain days of the week requires them to have a co-operating teacher working alongside them to support them as well.

Our evidence from Handbooks and interviews shows that, over the period of their programme, students in both primary and post-primary have the opportunity to teach at all levels, from infants to upper primary in the case of primary STs, and from junior through senior classes in the case of post-primary students. This is not new in the case of primary students who traditionally would have had this opportunity even before the new TC arrangements were introduced. It is new and more challenging, however, for post-primary students. Our three post-primary cases have incorporated this requirement into their provision. Case E did not have major difficulty accommodating this, partly to do with the specialist subject area in question. Cases D and F found this more demanding to accommodate but secured access by encouraging schools and students to participate in different contexts: team teaching, classroom assistance, observation, teaching of small number of specific lessons/units of work. The director of SP in F described a good sequence of development over the two years building up the number of lessons and developing capacity to cope with the demand of working with exam classes. This same programme also requires students to engage in some of the activities outlined in the Teaching Council guidance and they have added several other examples themselves to ensure that students are well involved in the life of the school. By the end of the two-year programme the expectation is that the students 'would have had a chance to experience both junior cycle and senior cycle examination classes'.

5.2.1 SOME CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURES FROM SCHOOLS

There were some changes over the period of the project to the timing, time, and balance of time on SP within the programme overall. For example, Site A changed the timing of its original Year 3 placement to the beginning of Year 4 and also incorporated some revision in relation to the cross-curricular/cross-school elements within the extended SP in Year 4 of the programme. Similarly Site E is currently reviewing the demands of the final year SP in relation to the two different subjects with reference to junior and senior cycle. These changes have arisen for HEIs from such aspects as concern on the part of schools about releasing classes for sustained, extended periods and partially from pressures to meet all the requirements such as having the opportunity to do some teaching at senior cycle in the case of post-primary programmes. HEIs are thus seeking to balance the twin imperatives of meeting the Teaching Council requirements on the one hand and minimising the challenges to schools of having a ST on the other. As we demonstrate later, HEIs are keenly aware of the challenges of securing sufficient school placements for their STs and as a result seek to minimise disruption to the routines of the school in which their students are hosted. What features in 5.1 is our best evidence of the current situation at each site.

What has not changed is the scale of visits from HEI tutors and the fact that all students are observed teaching by two different HEI tutors in their final, extended SP. According to our questionnaire surveys a typical student receives between 3 and 4 visits on the 10-week block or continuous placement but there is some variation in this. Even within the same programme tutors and students reported different numbers and this can be explained with reference to how they interpret 'typical', 'block' and 'continuous'. A more reliable statistic on this came from the interview data especially with Directors of SP: the majority of students receive a

minimum of 4 visits over the period of their extended, final SP, whether on primary or post primary programmes and all students are observed a minimum of 3 times. This has remained constant over the project. Students who are struggling get additional visits and the moderation process (see below) means that samples of students on all programmes have additional visits beyond the regular ones. All students have a visit from at least two different tutors on their final SP.

Individual HEI tutors have between 8 and 10 students so over a 10-week block this would involve between 32 and 40 visits to schools before counting any moderation visits.

5.2.2 TEACHING BEYOND THE CT CLASSES, SUBJECT EXPERTISE AND PAYMENT

Table 5.2 shows how some 64% of ST questionnaire respondents in the Round 2 survey are timetabled to teach classes that are separate from the classes of their CT but of note is that the majority of this group are primary students. Initially this was surprising to us but the difference between sectors, which is statistically significant, is explained with reference to the fact that primary students on their extended placement are scheduled to contribute to teaching across various activities in the school as well as being responsible for extended teaching in their own classroom. For example, in one primary programme the students engage in a creative arts or SEN or sports project or Maths/Science initiative for a number of weeks during which they work across classes or groups in the school. Similar initiatives occur in the other two primary programmes in the study.

Post-primary students are not involved in teaching outside of their subject areas and HEI tutors are very strong in advising against teaching subjects that are outside their degree subjects. Some PME student teachers, however, who only have one main teaching subject teach SPHE and/or CSPE for one or two periods per week.

A small minority of ST are paid for teaching or doing other work in the school. The sectoral difference here is statistically significant with a quarter of post-primary STs reporting that they are paid for teaching or doing other work in their school. Primary students, while on SP, do not get paid and tend to be precluded from taking up positions of substitute teacher. Their HEIs are strongly opposed to this until into June when their academic year is over.

Interviews with HEI tutors confirm that there is a tendency for post-primary students to receive payment for some teaching in their placement school as suggested in this extract from a focus group interview with tutors:

> Interviewee 2: Some of mine are definitely getting paid.
>
> Interviewee 6: I'm sure there is a way to pay them.
>
> Interviewee 2: But I'm not saying that they're all getting paid.
>
> Interviewer: Would you say more second years than first years?

Interviewee 2: A lot of mine. I couldn't say … I've seventeen, I know maybe eight or nine or ten of them would have mentioned, you know, that they had extra classes, but I never asked.

Interviewer: That's first years?

Interviewee 2: Well mine are all second years.

Interviewee 3: First years are doing it too. Some of them are past pupils of the school, they'd be well known, well established, so … I think that might be the link for them, but I think if there were hours that could be used.

It is likely that recent difficulties encountered by Principals in securing substitute teachers, especially in some subjects, will mean that student teachers are in increasing demand as unqualified substitute teachers. One Director of SP explained how some of their PME students are registered with the Teaching Council on the FE route and hence are eligible to be paid the unqualified rate. However, it seems there can be some tensions around adhering to the HEI requirements and accepting paid work in schools:

If they are consistently absent (from lectures) because they are working we have difficult conversations with them and we will certainly have a conversation with the school about that. As much as we are trying to build a partnership with the school we feel it's unfair to the students. I have many difficult conversations here. You are so beholden to the school but so many of the credits are for the university-based part of the course - 35 credits go to the university based components so they need to be in the University to have the required number of hours to get the required number of credits within their modules so we can't reduce the university-based component any further.

In another focus group of HEI post-primary tutors, confirming evidence from students themselves, the point was made that in some schools STs were timetabled in their subjects outside of their allocated quota of CT classes but do not get paid. In these cases tutors encouraged their students to tell them about such arrangements and any pressure from schools to teach extra hours. HEI tutors were not averse to granting extensions for assignments in such cases but were very aware of the difficulties:

We encourage them to tell us, we try to support them, give extensions, there are pressures from schools and from students too who want to oblige. For example, the Spanish teacher is sick and they have a year 2 PME in the school anyway; two years ago they would have been fully qualified anyway, school acting in interest of pupils, student teacher feels under pressure, sees an opportunity, we are caught in the middle and see both sides.

Tutors also expressed the view that Principals justify this to them on the basis of such arguments as getting 'a dose of reality' and the opportunity to 'test out' the ST in the context of a potential job offer. Students themselves share the view of the latter and are mindful of obtaining a good reference. Tutors also note how students should be paid the unqualified rate for any teaching they do outside of their PME allocated hours but refrain from criticising students (or schools) in this regard as so many students work in other situations (restaurants

and pubs) to support themselves financially and how there are, at least good professional learning opportunities available by doing substitute work in schools.

Table 5.2 Timetabled outside of Classes of CT and Payment

(discrepancies due to rounding)

	Yes	No	Don't know	
	%	%	%	N
I am timetabled to teach classes separate from the classes of my CT				
Primary	73	25	2	248
PostPrim	48	49	3	148
Total	**64**	**34**	**2**	**396**
I am paid for teaching/other school work				
Primary	4	95	1	247
PostPrim	25	75	0	146
Total	**12**	**87**	**1**	**393**

5.2.3 ANNOUNCED OR UNANNOUNCED VISITS

In all but one of our cases, STs do not know when a HEI tutor may call to observe them teach. Typically, students do not know when their HEI tutor may visit and the tutor, knowing the students' teaching timetable, arrives in the school some time before a lesson, observes the lesson, reads the file and follows up with a detailed debrief.

In one programme (Case study D) however, and indeed for all programmes in this particular HEI, students are told in advance. This is how the lead tutor in that case study setting described and justified the format of a visit to a student teacher on SP:

> Our students go to different schools all over the country. They might have several CTs. On visiting schools we ask the Principal to introduce us to the CTs and that's why we text the day before so we can meet the Principal and have every chance to meet the co-operating teachers. A cross-over visit is built into one of the three visits. We have very few tutors going into school – at most we might only have 2 tutors going into a specific school so when I get there I would spend all day in that school and see all the students or as many as I can and also see CTs.

Within one of the primary case studies, the practice of unannounced visits is traditionally the norm and the HEI tutors in the focus group were unanimous that it should remain so.

Representing the views of the group, one observed that STs should be intrinsically motivated to maintain high standards saying:

> [Unannounced visits] is much better, because in the real world you don't do a job like teaching because somebody 'up there' is watching you - you do it because you want to do it in a certain way, and it is not that they want to be watching you for the rest of your career - it's up to you to want to do it.

STs, though, are of the view that it would make the SP less stressful for them if they knew when exactly to expect a visit from their tutors. As one student put it: 'not knowing when a tutor is arriving adds stress particularly when other colleges and student teachers are aware at least during which week they can expect to be inspected'. We report further on this issue in a section more specifically devoted to the student experience on SP (Chapter 7).

In one case (F) where the visits occur about every two months the very first visit is announced in advance but all others are unannounced. This is justified in order to link with the co-operating at the outset: 'We want the tutor to build a relationship with the co-operating teachers. We ask the student to make the cooperating teacher aware of the time and date of the visit so they can build that relationship'.

5.3 FEEDBACK TEMPLATES, RUBRICS AND CRITERIA

HEI tutors use templates listing all the features that are important to being an effective teacher. These are detailed in Student Handbooks and while the wording and level of detail varies somewhat across handbooks for different stages of the ST's training and on different programmes, all converge in attending to the elements listed below. These are the aspects that form the basis of feedback in discussions with STs about performance:

- what the pupils are learning and how they are learning it;
- working relationships with learners;
- actual evidence of children's learning and ST ability to comment on this;
- the ST's presence;
- planning (short and long term) including cohesion and progression in plans, lesson notes, file;
- suitability of objectives, learning outcomes;
- differentiation and inclusion and extent to which STs facilitate the participation of all learners;
- organisational issues;
- classroom management and safety;
- formative assessment of pupils;
- communication skills;
- subject knowledge;
- confidence;
- STs' own written evaluations of their lessons; and,
- responses to earlier tutor feedback.

Without exception, the above items featured in all the descriptions in Student Handbooks and featured too in guidance given to CTs/schools. For instance, on one programme the following were listed as areas of assessment focus in guidance sent to schools:

- Planning and Preparation
- Subject Knowledge
- Teaching Approaches and Methods
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Classroom Management
- Reflection and Evaluation
- Ethics, Professional Orientation
- Health and Safety

Each item was further broken down and described. For instance, assessment and recording included: regular monitoring, recording and reporting on student learning; use of a diverse range of assessment methods to allow learners demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, including observation, class questioning and marking of student work; and the provision of regular and constructive feedback on learner's work including homework.

5.3.1 FEEDBACK AGAINST CRITERIA

One HEI tutor whose response was typical across HEI tutors, regardless of programme, noted:

> For me it's generally against the criteria, there's a reason for those criteria and it's linked to their practice, I structure my feedback against those criteria always – adding up to professionalism (described) in the Handbook. I try to sum up in the end some key things they need to work on over next few weeks and that helps them to prioritise. It's vital that they understand the written feedback you give them (PP tutor).

HEI tutors say they are flexible as to how to give feedback once it is linked to the key elements in the template. As one Director of SP observed: 'You can take the template and adhere to it strictly or adjust it – it's up to the tutors; tutors need to meet students beforehand –weeks beforehand - to ensure they know the criteria, I give them my notes after the lesson that I have observed'. While the list above is applied to all observations conducted by HEI tutors, the expectation is that as students progress through their programme, year on year, and progress over the period of say the 10-week block practice they show progression in how they teach. For instance:

> By 4th year, you are looking for more sophisticated practice – if say in a challenging school/setting can they accommodate all the diversity of learners, and in those very challenging contexts they may require further support but they have to show they can include all learners. (Primary tutor)

The comments of another relatively new, part-time HEI tutor who is a retired primary principal are interesting in that, she herself believes that while she adheres strictly to the list

above, she may be slightly different in her style to what she perceives as typical of the lecturer/HEI tutor. She is skills-based in her approach:

> You have a short window with them, I share tricks of the trade with them. I wouldn't be as academic maybe in my approach. Lecturers will give them ideas, but I will give them attention grabbers, ways of repeating without repeating...I will be thinking as a principal who interviewed teachers down the years for 40 years. I always say you are starting a journey... you don't have to re invent the wheel...'

This tutor goes on to emphasise a learner-centred perspective as she defines it:

> When I go in I have the methodologies in my head, key methodologies of the curriculum, I'm looking for active learning, collaborative work, presentation skills, behaviour/classroom management, overall, I get the sense of what they are about, what is positive about them...if they are a natural... then tease out ... how far down the road to being a competent teacher is this person... I form an overall impression, voice projection, presence etc. I'm encouraging them to get themselves off the stage of direct teaching early on.

This tutor adds how STs 'need to have something to work towards that is reasonable'.

All tutors are conscious of obtaining a balance between affirmation and judgment, and of pacing their STs' learning insofar as they hold out the expectation to their students that they should consciously work on the targets set for them on the basis of the oral and written feedback:

> I tend to identify some key things that they need to prioritise, it could be around the use of open-ended questions, or getting their pupils to engage in peer or self assessment for instance but I would also feedback on all the usual aspects like classroom management and use of resources….I would want to ensure that the student is very clear on what they have to do to improve. (HEI pp tutor).

HEI tutors give feedback based on the observation of complete lessons as reported in one post-primary focus group: 'we observe all of the lesson; the student has to have the opportunity to show that they can conduct a complete lesson'.

5.4 CRITICAL REFLECTION AND LINKS WITH OBSERVATION

As highlighted in the literature review in an earlier chapter to this report critical reflection is part of developing one's competence as a teacher and professional. This stance is strongly endorsed in the Teaching Council's ITE Criteria and Guidelines (2011) through the expectation that research and evidence should be visible in STs' professional portfolios. A key element of the extended programmes is that it should facilitate 'an increased emphasis on portfolio work, reflective practice and research/inquiry-based learning (Teaching Council, 2011, 17) and STs are expected to have opportunities to learn to 'engage in data gathering' and learn 'to critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge and research' (25) . The SP is expected to provide opportunities to 'integrate theory and practice' as well as opportunities 'to reflect critically on their practice' (13). The Teaching Council expects STs to 'conduct and apply relevant research' (25).

The notion of reflective practice and a general research/inquiry stance permeates the discourse of all HEI tutors interviewed and is undoubtedly a fundamental feature of ITE in Ireland. It is evident in all the programme handbooks, in the planning and evaluation files of students, and in the feedback and assessment given to students about their practice. It begins early in the ST's life on the programme with a strong initial emphasis on students discussing their own learning processes, their histories as learners and their past experiences of schooling, leading them to reflect on and understand the kind of teacher they wish to become. The emphasis on reflection progresses over time to incorporate exploration of their own practice on SP in the context of set readings, specified themes (e.g. inclusion), policy statements (e.g. syllabus in a particular subject area), lectures on what constitutes best practice in an area (e.g. teaching poetry) and especially in the context of their ongoing individual experience of being on SP. Throughout it is clear that the notion of reflection that is promoted is one that is not about being critical in a negative sense of practice they may observe in school but rather of trying to understand what shapes practice, what can be changed and enhanced, and what the assumptions are underlying their own and others' practices. Thus, the overall thrust of reflection, as students develop over their programme, is towards making beliefs and attitudes visible since beliefs and attitudes are part of the assumptions underlying practice and as such influence practice and provide an identity as a teacher and crucially also shape expectations in turn for their own learners and their identities.

According to reports from HEI tutors, STs find reflection very challenging (and this is confirmed by the evidence from students themselves (see chapter 7 for further evidence). Students are often reluctant to move beyond the task-oriented practicality of planning lessons, making and organising resources, organising activities to evaluation and critical engagement especially when the latter is expected to be written up and incorporated into planning files for tutors to read. For some students this is seen as 'extra work' on top of an already busy schedule, thus it is not viewed as something that is part and parcel of teaching.

The following quotes demonstrate the value HEI tutors place on reflection, their approach to its promotion, and how students find reflection a challenge:

> Reflection is so important – fundamental questions like – what is good teaching? What is a good teacher? How can I be more inclusive? What is important in the relationship between me and my students? Why am I leaving that child out? Am I giving more attention to boys rather than girls? These are all questions that help us grow…(PrimHEI tutor)

> Some feel you are adding to their very heavy workload and they do find all the reflection hard to grasp but for us it is integrated into the entire programme and runs across everything. (pp HEI tutors)

> For STs it is the biggest challenge – it is so vital; you cannot progress as a teacher unless you think about what you did / why, what went well – look back on it. (Prim tutor)

> Critical reflection is something that underpins everything we do – enabling students to be critical. At our professional development sessions we talk about criticality, reflection, feedback. In feedback or debriefing session (following the observation of a

lesson) it is all about reflection but they are sometimes so grading focused (Prim tutor).

Interviewees talked about how they support STs to be reflective and how they seek to overcome the difficulties students experience in relation to reflection and self evaluation of their practice on SP:

> It is difficult because they are reflecting after the event, they feel they are doing these reflective exercises for us rather than for their own developing competence. If we could facilitate reflection in real time, stop – why did you do that now, why these resources? That whole dynamic that makes it problematic when you can do it in real time. There is good potential in video material and we use that a lot, OK it's not in real time, not immediate reflection but it helps interrogate practice more. The same for micro teaching which is great because you can stop it; why did you do that … what else could you do, have you seen somebody else do… proper reflective discussion that might be more practical in the end. (PP tutor)

> Students keep a reflective journal / portfolio – we start the notion of reflection in first year – this is guided and supported a lot around their own past experiences and they gradually move into more a critical phase. We give lots of support towards critical reflection in the third and fourth years. We do at least four hours of specific reflective practice with a specialist here in the college – it is difficult, students find it difficult, we find it difficult too as it is in the past. (primary tutor)

> We look at their written reflections and give feedback – we notice whether they are describing or also being critically reflective. We take students through a structure, the content of their professional portfolios will vary according to different years of programme, there is always a strong link between experience and theory, how they develop as professional throughout the journey. In the final year they can use video diaries into their portfolios, so it's not just all written reflections as that doesn't suit everybody, it can be blogs, multimedia and it is part of assessment. We interview all of our students, 25% of grade, strong emphasis on critical reflection of personal and professional journey, interviewed by SP tutors. (Primary tutor)

Reflection is promoted by the HEI tutor in a way that supports the integration of theory and practice and is designed to provide students with the professional discourse necessary to talk about and analyse practice. In this respect the role of observation itself is a vehicle for this as the following extended quotation indicates:

> We have a placement where they go out and observe, they don't teach, it's just observational training based and they come back and do reflections with the tutors in tutorials. Instead of saying we do critical reflection I said we'll do some critical imagination so imagine the type of teacher you want to be and critically write about what you're learning about in educational psychology and the sociology of education. Use the language, use the terminology to describe the type of teacher you want to be and that as a stepping stone to then move into the reflection side of it which is I'm out teaching…How am I doing things. It gives them a sense of technical language, educational language, not colloquial language, they'll hear the colloquial language

from the classroom teachers and from us as tutors, we talk about the tips and the tricks but then they also go back to social constructivism, Piaget, Bruner, Bloom's taxonomy of learning because they've got a little bit of that in the first semester.

Observation of teachers teaching along with college-based tutorials where practice is discussed and shared as well as debriefing sessions all combine to provide feedback on what constitutes effective and professional practice. Tutors are aware of the challenges to STs of critical reflection and seek to make is progressive over the period of their programme:

Yes. Just take it at a very basic level. And then when we move on to the next practice we begin to look at – okay, let's compare what happened in first year with what's happening now. You know? And it grows with time. Because it's not something that they're good at as 18 year olds. You know, they look at it as a very factual thing, this is exactly what happened. So it's trying to get them to come to the stage where they can analyse what has happened and look at it critically without being negative.

The HEI tutor is the primary source of guidance on being critically reflective and becoming a reflective practitioner. Co-operating teachers tend to see critical reflection in the context of discussions about aspects of lessons that went well and not so well and were generally reluctant to claim that they supported students in evaluation and reflection. As one primary CT said: 'It doesn't really happen with the STs and me, I would not sit down and do that (critical reflection) with them it would be fairly superficial'.

Tutors are conscious of the need for CTs to have training in how best to support students in this respect. One post primary Director of SP perceived that that aspect of the CT role 'has not advanced in the last 3 years' saying how 'it's very patchy' and not viewed by CTs are part of their role.

5.5 OPPORTUNITIES TO OBSERVE TEACHERS TEACH

The opportunity to observe teaching is given strong emphasis in the new TC policy and has for some time been recognised in ITE as an important dimension of professional learning although the observation of teachers teaching was not always a feasible aspect of practice for various reasons, especially at post-primary level.

The majority of students surveyed and interviewed reported that they had some opportunity to observe teachers teach and the vast majority believe it is a good idea for student teachers to have a period of observation of teaching (see Table 5.3). Our evidence shows that 87% and 66% respectively of primary and post primary teachers observed a co-operating teacher teach in the first student survey we conducted, resulting in three-quarters of all students reporting this opportunity. The overall percentage increased by the round two survey to 91%, suggesting greater acceptance and importance being attributed to it on the part of schools and also a greater willingness on the part of CTs to engage in the process. On all elements of observation listed in Table 5.3 primary student teachers had more opportunity to observe (and be observed, see above) and were also more positive in their views about its merits. Of note is that 10% of post-primary questionnaire respondents disagree with the statement that it is a

good idea. As already noted the vast majority of students said they received guidance on the observation of teaching.

Table 5.3: STs Observing Classroom Teaching

	Primary Students R1(R2)	PP Students R1(R2)	Total R1(R2)
% of STs reporting that they observed their CT teacher	87 (99)	66 (79)	75 (91)
% of STs reporting that it is a good idea to have a period of observation of teaching on SP	100 (99)	85 (89)	92 (95)
% of STs reporting that they received guidance on how to observe	88 (89)	77 (94)	83 (90)
% of STs who believe it is a good idea to team-teach with CT	72 (79)	43 (47)	57 (67)
% of STs who had the opportunity to team-teach with another person i.e. CT or ST	66 (71)	53 (37)	59 (58)

N=235 (R1) N=394 (R2)

A further dimension allowing observation is the opportunity to team-teach with a CT. 72% of primary STs believe it is a good idea to team-teach with their CT but the corresponding figure for post-primary students is 43% with over one-third of post primary students teachers disagreeing that it is a good idea to team-teach with their CT. A related question in our questionnaire survey asked respondents to say whether or not they had the opportunity to team-teach with 'another person' i.e. CT or ST. Overall the majority had such an opportunity with two-thirds of primary students and 53% of post-primary students saying they had this opportunity in the round one survey. Noteworthy is that the latter statistic reduced to 37% in the round two survey suggesting this is not a strong feature of post-primary practice.

STs, regardless of type of programme, appear to have at least 12 to 15 hours of observation of teaching. The vast majority of post-primary principals (95%, n=18) indicated that student teachers should have the opportunity to observe teachers teach, claiming that their teachers were willing to support student teachers in this way and on SP in general.

According to our HEI tutor interviews, observation now features much more strongly that it did on previous programmes although it was always encouraged especially on primary programmes:

> In BEd1 they would observe for one day at beginning of 3 week SP; BEd 2s don't have formal observation days but they do have preliminary visits where they do observe. All students have 2 days of preliminary visits before SP. In the new programme they have a lot more observation than before.

HEI tutors see observation of teaching as vital for professional learning and they promote it enthusiastically, even if they feel they cannot always mandate it because of school circumstances. Tutors typically referred to the importance of focussed observation where students are given guided tasks to support their observation so that their attention is drawn to such aspects as pupil/peer interaction, questioning, and resources used in lessons. In addition, observation can take place while student teachers help with a small group of pupils or an individual pupil. Here is how one HEI tutor expressed the approach on her concurrent, post-primary programme:

> We encourage it in all years from year one when they visit primary schools, also year 2; they go back to same school in year 3; and in year 4 we encourage it as well. We have an element in relation to further contributions where they often participate by helping with tasks.

Tutors were very conscious of good practice in observation and were keen to ensure students observed a code of ethics and behaved professionally when commenting on their observations. A further element of good practice in this regard is how some tutors sought to link observation, critical reflection and research as revealed in the following interview transcript referring to practice on a primary PME programme:

> We have informal and formal observation. We encourage students to engage in reflection at all times – we imbue an observing capacity at all times. There is a little bit of tactical negotiation that you have to do in schools – you don't want students to criticise teachers in schools, to be critically evaluating teachers there and then, they have to exercise care around that. We don't operate a dump and run policy – they don't arrive and take over class - it is very scaffolded, very much based on gradual release of responsibility.

Tutors are aware of the possibility of students observing poor practice and rather than criticise teachers during discussion in College, the emphasis is on trying to understand practice and what happens in schools while becoming knowledgeable about what constitutes effective or 'best' practice. HEI tutors are very aware of the sensitivity and ethics surrounding students' experience of poor practice: 'we know that they're observing poor practice sometimes and what's good is that they recognise this but it requires sensitivity'.

Interviews with student teachers allowed us probe in more detail than in the questionnaire what their experiences and views are in relation to observation. In interview, students themselves expressed mixed views about observation with about half of those interviewed saying they would value yet more opportunities for observation. As one first year PP PME student put it, 'I would have liked to observe my class teacher a lot more to learn from their teaching methods and management style'.

Indicative of the findings in Table 5.3 not all students valued observation sufficiently and it may be that some teachers and principals under-estimate the potential of observation for student teacher learning. The following two quotes from final year post-primary students on a concurrent programme are telling, even though they reflect a minority view:

> We were observing teaching for 2 weeks at start of the SP but my Principal said it was better to start teaching straight away.

> We had the option to observe and I chose not to…We were there for a few days at school meetings so we knew things. I had done it (observation) before in year 2. So nothing had changed in two years so it was easy to fit in. It would be a waste of time as I observed those teachers before when I was there. I observed all the different teachers in all the different disciplines which was great, to see all the different subjects and how they were taught…. All students were aware I was at the back of the room and a student and I didn't feel it was worth it. I'd learn more by teaching myself. It was in the guidelines but you could do it if you wanted. We had to get permission from College to not observe.

From the point of view of co-operating teachers, it would appear that requirements for observation were unclear for schools, due in part, to the variation in requirements from different HEIs

> We don't get information from all the HEIs...I am going by what the student tells me. It might be nice to have some kind of formalisation of that. One student might say that I have to be there for the whole year whereas another student [from a different HEI] might come in and say I don't need to observe for the first few weeks, depending on their subject.

In primary programmes, our evidence suggests that observation of teaching would appear to also occur in the course of the student's own teaching practice insofar as the CT typically teaches some classes and the student observes and makes notes. Thus, this aspect of observation is more informal, opportunistic and *ad hoc* whereas the more formal specified type of observation occurs at pre-set periods and usually involves some note-taking and written commentary that is part of the student's teaching file and as such woven into reflection. It is clear that students appreciate the learning that accrues from observation but a significant minority of STs appear to place low value to it. Where observation was focussed, task-oriented and linked to activities set by the HEI, then its learning potential was maximised and better appreciated.

5.6 NATURE AND SOURCES OF GUIDANCE AND VARIATION OF FEEDBACK: HEI TUTORS AND CTS

Students receive Handbooks detailing the requirements about SP. The vast majority (88%) of the 395 students surveyed in round two acknowledged this but intriguingly some 5% didn't know if they had received a Handbook or not! Table 5.3 lists some key elements about SP and whether or not STs had received guidance pertaining to them. The vast majority of students reported receiving guidance on how many lessons they should teach, on taking responsibility for the whole class, on the observation of teaching, and on the assessment of learners. The last three items in this table – dealing with parents, participating in staff meetings, and cross curricular activities such as sport- appear not to get the same attention with only a minority of students in each case reporting that they got guidance on them. These same three areas pertain to the broader aspects of school life, beyond the immediacy of the classroom, and also reflect the more recent emphasis in the new arrangements on SP that recommend that STs experience the wider dimension of the school community.

Table 5.4 Incidence of Guidance Received on Key Elements as Reported by Student Teachers

Guidance on:	Yes	No	Don't know	
	%	%	%	N
The number of lessons I should teach	91	6	3	395
Taking responsibility for teaching the class independently	87	9	4	394
Observation of teaching	91	7	3	394
Assessment of learners	87	9	3	394
Dealing with parents	20	76	5	392
Participation in staff meetings	16	82	3	391
Involvement in extra-curricular activities like sport	39	57	4	392

All students are visited on SP and given detailed written and oral feedback on their progress from their HEI tutors. They also receive feedback from their CTs but understandably the nature of this feedback varies considerably with some STs getting a good deal of help from their CT while others may get very little.

5.6.1 *VARIATION BETWEEN HEI TUTOR AND CT FEEDBACK: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES*

The variation in ST experience in relation to their CT is a theme that featured in our diverse data banks. The main reason for the difference between the nature of the feedback given by the HEI tutor and the CT was articulated well by one ST interviewee and resonated with the thrust of our evidence overall: 'the HEI tutor focuses more on us and our learning whereas the CT focuses more on the learners in the class. College attends to me as a learner teacher and my impact on the students and their learning'. We highlight this point because it seems to be an explanatory factor in understanding the roles and responsibilities of the CT and HEI tutor.

Entirely in line with the international literature on the relative roles of HEI tutors and mentors/CTs, STs report that the HEI tutors are more attuned to the student teachers' concerns in supporting the process of professional development whilst the CT deals with more immediate practical aspects such as classroom routines, particular children and their special needs, specific curriculum areas to be covered by a certain period - as noted by a PME2 student the practical elements of SP when we are teaching and these are also helpful'. CTs rarely give written feedback (see further detail on CT below).

Student teachers received detailed written feedback from their HEI tutors about which they feel highly positive. The general finding is that HEI tutors 'comment on everything' and 'go into detail on every aspect'. As one post-primary ST focus group agreed: 'my tutor reads every single word in the file, nothing escapes her'. The following quote, along with reflecting the experience of very many STs, exemplifies good practice on the part of the HEI support system:

> My HEI tutor is much more in-depth-than my CT, she dissects everything and feedback is fantastic. She looks at my lesson plan and asks did I meet all the criteria... And she identifies things I should do to build up my skills in the next lesson so I can turn out really good lessons where the children are engaged. My CT is more looking at what I was just doing, whereas my HEI tutor is constantly dissecting my learning. My CT only comments on classroom management and didn't talk at all about the content I was teaching but my HEI tutor was talking a lot and commenting a lot on my content and how I was doing it. I got great advice.

And another student noted:

> Feedback from my CT is less formal like 'that is really good', whereas the HEI tutor is much more specific; they deal with subject content, concrete examples. What was really good in minute detail and what you need to do to improve. The HEI tutor sees you as a learner. . .

And other STs observed:

> You get brilliant feedback from your HEI tutor whereas it's more informal from the CT and it is more casual and maybe not so specific. . . . Feedback is about what you did, its impact and how it could be different. I don't get written feedback from my CT.

> The focus is on everything with my (HEI) tutor; 7 areas every single thing is commented on in one lesson. My tutor feedback is very detailed and precise; all followed up by an email detailing same. The feedback is really great. I have it then later in an email to reflect on it when I'm really able to digest it. She takes notes the whole way through and she sends that on later under headings. Things you can do to improve. Exactly what you need to help you improve.

Although the HEI tutor is involved in their summative assessment, it is clear from the above and our data, in general, that this is not an inspection-type enterprise, it is primarily about enabling the ST gain confidence and competence as a professional. One account from a HEI tutor, about trust, is interesting in this respect as it describes how one particular student in her group some years ago sought to maximise his learning opportunities in the tutor visits and tutorials. While the actions of the student are not at all typical of students we interviewed, the account certainly highlights the potential in the HEI tutor-student teacher relationship for learning and growth and how tutors seek to build trust with STs so they are willing to discuss weaknesses and strengths:

> Now what I find is that if you can get them to trust you and when you get them to trust you they'll begin to talk and you ask them, maybe you have different ways of approaching it but you would say to them sometimes maybe is there something that happened in the last few days, you know, that you wish you hadn't seen. And if you establish a sufficient relationship with them they'll begin to tell you this. And I base it on an experience I had five or six years ago with a guy who had been a barber for 16 years and had come fairly late to it. And he had three children and he had to wait a while after he did the Leaving Cert before his wife could work fulltime to allow him

to study so he was into this forties. And he had a diary and every day when I went in he had a whole load of stuff written down about things that he was worried about, things that had gone wrong on him, all of this sort of thing. He had no inhibition whatsoever about, he just wanted to extract all that he could from me about how so that he could do the things. And I thought if they could all be like that and if you can get some little bit down that road with them.

And another HEI tutor similarly emphasised the formative aspect of observing students and giving them feedback not only on SP but in tutorials in College:

I felt I tried really, really hard this year to kind of try and create a more collegial kind of relationship rather than the inspector–student relationship, because I felt that the first years (PME), that you needed them to be more open with you and, so that they would engage more and be more frank about things that were happening and that. Now, I don't know, I've certainly been working hard at trying to be less of a formal, you know, more of a critical friend type of thing than a kind of inspector. I don't know to what extent it's worked or not, you know. I certainly find it lovely, I like the tutorials, because you're with a different group than your own and I find that's a kind of, it's a different relationship, because I think they maybe feel freer speaking to you about things than your own students. I don't know.

We demonstrate further below the nature of feedback given by the HEI tutor by describing debriefing sessions we witnessed which followed observed lessons. For now we note how the quotations and claims noted here derive from a considerable amount of qualitative evidence which incorporated focus group and individual interviews with large numbers of HEI tutors and students over the period of the study. This evidence is representative of our data sets and therefore can be thought of as typical practice.

5.6.2. FEEDBACK FROM A RANGE OF SOURCES INCLUDING THE CT

The quantitative evidence in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 extends the evidence base from the qualitative dimension, confirming the importance of feedback from a variety of sources. Overall, STs talk to and get guidance from a range of people about their SP, from their HEI tutor and CT through to peers and other teachers in their placement school. The Tables show how the HEI tutor is the primary source of feedback to the student teacher although it is noteworthy that the role of the CT is especially important in relation to guidance on planning and the vast majority of STs reported having conversations with their CTs about their progress. A minority of STs reported being observed and getting feedback from School Principals, with the incidence of this lower at post-primary level.

It is noteworthy that 'other teachers' beyond the CT are more relevant for the post-primary ST with 69% saying they get guidance on planning from this source in the round one survey though this falls to one-fifth in the second survey. 72% of STs said they get guidance on teaching and learning from 'other teachers' in the first survey, though again, the corresponding statistic falls to 9% in the second ST survey.

Table 5.4 also shows some differences across the experiences of STs at primary and post-primary level in both rounds of questionnaire surveys. The main difference, which is

statistically significant, is the incidence of CT feedback on the quality of teaching of the ST. In both rounds of fieldwork primary teachers appear to be much more likely to get feedback from their CTs than their post-primary counterparts. Unsurprisingly, related to this is that the same pattern applies to being observed by the CT, with a greater incidence of observation of primary students in evidence. However, as noted, the majority of respondents, regardless of sector, reported having some dialogue with their CT about their progress in both rounds of questionnaire surveys.

In relation to changes over the time period of roughly 2.5 years, the evidence, at least in Table 5.4, does not suggest any trends in any particular direction.

Some items were incorporated into the second ST survey that did not feature in the first one. Table 5.5 provides further quantitative evidence of the guidance available to STs based on their responses in the second survey. Here percentages have been rounded up to enhance readability and statistically significant differences, where they occurred between primary and post primary, are highlighted.

A significant minority of STs (34%-43%) report that they get guidance about working with other colleagues from their HEI tutors, CTs and other teachers. The vast majority get feedback on the quality of teaching from HEI tutors and CTs with primary STs reporting more input from their CTs than their post-primary counterparts. This bears out STs' experience as reported in interviews. The CTs associated with primary STs tend to be in the classroom almost all the time while the ST is teaching. That varies more for post-primary STs, the latter CTs tending to be involved in other work elsewhere in the school and not necessarily always in the classroom. However, when it comes to guidance on how to assess learners, there is no difference between primary and post-primary with over half the STs surveyed in each case saying they receive guidance from their CT about this.

In line with the international literature about the role of the HEI tutor in the promotion of reflective practice and research, STs in our survey depend primarily on their HEI tutor for guidance on developing professional portfolios/files and critical reflection and this is so regardless of sector. Once again insofar as there is a sector difference, primary CTs tend to play a greater role in this than their post-primary colleagues.

Table 5.5 again confirms the importance of CTs in offering guidance on discipline/classroom management issues for STs and once again there is a significant difference by sector with the primary CT more involved.

Table 5.5: Sources of Feedback to the ST by Primary and Post Primary in Round 1 (R1) and 2 (R2) Fieldwork

	Primary Students %R1 %(R2)		PP Students %R1 %(R2)	
STs reporting they receive feedback on the quality of their teaching from:				
HEI tutor	100	(71)	91	(85)
CT	62	(73)	43	(42)
School Principal	26	(12)	23	(9)
STs saying that they are observed by the:				
HEI tutor	96	(100)	90	(100)
CT	82	(97)	37	(60)
School Principal	13	(34)	14	(10)
STs saying they get guidance on teaching and learning from:				
HEI tutor	96	(67)	86	(80)
CT	74	(68)	73	(38)
Other Teachers	32	(12)	72	(9)
STs saying they get guidance on planning from:				
HEI tutor	79	(51)	77	(69)
CT	79	(73)	70	(52)
Other Teachers	32	(13)	69	(20)
Principal	22	(12)	24	(11)
STs saying they have conversations about their progress with:				
HEI tutor				
CT	65	(98)	47	(94)
School Principal	60	(93)	63	(85)
	27	(78)	30	(69)

N=235 in Round 1 and N=396 in Round 2

Table 5.6: Guidance on how to teach by primary and post-primary (round 2)

	N	HEI Tutor		Other teachers		Co-op teacher	
		Yes %	**P**	**Yes %**	**p**	**Yes %**	**p**
Class Management/Discipline							
Primary	234	45	NS	17	P< 0.001 ***	87	P< 0.001 ***
Post-primary	149	50		46		68	
Total	**383**	**47**		**28**		**79**	
Working with other colleagues							
Primary	235	32	NS	33	NS	43	NS
Post-primary	149	36		37		44	
Total	**384**	**34**		**35**		**43**	
The quality of my teaching							
Primary	233	72	P=0.002 **	10.	NS	73	P < 0.001 ***
Post-primary	149	85		8		42	
Total	**382**	**77**		**9**		**61**	
School/classroom planning							
Primary	234	51	P <0.001 ***	13	NS	73	P < 0.001 ***
Post-primary	149	69		20		52	
Total	**383**	**58**		**16**		**65**	
My teaching and learning							
Primary	234	67	P <0.007 **	12	NS	68	P < 0.001 ***
Post-primary	149	80		9		38	
Total	**383**	**72**		**11**		**56**	
Assessing learners							
Primary	234	62	NS	6	P = 0.002 **	57	NS
Post-primary	149	65		17		51	
Total	**383**	**63**		**10**		**55**	
My professional portfolio							
Primary	234	75	NS	3	NS	14	P = 0.044 *
Post-primary	149	76		1		7	

Total	**383**	**75**		**2**		**12**	
Critical reflection of practice							
Primary	234	85	NS	3	NS	30	P
Post-primary	149	87		4		18	=0.010 **
Total	**383**	**86**		**4**		**25**	
Discipline Issues							
Primary	226	54	NS	12	P =0.004 **	85	P < 0.001 ***
Post-primary	145	51		24		64	
Total	**371**	**53**		**17**		**77**	

This quote from a first year PME primary student highlights the power a CT has in their development:

> Having a supportive, helpful and understanding class teacher in the class made SP easier. Feeling like you could ask for help, guidance, ideas in difficult areas were great. If I did not have a teacher who welcomed me and tried to help me so much, I imagine SP would be much more challenging.

Typical open-ended responses on questionnaires included the view that 'guidance from teachers in the profession is very valuable to me to help me improve as a teacher'. As already noted the incidence and nature of feedback from CTs varied much more than in the case of the HEI tutor. This variation was particularly evident in post-primary programmes where perhaps the tradition of class teacher presence/involvement was relatively more limited.

The following quotes reflect the range of student teacher experience in this regard from observation of the student teaching followed by guidance and tips on how to improve to no mentoring or guidance at all:

> My CT sat down at back and commented on a few things – I was talking too much and he told me to try and get the students talking more and get a student 'to teach' the class, to take turns dealing with a part of the lesson.

> One girl had no English at all in my class; I was trying to put Lithuanian words on the board to help her. . .Chinese girl in my class, I was translating. My CT told me stop doing that as she wasn't going to do it for her when I'd be gone . . . various amount of help from CT but help varies dependent on who your CT is and how co-operative they are.

One of my teachers doesn't help, she is not constructive. . . I have 3 CTs. . . . Some have just one, some have more. It's the teacher whose class you are taking becomes your CT and some have one CT overall.

Most second year PME students have no real CT.

As we have noted there is much variation in the scale of support offered by CTs. In one focus group of six primary year 4 students there was agreement that the amount of support students get varies considerably according to the class teacher. One student in the group captured how all felt when she said:

My CT is lovely, she is very accommodating, she just says 'use what you want from the press' but she doesn't say anything much about what I'm doing, she's just happy for me to get on with it. On my last placement I had a different experience, my CT was always finding interesting things to show me, things I might read and everything, showing me a book and going 'this book would be great for you', she was so into my learning, it was terrific.

And another student in the same group went on to describe how her friend has a most difficult relationship with her CT and how there is simply no communication.

HEI tutors are very aware of the variation and indeed inequity in the experience of STs with regard to CT support while recognising the power of the CT to impact very fundamentally the learning of the ST as indicated by one tutor in a focus group interview:

…there's an inequality there where you have a class teacher and if you have a discussion with the class teacher and you point out certain things where that person can assist the student and they go all out of their way. I had a student last year who started off quite poor and the class teacher was superb, took him in hand and by the end, it was a 1st year placement, by the end of it he was, he had just improved I'd say 300% and it was due to the class teacher who had taken him in hand. And then you could have another situation where the class teacher doesn't see it and they're quite entitled to that but it's just it's very fortunate for the student who has a good experience.

However, STs also referred to what they perceive as variation in the feedback they get from HEI tutors. In interviews with STs there was much commentary about getting 'conflicting advice' from tutors and this is a concern to them since it is perceived as a matter of equity. In one case students spoke passionately about their wish not to have one particular HEI tutor as their SP tutor since that tutor is perceived as 'harsh' and 'confrontational' and 'far too demanding'. As a result of agreement in the focus group expressing this view, they put forward the view that STs would welcome greater standardisation in how HEI tutors interpret observed practice. Having more than one tutor observe and assess STs on SP is clearly important in enhancing the reliability and validity of allocated grades, a theme we develop in more detail later in the chapter.

The evidence overall points to the significance of the HEI tutor's role in feeding back to the ST accounts of how they can continue to make progress as a teacher. However, it is important to note the additional significance of the CT role and feedback revealed in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 and via the qualitative evidence. Bearing in mind the international literature again, this profile of involvement in feedback is what we might expect. Mindful too of the still very early stage at which the language and role of 'co-operating teacher' exists in ITE policy in Ireland it would appear that the CT is already playing an important role in the support of the ST. The greater variation in the nature of the input of the CT is to be expected given the diversity of practices in schools and the variation in the extent to which CTs are available and willing to take on the task.

5.7 HEI TUTOR AND CT COMMUNICATION ABOUT ST PROGRESS

This theme is part and parcel of school-HEI partnership in developing the ST and we consider it here in this chapter in the context the ST's progress in learning. We asked our participant HEI tutors to tell us about their engagement and conversations with CTs (and principals) about the student teacher's progress. Most said they would seek to meet the CT when they visit the school though it is not always possible, especially at post-primary level, as the CT may be involved in other duties and not be available. On being asked about the nature of the conversations, a common response at post-primary level was the following: 'It's very light actually unless there is an issue. If the CT has engaged with the student then the conversation can be deep but often that's not the case' (pp HEI tutor). Another common response was the following: 'it is very important to get the perspective of the CT, if they are willing to give it. It's not necessarily about assessment in the case of the CT. We need assessment but the CT has a vital role - often a student will listen to a CT more than someone who is assessing them' (primary HEI tutor). In general the phrase 'hit and miss' seems to capture the communication between HEI tutor and CT during visits at post primary level, as suggested by this post-primary tutor:

> I've met principals, I've met teachers who've just come up to me, oh, are you supervising this student, I just want to say he or she is excellent and they give me all the feedback. That's for students that are excellent, you know, but sometimes the teachers, the co-operating teachers really want to pass that information on. But it's a bit hit and miss with the co-operating teacher, I have to say. They might be in class. I might have met the principal one time, the deputy principal the next time. I'm always trying to make the connection but, you know, without disturbing their routines, they're very busy people, but it is a bit hit and miss.

All HEI tutor interviewees, regardless of sector, said that where possible they would speak with the CT when visiting their students. And this is a point that many said was different to the 'old teaching practice days':

> Yeah and this is only a new thing like from my perspective. In the old days you would say hello teacher, goodbye teacher, that's it and none of your business but that's totally changed and it has to change.

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While it remains very unusual, quite rare, for CTs to be present in the HEI tutor's debriefing following an observed lesson by a ST, it is not entirely absent:

> This particular girl had a wonderful relationship with the host teacher. The host teacher had, she was English born and she had been involved she told me about, I forget the details of it now but a university in Liverpool, she was involved in mentoring trainee teachers and so on. And she had a particular background to contribute in this situation. Now I spoke to both of them and I asked them how, I never reported this now but anyway, how they would feel about she's sitting in on the [debrief] and both of them are very much in favour of it and I thought in that instance, I'm not recommending, you can't make it blanket, but it was hugely beneficial. And she contributed throughout the [debrief] and the discussion and so on and it was a fairly equal three-way conversation.

HEI tutors also recognised the difficulty in generalising about the professional relationships between the ST teacher and the CT due to the variety of students and experiences with CT. As some STs in post-primary may be required to interact with up to eight CTs, this results in idiosyncratic relationships that can vary by subject and year group. One HEI tutor suggested that the relationship between the ST and CT is "generally a more benign relationship" whereas that which exists between the ST and HEI tutor is "a bit more a business relationship", suggesting a complementarity in roles, if not clear division, between the school based supportive role and the university based, evaluative one.

We also asked CTs and Principals for their views about conversations they have with HEI tutors about student teacher progress. All the Principals reported having conversations with HEI tutors when they visit the school to observe students. However, CTs were less likely to have such conversations and some were critical of what they saw as a lack of appreciation of their contribution. We revisit this theme with more particular reference to the perspective of the CT in Chapter 6.

5.8 THE DEBRIEF AS A PIVOTAL VEHICLE FOR INTEGRATING FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

For the purposes of clarity in presenting our evidence we are separating the more informal, formative assessment dimension from the more formal, summative one involving the grading of students' performance. However, in reality our evidence shows that these dimensions are not separate since the discussion and rationale surrounding the allocation of a summative comment or provisional grade is typically bound up with explanation, guidance for future practice, and aspects that need to be worked on. Referring to methods of assessing the effectiveness of teacher education programmes Worrell et al (2014, 8) conclude that 'formative evaluations should provide diagnostic information that helps produce successful summative evaluations'.

The vast majority (in excess of 80%) of all STs surveyed in both surveys reported that their HEI tutor shares assessment information with them with no significant difference between primary and post-primary in this regard. 90% of students in the second survey agreed that their HEI tutor gave them feedback on their teaching. This is especially evident when one considers the debriefing and feedback sessions that students have with their HEI tutor after an

observed lesson which usually occurs immediately after a whole lesson has been observed by the tutor. It also occurs in small group college tutorials with the tutor, on PME post-primary and PME primary continuous block placement, when typically students share their experiences and dilemmas with their tutor in a safe environment designed to reflect on practice and to problem-solve for each other. In this section we focus particularly on the nature of the debrief. Typically STs and their tutors use the term 'debrief' for these sessions since feedback is their primary purpose. As can be seen from the evidence, what occurs is a professional conversation in which the ST has the opportunity to reflect with their tutor on what transpired during the lesson. The term, 'professional conversation' used in Droichead is also applicable and highly relevant.

Appendix 1 unpacks some of the above discussion about teaching and learning with reference to the kind of interaction that takes place between ST and HEI tutor following the observation of a lesson. It is based on a selection from 2 debriefing sessions, (from a total of 7) with 2 different tutors, the first one lasting just over one hour, the second one lasting just under an hour. Some aspects (e.g. the actual focus of the lesson/content) are changed slightly to protect the anonymity of the tutors and the programme but this does not interfere with the actuality of what happened. The first is a post-primary, practical lesson in a special educational needs setting and the student is in her fourth year of a five-year programme.

To our knowledge there is limited data available in the Irish context on the nature of the interaction that transpires between tutor and student about an observed lesson and undoubtedly this is an area that would merit further study in the future because it represents such direct evidence of what is really valued and monitored on SP. What is clear is that the debrief is an important meeting point of theory and practice, and of formative and summative assessment. It is a vital mechanism for integrating those elements and because it is directly to do with the personal, context-laden 'here and now' experience of the ST, it is deeply meaningful and thus a powerful source for the shaping of competence and identity of the beginner teacher.

Unlike the evidence presented in other sections of this report we can't claim that these debriefs or professional conversations are necessarily the norm since our evidence base is too limited to make such a claim. Because overall we witnessed a total of 7 debriefs across primary and post-primary contexts, we followed up by asking HEI tutors in the second round of fieldwork how they conducted their debriefs. Typically, tutors said they do so immediately after the lesson and usually in the school itself. Occasionally it is conducted back in college depending on practical circumstances of both the tutor and the student. Each such meeting is reported to last between 45 minutes and over one hour and to range widely over the list of topics presented at the beginning of this section. Tentatively we suggest that the limited debriefing evidence presented here does align with the typical practice described in the interviews and questionnaires but future research might usefully examine the nature and role of the debrief across a wider and more diverse range of settings.

5.9 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment results of SP are 'high stakes'. This is so because they are perceived by students and prospective employers as indicative of the competence of the teacher. Students themselves perceive their results in SP as hugely significant and they pay very close attention

to the entire formative and summative assessment process. In the student handbooks in all our case study programmes considerable space and detail are devoted to the assessment process and students tend to be very clear on the procedures. As one Primary Director of SP told us:

> Students themselves are aware of criteria from which we base our assessment, reports that we complete, college is very exact and precise and demands certain standards in those reports. We are highly organised in this, we are very professional but still, all the time, we all have the opportunity to accommodate and facilitate individuality that we constantly see in schools: classrooms, teachers, and schools as different.

We are not aware of any programmes in the State that do not grade SP – the main SP results are not on a pass/fail basis (like they are for instance on most programmes in England) but are graded such that the results influence the student's degree classification. The HEI tutors we interviewed accept that practice has to be observed and eventually summatively assessed/graded in the interests of transparency and assuring the quality of the teachers who emerge from their programmes.

The HEI is solely responsible for summatively assessing a ST's performance of SP and for allocating a grade. HEI tutors do not grade individual lessons on single visits, rather they typically adopt a more holistic stance and determine a mark at the end of the SP module based on all the visits, on progression of learning against the criteria, and incorporating planning, reflection and evaluation as well as direct class teaching.

Moreover, students are not graded on every single SP – as they progress through their programme and as the SP gets more extended they are graded. For instance, PMEs are mostly graded on a pass/fail basis at the end of year one but are graded at the end of year two. In our interviews over the two rounds of fieldwork HEI tutors said that a small minority of students fail to progress because of not meeting the criteria and not making enough progress to give the HEI confidence that they could make good the gaps in their competence as NQTs. However, it is not possible to specify a particular percentage here since the approach is also one of 'counselling some students out' during (as opposed to at the end) of their time on the programme'. And as one tutor observed: 'some students know themselves by Christmas that teaching is not for them and so they deselect themselves'.

Student teachers are observed by more than one HEI tutor on the extended/10-week block SP and sometimes by more than one tutor on shorter placements. In one programme, which appears to be standard practice across our cases, the placement tutor reported that in the case of a student who is considered 'at risk' (of failure) a second opinion is sought and the student receives a visit from another tutor. Furthermore, if a tutor is concerned about lack of progress of particularly poor preparation and lesson plans, they may remain in the school and observe an additional lesson. In all cases it is clear that programmes have in place procedures for addressing weak performances and additional support is made available to those who are at risk of failing their SP module. There are also robust procedures in place for ensuring that grading is trustworthy and consistent which we describe below.

There is recognition that there has to be a balance between demonstrating competence for grading purposes and getting an opportunity to experiment and extend oneself in new directions as indicated by this quote from a primary tutor:

> In our second year students have a supported visit, there is no marking or grading during that SP, so they take risks, they experiment, try something out, they teach a subject – I had a student who was not comfortable with teaching Irish she said, I'm not too good at the Irish and I said let's use this time to prepare and she did because she wasn't concerned about the grade.

The grading of students on SP is based not only on performance in the classroom but also on their wider professional engagement which is mainly evidenced through the classroom planning, resources, reflections, evaluations, and accounts of contribution to the school which are detailed in the student's files. The following is a typical tutor response:

> They get a grade which is also based on their written evaluation, their interpretation of the feedback they get from us, it's based on their learning; it's based on performance, but not only performance, they have to make a lot of the feedback they get and write about that. We manage it, there is a lot of work.

Critical reflection is part of the grading. Generally this is not broken down into components. This is how one programme assesses critical reflection: 'we interview all of our students and that's 25% of the overall grade, there is a strong emphasis on critical reflection on the personal and professional journey, they are interviewed by SP tutors after their placement is over'.

Another tutor described their process:

> We don't directly assess/grade them in schools, we visit but don't assess, we have conversations. We assess them in May, there is quite a block of time between end of SP at Easter and May. Every student is interviewed around 4 themes … It's usually a 15-minute interview. School Administration, Developing my Initiative, Professional Conversations, Contribution to my School Community. They select one and speak to it for 5 minutes, while the interviewers pick another and ask questions about it. This is all videoed. In this we are trying to get students to see the wider nature of teaching, getting them to step outside the lesson, it is important to be a member of community.

This is also set up to give students an experience of interview: 'something to talk about in an interview– teeing them up for the transition to the school community'. Some newly qualified teachers participate in these activities with students thus easing their transition to the status of NQT.

Some tutors expressed concern about the impact of grading on the wellbeing of the ST. These commented on how competitive students have become in relation to SP grading such as the following primary tutor: 'grading can work against some of them, they are so competitive, they have such high standards, they don't settle for second best, they put huge pressure upon themselves'. And another noted 'in recent years, I notice that they are not listening to me sometimes – they are only interested in one aspect of what I have say – the grade, they ask me 'have I got a 2.1'?'

To conclude this subsection is noteworthy that assessment of performance on SP is through direct observation. Unlike other dimensions of student teacher learning that tend to be assessed more indirectly i.e. through written assignments or perhaps timed, written

examination, SP is truly a performance assessment. This means that validity is high: what is assessed is what is intended to be assessed, it is the actual, authentic performance itself that constitutes teaching and that constitutes its assessment. As Worrell et al (2014, 3) writing about assessing and evaluating teacher education programmes claim 'validity is the most important characteristic of any assessment and is the foundation for judging technical quality'. SP in Ireland aligns very well with what international evidence indicates as 'best' practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 14): first it is performance assessment as outlined, and second it adheres to what is considered the vital practices of effective teacher preparation, that is, practices that link in turn with good outcomes for pupils, although unlike the US evidence, good outcomes for students is mostly qualitative and descriptive rather than mostly test-based as it is in the US models described by Darling-Hammond. The evidence from the sample of debriefs confirm this emphasis.

Drawing from various effective assessment models in operation in the US, Darling-Hammond (2010, 14) advocates the following dimensions as the focus of ST assessment: planning and teaching a series of lessons linked to appropriate level of pupils; daily reflection on lesson taught with revision of plans in light of that reflection; analysis and commentary of their own teaching included in their portfolios; collection and analysis of evidence of student learning; reflection on what worked, what didn't, and why; and projection as to what should have been done differently. As demonstrated by the evidence in this Report all these dimensions are not just included but made central in the performance assessment of STs in Ireland.

5.10 ROLE OF CT IN GRADING

It is clear that a key part of the evolving partnership between HEI and school bears considerably on the role of the CT in shaping the ST for the profession. So far we are concluding (from the above) that while CTs offer very important guidance to the ST, it varies a great deal and it varies across sectors.

As we already pointed out above, HEI tutors are exclusively responsible for the summative assessment of students on SP. We specifically asked if CTs play any role in summative assessing or grading students and currently they have no role in allocating grades. However, in line with evidence already presented above, the vast majority of HEIs surveyed (98%) said they engage with the CTs and principals in relation to student ST progress and at least one of our cases invites CTs to complete and return a template on various aspects of the ST's contribution. The latter asked CTs to comment on all of the following: punctuality, appearance and dress, relationships with staff in the school, relationships with learners, lesson planning and preparation, contribution to extra-curricular activities. The CT is invited to sign the template.

We found that there are mixed views about the merits of CTs being involved in grading. Some student teachers themselves tend to want their CT to have a greater say in grading than currently but it must be said this varies a great deal with other students resistant to this idea. Understandably their perspective on this is entirely influenced by their own experience and relationships with their different CTs over various placements. The following gives a sense of the diversity of views held by students as to the involvement of the CT in their assessment and grading:

> CTs should be 100% involved in formulating ST grades as they see their progress and development regularly.

> I believe that the CT should play some part in assessing you by providing questionnaire feedback to the HEI tutor.

> The inspector (HEI tutor) assesses you, the CT does not. No, it would not be a good idea to have the CT assessing you. You want to be part of the staff as much as possible and it the teacher is assessing you it would put a big strain on the relationship. Above all you want to feel part of the school, definitely they shouldn't be assessing us at all.

The questionnaire survey of student teachers shows that 57% of primary STs and 63% of post primary students said the CT should have a role in grading them on SP. An item on the questionnaire also asked them to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, 'my CT is well placed to assess my teaching'. 63% of primary students and 42% of post primary students agreed with this statement. Interviews with CTs lead us to the conclusion that, while they are keen to engage with HEI tutors and offer their professional judgment on the progress of the STs in their classes, they are less enthusiastic about having a say in their actual grading, believing that this role would entail considerable additional work, would require intensive training, and interfere with the nature of the relationship they may have with the ST. In particular the view was expressed that it would certainly challenge the advocacy role that some CTs adopt towards their student teachers (see below).

HEI tutors and indeed CTs themselves recognise that the HEI and therefore the HEI tutor has the ultimate responsibility for the ITE programme and as such has ultimate responsibility for the student's grading. Moreover, there is recognition that the HEI tutor has the benefit of the 'bigger picture' in that s/he sees a wide range of students and practices and is usually highly accomplished in mentoring student teachers and has the balance of theory and practice, including awareness of all the other aspects of the student's learning across the programme. This experience is recognised, by all the stakeholders, as endowing the HEI tutor with the broader and deeper comparative and 'good practice' lens that may not always be available to the CT, particularly at this stage in the development of the new policy on SP. Such arguments are persuasive.

However, not all HEI tutors share the view that the CT need not play a role in grading. The following strongly held view was advanced by one senior HEI tutor with long experience of mentoring students on SP when asked about the factors that would enhance her ability to support students more effectively:

> That all (CTs) would be up to speed on the assessment process and they should be able to be involved in the assessment and I would go so far as involving students in 'an exit poll' the students themselves evaluating, like in professional development hospitals, like medicine 360 evaluation. That's where we should be headed and encouraged to move to. And have schools opting out rather than opting in so a precondition / assumption would be that they are involved. And really schools are wonderful even now and willing to do so much.

Not unlike this view, a Principal of a large primary school said having the CT grade the ST's

performance would be the ideal but how it would require considerable investment in CPD for CTs:

> Perhaps teachers should be more involved. And this (grading) happens in other professions, indeed it may be the host professional only and then if there's a problem the College gets involved. Yes I think the teachers should have some role in assessment. But it's a time and resources issue. We see the students a lot more than the inspector- you might only see the student a few times. …It's a whole package, you (i.e. the Principal) are looking at the ST everywhere in the school, the staff room and so on and checking. The CT needs to see the whole package …. We should be more involved in grading and have more autonomy in that … danger is though if we got the autonomy for grading it would inevitably change the relationship you have with the student…more CPD would be needed.

Another HEI tutor, however, expressed a different perspective:

> We have to be careful about CTs being involved in grading- that would mean considerable movement for teacher as primary assessor and while in theory and in principle it looks good, the reality is it produces a huge amount of problems. It would mean spending too much time with teachers rather than with student teacher… if you are trying to deal with the teacher, broker the teacher into assessment, the reality is the teacher as assessor can complicate experience totally…it is difficult as it is but add teacher into this mix and it complicates the picture. I've watched it in operation where tutor from college engage / placate the teacher rather than deal with student.

The above comment was offered in the context of the difficulties often encountered in discussion about weaker students where the CT takes up the role of advocate for the student and is often reluctant to tackle more critical feedback about the student. This is a view that HEI tutors in all our case study programmes expressed and are very aware of. In one of our primary case studies a HEI tutor noted that, notwithstanding the aspirations of the Teaching Council Guidelines, where a ST encounters difficulties, HEI tutors noted the reluctance of CTs to engage in a conversation about the matter:

> You could see them even physically backing back, distancing themselves from you because they just didn't want to say anything.

> A couple of teachers have said to me, 'I'll tell you what she is really like but please do not write anything'...they didn't really want it disclosed to the college

Cases where a ST is well known or related to staff in a school can present a set of complex issues in relation to how the ST is mentored and supported, and ultimately assessed. As one HEI tutor observed:

> To give independent advice is something that I would have found is an issue and particularly because we are now asking the students to find their own SP. It takes a very brave teacher I think to come to a supervisor and say, 'I'm not happy with this student and I know she is a daughter of whoever in the staff.

Similarly, issues arise in the case of assessing STs in small schools, or in a small community where a student is known in the community or where there is a family member in the school. As one HEI tutor in a primary context observed:

> Can you imagine how difficult it would be in a local school that gave an *F* to a principal's daughter or son? I mean it's just ridiculous… I think there has to be some very strong relationship between the supervisor and the class teacher, or maybe that's where it comes in.

CT interviewees themselves were not keen to have a formal role currently in the summative assessment of student teachers where this would involve reporting grades (but see survey data in chapter 7). While CTs provide an invaluable formative support, the typical response in CT interviews was that they do not wish to 'have anything to do with grades' as one CT expressed it. On the other hand, CTs are uniquely positioned to observe STs learning to become teachers in a range of different teaching and learning situations, as well as within the wider school context in ways that may not be evident to the visiting HEI tutor. The following quote from a post primary school illustrates how CTs see their role and how they might contribute to the overall ST evaluation:

> ...Not the assessment, but I would like to have a discussion with the HEI tutor that they are only seeing forty minutes of a student's time and we are working with them for the whole year. For them to come in and not even acknowledge that we are there and what we are doing with this work...and that we have inside information maybe about the student...If they are concerned about something we could maybe alleviate that concern and say, 'We know, we have observed them, and I wouldn't think that is an issue.

On being asked about offering oral and written feedback and assessing students the typical response is that CTs are very willing to offer oral feedback on observed lessons, to support student teachers informally and formatively, rather than systematically and to a formal template. The following extract is very typical of the responses of CTs about assessment of STs in their classes. It derives from a focus group in a large school in a provincial town in the north west, a school which has a tradition of taking STs from all the HEI primary providers:

> Interviewer: Oral feedback? Written? How open to written?

> Interviewee: I prefer oral.. verbal feedback. The ST should expect to get oral feedback and they do; we don't want to feel we are knit picking. We shouldn't be overly judging. We don't want to be seen like we're assessing them, making their time difficult with us. We want to feel we're on their side. We want to be seen as having a supportive role, not as an inspector, we don't want to be in inspecting role.

> Interviewee: Grading is a matter entirely for the university. We have to remember that these students are our neighbours, they are our ex pupils, so grading them would be very difficult indeed.

> Interviewee: It's good though to be able to talk to you guys, and you guys do ask us when you come in if there are any problems anything of concern.

> Interviewee I'm happy enough as things are without having an evaluative/grading role. I would hate to have responsibility for grading. Better left with the College.

The triadic relationship between the ST, CT and HEI tutor is one that will be considered again in our section on partnership. For now, we note the disjunction in communication that can occur and the potential for misunderstanding in the absence of dialogue, as one post primary CT observes:

> In a way, we are kind of left out...the relationship is obviously between the student teacher and the tutor. The tutor comes into the school and leaves the school without any acknowledgement or any hello or goodbye. But I have never formally met any of the tutors.

Yet, the potential to gain a deeper understanding of the ST's learning can be greatly enhanced when communication flows, as described here, shedding light on diverse aspects of ST learning, on the dialogic nature of learning between ST and CT, and ultimately developing ST agency and self-efficacy:

> Actually by chance I bumped into the inspector on the way out and went just had a chat about the classes and what I had observed. And then afterwards the ST said she was so grateful that I had said what I had said. And I said, well actually I told her the truth…There were things that she was glad the inspector had heard, different strategies and funny things I learned from her because students are coming in to us with brilliant ideas and we are stealing those ideas then and it's great. It gives them great confidence.

5.11 BENEFITS OF THE EXTENDED DURATION AND CONTRASTING SP

HEI tutors, especially those involved in PME for the secondary system, expressed the view that both the extended period in ITE along with the opportunity to experience a contrasting school experience have been very significant in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the competences of STs. HEI tutor interviewees were keen to emphasise how PME students in year two of their programme had shown they could contribute well to the school and be highly accomplished in their class teaching. This was confirmed by some of our CT and principal interviewees in that they tend to prefer to take students who have already successfully completed one year on the programme. HEI tutors reported that in year 2 PME most of the students are able to participate fully in the life of the school as teachers, as one programme leader of a post-primary PME observed: 'they have the competency and the schools love them'. However a small percentage don't have the competence, it seems, and this is only becoming evident because of the extended duration plus the opportunity to be in more than one school:

> It is really emerging in Year 2. In the old system they were in and out but now we are catching the weaknesses in Year 2. We are catching now in year 2 student teachers who in the old system were not spotted until induction and then they are gone from our jurisdiction.

Another HEI tutor in the same focus group interview (which, incidentally included tutors who taught on both a consecutive and concurrent programmes) said:

> This week alone we have 3 PME 2 students – where the schools cannot support them and they are back into team teaching. They were ok last year but this year they can't hack it in their very different setting. Definitely it was a case that they were comfortable in their own school where they knew people, safe and secure but now this year they did not transition with the same level of competency.

And another develops the point:

> One of my students is a slow developer – this girl is only now getting it (middle of second year). She was fairly ok in school last year but she was very protected there, there was no challenge but this year she has a lot of challenge and is now finally getting it, but after 6 months.

A factor that influences progress is school culture. This is well known and understood from the many research studies over a long time from several countries. One HEI programme leader expressed some disappointment at what she perceives as the relatively low growth in competence given the extended period of training:

> I'm not seeing great progression in second years, as much as I expected. They get encultured into the schools in a way that sometimes is not good for them. I have to remind them of AfL, changing their questioning strategies over and over…

Tutors report that much depends on what the culture of the school is in which they are doing their placement, one tutor suggesting that 'cliques in staff room, members of staff they have befriended influence what they do, they can be channelled into ways of working and thinking that are not very reflective'.

Overall, evidence from our project confirms the value of the extended duration, more particularly of the extended period in school, and most especially, the opportunity to experience a contrasting placement. This was more evident in the case of post-primary programmes. The latter is not surprising given that the requirement of a placement in more than one school is entirely a new aspect for post-graduate, post-primary programmes.

5.12 Quality Assurance: Consistency in Supporting and Interpreting Student Performance

We already demonstrated how there are mixed views as to the potential of the CT as summative assessor of the ST on SP. Our qualitative interview evidence shows that in general they remain reluctant to be directly involved in the grading of STs but are willing to speak to HEI tutors and offer informal feedback that could influence the grade. There seems to be a reluctance on the part of CTs to offer written feedback, thus a resistance to a more formal engagement with the process of grading. However, it has to be noted that a majority (67%) of post-primary CTs surveyed (see Chapter 7) reported their desire to have a role on the grading of the ST. Thus, our qualitative and quantitative evidence would appear to be rather conflicting and this is discussed further in Chapter 7. The interviews allowed us probe in

some detail what would be involved in CTs grading STs and we conclude that expecting CTs to write reports leading to a grade is not feasible at this point. Over the period of the study some HEI tutors reported a slight hardening of this position with CTs apparently resisting a role in assessing student performance and in some cases reluctant to have any part in feeding back to the HEI on STs. It may be that this stance cannot be separated from the wider policy context and developments in relation to Droichead, specifically in the role schools have in supporting the induction of NQTs into the profession. As one post-primary HEI tutor and programme leader put it: 'over the last two years, teachers have pulled back fully. I go into schools and they run a mile. Around the Droichead issues, there is a feeling expressed of being over-worked, they (teachers) see themselves as doing our work and the ITE student is not considered part of their community'. It is important to note that CTs have not been required or expected to play a part in determining STs grades. The task of grading remains firmly the exclusive domain of the HEI tutor who is extremely conscious of the responsibility. As one primary HEI interviewee explained with reference to Droichead, the assessment carried out by the HEI is all the more important as assessment of individual competence is now only carried out at ITE level.

The HEI tutors perceive that students themselves wish to be graded, beyond merely pass/fail and students simply take this for granted: they expect to be graded. The upshot of this is that success criteria around student teacher performance in schools, along with their lesson planning and evaluations, need to be clear, accessible and understood by all concerned. Having objective, transparent rubrics which are communicated well in advance is an expected feature of all programmes and HEI tutors, in particular, were unanimous in their emphasis on this point. Of course how participants – HEI tutors, CTs and STs interpret them at local level, given particular students in particular settings and contexts is a complex matter that inevitably can be highly problematic involving significant matters of professional judgment since it is not possible to pin down and pre-determine everything in advance.

Some student teachers themselves in their interviews (see above and Chapter 8 on student experience) were highly exercised by what they occasionally experienced as inconsistency across different tutors' interpretation of observed practice. They reported that they get to know their tutors and recognise what they want and expect to see when they visit. One interviewee claimed that 'at times feedback can be quite different among different tutors' and went on to argue that there should be more 'common ground' as 'at times you can do the same thing yet receive different response from tutors'. Thus, the ST perception is that not all tutors have the same practices and students feel obliged to tune in to the particular emphases a particular tutor might have. While the typical response from students was that HEI tutors offered detailed and very helpful written feedback against the professional success criteria and engaged in helpful debriefing sessions following observational visits, some students commented that their tutors sometimes valued different things and thus they felt the guidance was inconsistent.

However, HEI tutor interviewees emphasised the importance of consistency, validity and reliability in the final grades conferred on student performance. They emphasised, for instance, the comprehensive moderation processes that staff undertake to maximise fairness to students and to ensure consistent interpretation of practice. For them, strict adherence to the assessment rubric is crucial. In one primary programme for instance, the language used in the evaluation form and with the student reflects the language of the rubric very closely, such

that the student should be able to recognise his or her grade on the basis of the comments provided by the HEI tutor. Without exception, our interviews with HEI tutors and directors of SP across the years of study talked about the mechanisms they have in place to maximise the faith one can have in the grades awarded students for their work on SP. They were very mindful that schools themselves tend to pay particular attention to that outcome of the initial teacher education programme in job interviews. This unanimous position was confirmed in the HEI questionnaire survey where 100% (n=80, Round 2) and 96% (n=112, Round 1) said they receive guidance on moderating grades for SP. Moreover, 100% of HEI tutor respondents expressed confidence in supporting students on SP while the vast majority (95%, Round 2 survey) said they were familiar with their own HEI requirements for SP.

The mechanisms geared to enhancing the quality and consistency of HEI tutor feedback and grades span induction for newly appointed tutors through shadowing more established tutors, ongoing CPD on assessment and feedback for all tutors – full and part-time - communication of exemplary and expected practices to students and schools, sessions to ensure tutors understand and agree the professional progression of teaching performance over the period of the programme i.e. the difference say between years 2 and 4 on a concurrent programme and the difference between years 1 and 2 on a concurrent programme; and blind marking of student folders/SP files.

The following quotations are presented as typical of the approaches adopted by HEIs in this regard:

> We have a rigorous procedure for the induction of SP tutors– it is way more regimented in last 6 years – tutors shadow an experienced tutor, and will be involved with 3 meetings with students in shadow capacity in order to know the ropes; we have a lot of induction for new tutors. (PP HEI tutor).

> All HEI tutors who are new go through a shadowing process, they don't supervise alone. (Primary tutor HEI)

> We have several sessions on how to give feedback and discussions on how to interpret practice … We've all had videos where we can compare / contrast interpretations and these are of great value … in terms of developing a shared interpretation of practice. (PP)

> CPD training is about 2 hour duration at least 3 times per year for the tutor group. The focus is on forthcoming SP; the requirements of the SP, any changes that have happened tutors have to be aware of them. We regularly survey tutors to see what areas they would like input on… for the last one, we had 5 lecturers from college presenting on assessment, …while there are lots of guidelines in our HEI tutor folders it is still important to have face to face professional development. We also have moderation of samples of student folders – these are blind marking sessions.

In a lively focus group interview with primary PME tutors the training of all new tutors was of paramount important to ensure consistent support to students and reliability in the assessments made. The following is an extended segment describing the approach to the induction of new SP tutors:

Interviewer: Great. In terms of professional preparation, just maybe a comment in relation to the provision of preparation or training for the role, who provided it, the school placement, what elements were included?

Interviewee 1: We had a day's training here and we shadowed three different tutors.

Interviewee: Oh did you?

Interviewer: Yeah, I shadowed with one tutor for three days, and I shadowed with another tutor for a day. And another tutor for another day.

Interviewer: And then did you continue on straight away in school placement or for the next placement after that then?

Interviewee 1: After doing the shadowing I was thrown in, I suppose I mean, we had the training course. We had a lot of reading, we got... we certainly got all the Teaching Council guidelines.

Interviewee 2: And inputs from here, reading and shadowing. And a lot for each placement**.** So we had great support.

Interviewee 3: And we have continuous support from the college, from everyone, your consultant or (tutors and Directors of SP named), they're only an email away or a phone call away, and you are very much supported and scaffolded along the way.

Interviewee 1: And then we in turn have had people shadowing with us as well.

Interviewer OK, the cycle continues.

Interviewee 4: We try to start supervisors with first years, where the stakes aren't that high so it's important that they start at an easy enough… And as well, I would also say about the (contract/part-time) supervisors, particularly here, the contact between them is huge the contact between yourselves which I think is very, very supportive.

Along with CPD for all HEI tutors involved in SP, a further approach adopted across all our case programmes for the extended SP, is moderation incorporating a second tutor who independently visits and observes the student's teaching and then both tutors confer and share perspectives based on the observed lessons. One HEI tutor said: 'Having a second person on visits is very useful so long as it doesn't make the student more nervous' (PP tutor) while another in the same focus group explained how in addition to a second visit, some students have an extra visit due to various factors such as having had a particularly 'bad experience' in some dimension of the placement.

Also, HEI tutors frequently request an additional visit for STs who may be struggling and such students are informed that they are to receive an extra visit from a tutor. Student teachers who 'made a poor start' or who took longer to show indicators of competence receive an opportunity to 'catch up'. Tutors across all programmes described practices for

dealing with such students, mostly involving intensive debriefing and tutoring from placement tutors.

One HEI tutor who is also a programme leader described their approach on a post-primary PME programme. The description of the intensive grind in college (below) was not a feature that others mentioned in this way but, especially in the case of those student teachers who are struggling to meet the criteria, all HEIs mentioned extra visits, cross moderation, and discussion with the CT:

> If there is a sign of failing, we bring them back in, we give them intensive one-to-one tuition and micro teaching, we do an in-house competency test here on campus; we have some 1st years who can't cope, they are at risk of the schools saying that they cannot support them. We take them back, we do an intensive grind on classroom structures, classroom management – usually those aspects but whatever they are struggling with really. Then the person who is struggling but surviving in practice: we do cross moderation, we give extra visits. We want to give them every chance to get better and to pass. Teaching is a tough job but you have to be good at it, you have to be passionate. We have to be cognisant of their wellbeing also as potential teachers. Especially when they are gone from the university with no tutor support. We need to give them every chance to show what they can do but make sure they can do it. The CT is invariably involved in this conversation. You always talk to them on visits[1]. In cases where student may fail, I would always talk with the CT – how the ST is coping, relationship with students, school, try to identify pitfalls, we need to understand the complete, bigger picture.

It is noteworthy that the role of the CT, as perceived by the HEI tutor, ideally involves offering feedback to the HEI about the ST's performance in the class and the school. Where this happens it is highly valued by the HEI tutor, as in the above quote. However, tutors were also keen to point out that it is not valid to use a CT's testimony 'to call a grade' since as one tutor said, 'we can only call a grade on what we have observed'. At least one tutor argues that even if one gets 'good feedback' from a CT one can't use it in determining a grade for a student. The latter has to depend ultimately on the HEI observed and evaluated practice, lesson plans and evaluations.

A further dimension of the quality assurance process is the external examiner system in place in all settings. This involves an experienced HEI tutor, usually a senior academic with a background in teaching and teacher education, visiting the programme and accompanying HEI tutors on some school placement visits, observing the entire process from observation of the student teaching through to the debrief and the process of allocating grades in examination boards.

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[1]The tutors in this programme tell STs when they are visiting their school, one of the main reasons being that they then have a better chance of meeting the relevant CT.

5.13 CONCLUSION

Key findings from this chapter can be enumerated as follows:

1. STs typically are observed and get detailed feedback from their HEI tutor on all aspects of their teaching 4 times during their extended SP and all students are observed and evaluated by more than one tutor on their extended SP.
2. Visits are typically not known by STs in advance but in one of our sites, students receive a text from their HEI tutor the evening before a visit, partly to allow for the possibility of meeting the CT.
3. Feedback and assessment are given against professional criteria that are listed in ST Handbooks e.g. teaching/learning, planning, class management, differentiation and inclusion, subject knowledge, assessment, recording and reporting, and reflection/evaluation.
4. All students have some opportunity to observe teachers teach with greater opportunity for this in the primary sector.
5. The vast majority of STs report that they receive guidance on a comprehensive range of aspects of professional practice but only a minority reported receiving guidance on some broader aspects of school life such as participating in staff meetings, dealing with parents, and cross-curricular activities like Sport.
6. HEI tutor feedback tends to be very detailed, criterion-referenced, challenging, focussed and bearing on professional performance including lesson planning and critical reflection and evaluation. There is considerable consistency across how HEI's formatively assess their students. Feedback is offered orally and in writing and the debrief provides for in-depth discussion and dialogue around pupil learning, and targets for the ST's own professional development. It is highly regarded by STs.
7. CT guidance and feedback is more varied in that it is not as 'standardised' as that of the HEI tutor since much depends on the context and especially the available expertise and time of the CT. In general, guidance is strong on planning, classroom management and teaching/learning and is usually informal and rarely if ever written down. It is also highly valued by STs.
8. A key difference in the nature of feedback from the HEI tutor and the CT, apart from formality, is that the focus of the tutor is always the ST's learning whereas the primary focus of the CT is pupil learning and this partially explains the difference in orientation. HEI tutors focus on a wide range and in considerable depth on areas of professional practice and pay attention especially to reflective practice and students' own evaluations and responses to earlier feedback.
9. The CT plays and important role in the support of the ST but there is considerable variation in that support.
10. The main source of feedback and guidance is the HEI tutor but STs get feedback and guidance from a variety of sources including HEI tutors, CTs, peers, other teachers and principals. The vast majority of STs have conversations with their CTs about their progress.
11. There are sectoral (primary/post-primary) differences with primary STs more likely to get feedback and be observed by their CT.

12. HEI tutors are exclusively responsible for grading and there is currently a reluctance on the part of schools to share this responsibility.
13. Summative assessment is not based on individual observed lessons but is based on a holistic judgement of the range of factors and areas of professional practice. All assessment, formative and summative, is based on direct observation, it is a performance-based assessment with high validity.
14. STs' assessments/grading are also high on reliability given the scale and emphasis on quality assurance mechanisms for maximising the consistency of interpretations. This ensures faith in the fairness of results to students and maximises equity.
15. There is no consensus, even among HEI tutors, about the potential role of CTs in assessing/grading STs although the balance of evidence is away from such a role.

CHAPTER 6: SECURING PLACEMENTS AND SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIPS

The initial vision for my role was building the partnership with schools but in reality the day to day is about securing placements and managing the overall process.
(Director of SP, 2017

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The new arrangements for SP in Ireland are happening in the context of an existing pattern of relationships between HEIs and schools. These relationships stretch back over many decades especially in urban and suburban areas, and the general hinterland around HEIs, and right across the country in the case of teachers of specialist subjects who have come through concurrent programmes. These institutional connections, built up over time, are enhanced at the individual level as some school staff members and HEI tutors also know each other and have various histories such as familiarity through having liaised with tutors about STs on SP, former students from the HEI who are now teachers in schools taking students on SP or principals and CTs who have or are pursuing further study at the HEI. The process of securing schools with willing CTs is integral to the process of developing school-university/HEI partnerships. The chapter begins with an account of the procedures for securing placements and continues to present evidence on the nature of partnership development and the issues constraining and facilitating that process.

6.2 PARTNERSHIP AND PROCEDURES FOR SECURING PLACEMENTS

Many of the schools associated with our case studies have long established informal partnerships with HEI providers and have a history of taking STs into their schools. School Principals (SPs), Deputy Principals (DPs) and Co-Operating Teachers' (CTs) spoke about the long tradition the schools have of supporting students, some schools having a particular history with one provider, often due to geography and connections going back decades. Others, specifically in the Dublin area, have connections with several providers and take students at various times of the year from different programmes. Many of those school staff interviewed and surveyed also referred to the connection they would have had with particular students. Some of their comments illustrate the point:

- We've had students on SP for 40 years from all the colleges …
- We have taken students since 1973 … we have a rapport with one provider … The school has been involved since 1980 …
- We take SP from lots of places … for years, at least 14 years here …
- We have a relationship with *(names the University)* so we take students every year from them.
- We have taken students for 10 years now… We take students from one provider only.
- We like to take our own past pupils usually regardless of what college or programme they are on.

However, we also spoke with staff in schools, both primary and post-primary, where students were on SP, which did not have a history of involvement with any HEI. This is the case where students themselves secure their own local placement – typically a primary school or a post-primary school for a particular specialised curricular subject. Thus the procedures for becoming involved with SP vary depending on one's subject, the phase/year and length of the programme, and the ST's own school contacts. This remained the pattern over the period of our study.

A common procedure for securing the long placement i.e. the 10-week block or the continuous placement associated with the post-primary PME in NUI colleges and the PME primary is that students themselves source their school from a list of possible schools in a given area, sometimes within a particular radius of their College. Arrangements are in place several months before the student embarks on the placement. HEI tutors and especially senior tutors (heads of schools/departments) and Directors of SP described the process of establishing such a list of willing schools. The following quote represents the process on all programmes except SPs that are selected based on the student's own home area:

> There was a huge effort made to identify local schools …we meet with School Principals, talk them through what we do and what we value as important, commitment involved, then we send out a formal letter to invite them get involved, how there are a lot of school visits involved. Then we invite them to come to the campus, we organise focus group collaborations in order to outline the nature of the ask. We generate feedback from them; we develop a mutual relationship – we broker relationships.

There are two key processes in the selection of a school for placement: a) the identification of schools willing to 'sign up' to the new arrangements in particular the provision of a CT for a student and b) the acceptance by the school of a particular ST for a period of time in the school/class. Once a school has in principle agreed to participate, a student teacher who wishes to be placed in that school usually visits the school and is interviewed by the Principal or by another senior member of staff in the school. If the student is to go ahead and be placed in the school usually there is some written communication with the HEI and the student. The following quotes from various ST interviews give an insight into aspects of this process:

- You have to give all details to College so we know for 4/5 months in advance where we are going. The steps are: get the school first, then … we brought out the letter to the school which the Principal must sign and we return it to our College.
- I [student teacher] had an informal chat with the SP for maybe half an hour.
- In third year we do one SP in HEI area and one in our home setting …the HEI provider sources the school close to the college and for our home SP we call to the schools ourselves, explain how it works, if we have a contact in school it helps … for the HEI selected school we simply turn up on the day, but for the school in home area, it depends on the school …sometimes there is an interview …sometimes not…
- In Year 1 you [the student teacher] went to your own primary school, this year the school is closer to the HEI provider setting …within a specific radius

> …they [the HEI] sent us a survey with questions such as do you have access to a car etc. and then the school is chosen for you by the College …

For PME-PP students the procedures were more complex in the 2015-2016 school year and continued to be complex the following year, especially in the Greater Dublin Area. Students were typically required to find a placement in advance of accepting the offer on the course. In many instances, this proved to be problematic and prospective students who were unable to secure a place in a school within reasonable commuting distance ultimately had to relinquish their university place. From the schools' perspective, the issue was compounded by the increase in the number of students seeking placements as part of the two-year programmes. However, where some HEIs alternated the days for placement in schools across the week between year 1 and year 2 students, this alleviated the pressure on schools to some degree. The issue was not as acute for PME primary STs although students themselves agreed that securing a school for placement in the Dublin area was particularly challenging.

A message from our data in relation to procedures for schools becoming involved in SP is that initial verbal contact from the HEI or the ST (via a telephone call or a school visit) to secure SP is most valued by schools. The HEI providers that we interviewed and surveyed typically send out (i) protocols/guidelines about SP: SP period, tutor visits, and protocols for reporting concerns and (ii) a formal letter thanking the school for agreeing to host a ST.

Interviews with Principals and CTs allowed us to explore in some detail what the experience and views are in relation to procedures for becoming involved in SP at school level, the following indicative of the range of practices:

- Contact with the school is vital … one university communicates only by email and our confirmation is sent back via email … other universities would ring us and we'd work out a list of students that may be suited to our school in terms of location etc.

- The students' contact us directly by email or they come in or in some cases the college sends in the forms.
- Students contact me and I meet with them. We don't have an explicit partnership or policy in relation to SP
- The ST contacts me, we have a form they fill out, and we have a set of guidelines re expectations, depending on the level…
- X (naming one college) is very good, they send out different expectations student / teacher but there are different expectations from every provider.
- Students apply to us early in the year …we match subjects with our team and then set up interviews …we select on that basis…

6.3 SOME INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

We identified a range of innovative practices in some schools/HEIs in relation to the process of securing placements and supporting STs:

(i)   a link teacher who talks with all of the teachers to see if they are interested in becoming involved with SP; the link teacher becomes the liaison person with the HEI provider and a support person at school level for the STs;
(ii)   SP teams who meet regularly about SP and STs in the school;
(iii)   school policy document on SP;
(iv)   CT Handbooks prepared by the HEI but in consultation with schools providing guidance on various aspects such as giving feedback, participating in observation;
(v)   newsletters from the HEI to its partner schools about developments of relevance to the schools; and,
(vi)   training sessions at the HEI for CTs.

In all cases, CTs volunteer to take on the role of CT, the following quotes being typical of school staff responses:

- We return an email if we are interested in taking students …we let our principal know.
- We volunteer to take students on SP at a school meeting …
- We now have a nice team of mentoring teachers that are willing to co-operate…
- I would check to see if a teacher is willing to take a student … I wouldn't impose a teacher on anybody but by and large teachers are very willing.

One principal talked about the process in operation in her school and describes a reciprocal relationship with her local HEI:

> We take students as we have a very good rapport with [HEI provider] …criteria for us is that we would have a rapport with the college – so (names the College and the Director of SP) came out, made the link and then X was our 'go-to' person. …there is a reciprocal relationship. It's not just all one way, the school benefits. They are prepared to work with us, we are benefiting in a more overt way…they come in and work with us in a number of areas, we are benefiting from their expertise…learning new approaches, the learning would be from the college - we would hope for a more open link with the college, with the curriculum aspects of the college.

STs also were able to describe models of SP that primarily consist of one HEI provider aligned with a number of local schools, usually located in the same geographical area.

It is worth noting an initiative introduced in one of our case study sites which aligns very well with some of the effective practices described in the international review of literature – collaboration, team teaching, co-teaching and lesson study. The example in our study is about team teaching. The post-primary HEI programme team in this case have evolved a good working relation with the PDST which itself has been developing team teaching in some 200 schools around Leinster. The initiative in the HEI programme involves ST and CT team teaching, genuinely working alongside each other rather than independently teaching the class. The training for this is provided jointly by the HEI and the PDST, with the latter supporting the costs, enabling co-operating teachers to participate and get substitution cover

while away from their school for the training. The HEI and PDST work together to train the CT and the ST to 'operate in complex settings, sharing classes and to work through the relationship issues and some of the other things that occur when sharing classroom space'. At least two workshops explain the process with research evidence and illustrative scenarios. Participants are invited to team teach in their schools and follow up workshops offers an opportunity to debrief on the experience using profile protocols. The initiative is perceived by tutors as very effective in extending professional learning opportunities for STs.

The model of partnership evident in our data, as described here, conforms to elements of the approaches described in the literature (van Velzen & Klink, 2014). For instance a *co-coordinator model* is where the school provides SP opportunities and there is generally a key appointed teacher who maintains the relationship with the HEI provider and co-ordinates the mentoring of the STs. A *partner school model* is where school based teacher educators are responsible for the professional development of staff members and STs. In this approach, the school-based teacher educator co-operates with the HEI provider in supporting the necessary staff development. A *network model* is where teams of school-based educators, HEI-based teacher educators and day-to-day mentors are responsible for the professional development of STs within the school. On the basis of some the practices we found it can be argued that the *co-ordinator model*, with some elements of the *partner school model,* as defined by van Velzen and Klink (2014) feature in our case study sites. Further examples of innovative and effective partnership practices are described in Chapter 9.

6.4 Difficulties in Securing Placements

The majority of student teachers reported that they knew the procedure for acquiring SP across the various ITE programmes. Our evidence shows that 85% of primary student teachers and 91% post-primary student teachers knew the procedure for securing SP. In the second survey, conducted in round 2 fieldwork, this figure increased with 95% (n=395) of all students reporting that they knew the procedure. 90% of primary student teachers and 78% post-primary student teachers received a Handbook from their HEI that helped them know the procedures and requirements about SP, according to our first survey. Again the incidence of this had increased by the second survey: 88% of all students said they received a Handbook and on this occasion the proportion of post-primary students (93%) so reporting was higher than primary students (85%).

Despite the high incidence of student teachers knowing the procedures for securing SPs, this knowledge did not mean that it wasn't difficult to secure access to a school and the STs' own experience here is confirmed by that of the HEI Directors of SP. Some STs struggled to secure their placement and asked HEI tutors, previous schools and family members to intervene on their behalf. The following statements are from post-primary STs but the difficulties were not confined to this sector:

> Well last year I think I spoke to about 50 principals and sent out about 75 letters and ended up having to go back to my old school (2017).

> We have to aim to change the gender of our school for second year, I was in an all-girls' school last year and I really struggled to find placement. I didn't get it till 20th June. So, I'd sent off to 76 schools by the time I ended my count and I was hearing

that there was, you know, already a music teacher in schools, there's only one per department so they didn't want anyone taking hours, so yeah, I really struggled. It was horrendous. It was actually my tutor sorted my placement (2017).

You send reams and reams of CVs, emails, ringing and all the rest of it. I found myself that unless you had a link to a particular school or you were a past pupil, you hadn't a fear of getting into that school. Many of the schools I emailed did not respond, did not get back to me. Left messages with secretaries never got a response. It was only because my aunt was very friendly with a principal that I got my first-year placement. My second-year placement was my old school purely for the fact that I am a past pupil. I think a lot of people are in the same boat in that regard. It is so tough to get a look in schools (2017).

… In November last year I started to look for my second-year placement and I contacted my aunt who lucky enough she works in the ETB and I wanted to get an ETB for my second year just for contacts. So, she made a call and she got me then into the school I'm in this year … (2017)

A number of STs were interviewed (both formally and informally) by the school prior to being accepted for placement but this practice varies across schools:

I had an informal chat with the SP for maybe half an hour (2016).

I sent out a good few CVs and I got a call back from a few of them, I went to I think three interviews and I was offered one and I took the first one and then I was offered the other two. So, it wasn't that difficult for me this year… (2017).

STs identify the process of sourcing schools for themselves as worthwhile and a good learning experience somewhat akin to applying for a job, some even enjoying the process of negotiating with the school to obtain their place:

It is hard but, like, then you go to the school and you have had that independent experience of sourcing the school yourself and it is kind of nice to go in and it's your, kind of, it's your deal with the principal….it's almost like, do you know, like looking for a job, you are kind of like, trying to sell yourself into the school it's …(2017).

Our evidence shows that 59% of HEI tutors surveyed regard their role as HEI tutor much more challenging now (under the new arrangements) than it was in the past. Interviews with HEI tutors allowed us to probe in more detail than in the questionnaire the new challenges posed by SP nationally, specifically the need for more formal training and formal arrangements in terms of student access to SP. The following quote is reproduced here as it was offered in a focus group interview where all present agreed with its sentiment. Moreover, in all our interviews with HEIs there was a sense of increased pressure in their role as tutors and most certainly those involved in securing SPs for students, were very aware of the challenge and would, in the main, align with the following:

SP puts increasing demands on schools and that is often difficult for us as it takes a lot of time ringing schools and trying to appeal to their better nature. It should be a

formal arrangement whereby schools should have more involvement – it shouldn't be a voluntary arrangement, they should be obligated to take students and be involved to that extent in their training… Each school should have to take an appropriate quota and all should have to do it rather than some doing it and some refusing – the process needs to be formalised….As it stands the HEI has to make it happen and we need more help from the Teaching Council to encourage and push a bit more for the better sharing of responsibility (for the formation of the profession). CTs need more training, recognition and time devoted to the development of their role as co-op teachers.

The various sources of evidence from our different informants allow us to conclude that securing suitable school placements is the most difficult aspect of the new arrangements. Developing the point highlighted in the previous quote, which is representative of Directors of SP, the next two sections show how the process remains an informal one, with some formal elements. Because schools are currently not obliged to take student teachers on placement, negotiation on the part of HEI and students for places is likely to continue and to remain challenging.

6.5 INFORMALITY AND HISTORY CHARACTERISING PARTNERSHIP

The various points of data collection and research methods deployed to probe the matter of partnership in this study lead us to argue that informality and history still characterise school-HEI partnerships and, while more formal arrangements in the shape of an MoU are talked about, the nature of school-HEI partnership working remains informal, with communication conducted by HEIs visiting schools and through phone, email and letter.

There is a move towards more formal links in the form of information meetings at the HEI, setting out expectations for STs on SP, visits by HEI to school staffs to explain the new arrangements, and courses that are free to selected teachers/schools. The rounds of interviews, in particular, highlighted the transitional issues associated with the SP arrangements and informants interestingly did not distinguish easily between formal and informal agreements or understandings[2]. As we go on to show in this chapter part of the informality stems from the very delicate balance that HEIs believe they have to negotiate with schools in terms of securing school placements on the one hand and persuading schools to allow student teachers to have access to various aspects of the school's practice e.g. the observation of teaching on the other hand.

The following segment from an extended focus group interview with six post-primary HEI tutors on a PME programme, which included full and part-time tutors, is a good

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[2]Survey respondents seemed to vary in how they interpreted the item on the questionnaires about MoU/A, some ticking 'yes' even when a formal written agreement wasn't yet in place. This was checked further through the interviews where it was clear respondents interpreted 'Arrangement' rather loosely and as something ongoing and mostly informal.

representation of the perspectives on the formality of the arrangements between HEI and school:

> *Interviewer:* And, do you know, in terms of the relationship between the institution and the schools, does the institution have some kind of formal arrangement with the schools, it could be a memorandum of understanding, it could be some kind of contract with them. It could be just a letter. Are you aware of that kind of formalising of the relationship with the schools?

> *Participant 4*: I think there's an informal relationship with a school that I know of. I don't know that anything is in writing, but there's a very good understanding that they're working together. So there's cooperation there. I'm not sure if there's anything written down.

> *Participant 6*: As placement tutors we're really encouraged to make contact with the cooperating teacher and to be very aware and cognisant of the fact that we're representing the college and building a relationship and honouring that relationship as much as we can, so.

> Interviewer: So you're kind of the embodiment of that agreement, if you like, even though it mightn't be explicitly written down. In some way you convey that understanding.

> *Participant 2*: And we're invited to reflect and share about that often. You know, it's something that's kind of top of the agenda, isn't it really?

> *Participant 4*: I was asked, or it was said to me that I was going to be an ambassador for (names her university) at interview, and how did I feel about that. So I suppose that's the nature of it.

> Interviewer: That's quite a formal role, then, isn't it?

> *Participant 2*: And I think the university has a school placement coordinator, who liaises with schools, placement schools.

Our first questionnaire survey of HEIs showed that 69% (n=112) reported that their HEI has an 'explicit partnership agreement' with placement schools. This figure had increased a little in the second survey to 73% (n=80). Again evidence shows that our six HEI providers are in the process of strengthening and building their school partnerships with individual schools. Yet while 74% of HEI tutors surveyed in 2015/16 (Round 1) reported that their HEI hosts information meetings about SP for School Principals and CTs, the corresponding statistic for 2016/17 had dropped to 56% and one-fifth of HEI tutors, in both surveys, reported that they didn't know whether their HEI hosts information meetings about SP for SPs and CTs.

On the issue of MoU/A with schools, 59% of HEI tutors claimed there was one in place but one-third of respondents said they didn't know whether or not one existed and 26% said they

were not familiar with its contents. The more in-depth qualitative data (see following quotes) shed better light on this and essentially confirm the quantitative evidence that partnerships are ongoing, that while formal written MoUs are not in place in all of our six case studies, informal agreements are very definitely in place. HEI-based meetings, visits to school personnel, and communication through email and letter are all mechanisms that are used in the development of understanding in relation to SP. The following quotations from the interviews describe some common practices and views:

> We are still building partnerships. We have expectations and codes of responsibility. We have lots of schools (50) and it is evolving but we don't have a written down MoU with partner schools. But we do have partner school days. (HEI tutor, 2015/16)

> We've had a lot of change. We are trying to offer something to everybody. We are still in a process of development.

> We do not have an MoU, it is something we are looking at, we have discussed it in the team ourselves. We are really awaiting further guidance from the Teaching Council before we proceed. The current basis of communication is letters from us to the school and from the school to us. We lay out our expectations about what students have to do. We haven't gone down the formal route and we didn't get positive reaction from schools about that approach anyway so it remains as grace and favour. (HEI tutor, 2017 interview).

> They [the schools] are stakeholders, we invite our CTs to reflect and respond to our questionnaires and we invite them in for focus groups and they provide important feedback, viewpoints – all very informative for us. (Director of SP and HEI tutor)

> We have specific schools. We are keen to work with schools where good practice is happening. We are working on that – schools – communities of good practice. (Director of SP)

Several principals we interviewed in both rounds of data collection expressed commitment to the new emphases in SP and believe they are evolving valuable partnerships with HEI providers. Very much appreciated by the principals is clear communication about expectations and liaison about what students are supposed to experience while on placement. Referring to his experience of his nearest HEI, one principal commented favourably on how the Director of SP 'communicates openly and honestly with us, respects the school staff as valued colleagues who work together in the reproduction of the teaching profession' while another noted that

> our staff feel valued by (the HEI) … you are not just opening the school and taking the student you are sharing your professional practice …you are valued for it. Tutors come in here and express that to us – there is a sense of relationship, support.

All HEI tutors we interviewed placed a high value on the School Principal or on having a contact person in the school who is familiar with the SP arrangements, especially in the case of a new school taking on students on SP for the first time: 'The School Principal plays a key role in supporting the idea of SP. We are depending on the Principal to liaise with us re the experience – particularly when it is a new school'.

A director of SP explained to us how he goes to schools to explain their ITE courses to them, commenting that 'it is very valuable to have the conversations ... I am willing to have whole staff conversations...I get a better understanding of their perspective and they mine...' Another primary provider similarly reported that 'schools and receiving teachers get a lot of documentation. When (names HEI) student comes in to a school they arrive fully equipped with full documentation that schools needs'.

Three of our six case study HEI programmes do not have special meetings in the HEI to discuss with their participating schools (or future potential partner schools) issues of SP nor do they have pre-arranged courtesy visits to inform schools about the new requirements. The reason for this is to do with feasibility, mainly the geographical distances involved and the fact that there are so many schools with perhaps just one ST on placement. Three HEIs have meetings for this purpose.

However, all six HEIs offer their local schools various opportunities to participate in events held in the HEI from conferences and courses to student award ceremonies and research dissemination days/evenings, some involving students who have been on placement in their schools. In addition, all HEIs regularly invite teachers and principals from their partner schools to input on various elements of the modules and this is also viewed as a way of sharing and valuing the perspectives and practices of local schools. As an example a Director of SP describes their experience as a 'snapshot of how partnership can work':

> I see this as a snapshot of how partnership can work. We were having CPD, we invited a School Principal, keen to get the perspective of a Principal; we offered her payment, and she said no but that she would like to bring some of her students in to college. We had a student on 10 week SP in the school and she organised everything. She organised that 40 primary children came in here for a day, they experienced 3rd level, nice sense of partnership. They had sessions on art, drama, sharing.

HEI tutors, including directors of SP, were unanimous in their claims that there are ongoing, influential issues in developing SP partnerships though they are proactive and have 'made huge changes' in terms of visiting schools to negotiate partnerships and as a result, they claim that 'the professional side is much stronger and much more profound than it was in the past'. What are those issues that are constraining and delaying more partnership working? We consider that in the next section.

6.6 PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

The process of building good working partnerships is perceived as extremely demanding for the HEI. This comes across at each round of fieldwork but features as a greater issue in round two (2016/17). From a HEI perspective, the major challenge is ensuring their STs have continued access to suitable settings in which to do their SP and this challenge dominates the time and energy of programme leaders and directors of SP as captured in the quote at the head of this chapter. HEIs are reluctant to 'impose' on schools yet they are acutely aware of the requirements around observation, the 10-week block and so on. HEI staff appreciate the increased accountability pressures on schools in recent years especially regarding literacy and numeracy targets in the case of the primary sector.

The tension resulting from maintaining this balance between compliance with the TC/HEI requirements and having enough schools for students is perceived to be even more challenging by the broader professional context, specifically the induction process of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Overall, this means that HEI tutors believe they are negotiating their working relations with schools and brokering new arrangements only with arguments around what is good practice and good professional development for ST in ITE rather than with any other inducements or incentives. It is perceived as resource-intensive work. As one Director of SP asked, 'what is the incentive for a school to take a ST?'

The following quote about securing school placements for students is reproduced here as it was offered in a focus group interview where all present agreed with it but is also illustrative of the message obtained in every other interview we conducted in both rounds of fieldwork and is thus an important aspect where there is strong consensus in the system:

> By 1st August every year we have 40% still without SP – we spend all of August sourcing. There is often disorganisation on the student's part. We end up having to do the begging, leg work. It is tough. The ball is in our court. (PME PP, 2017)

As we noted above HEI tutors believe that if all schools were obliged to take an appropriate quota of STs the challenge of the new arrangements would be considerably lessened for both HEI tutors and students themselves. All tutors are aware of their limited power to oblige anything at school level and are very conscious of over-asking or being impositional. This tutor and Director of SP is very sensitive to the existing demands on schools and is reluctant to be seen as making yet more demands in relation to ITE students. He says

> we are formally engaged with students on practice. The teacher hosts the student – acts as coach, support, mentor. We don't provide a formal list of expectations that they (the teachers) must adhere to; it is not our responsibility to impose expectations on teachers – we operate more on grace & favour. We complement: we grade and they don't.

Another tutor emphasised how HEI tutors have to be 'ultra diplomatic' in their engagements with schools, how some are 'afraid of offending the school lest all support is withdrawn for SP', This tutor was making the point that instead of local MoUs and agreements there needs to be a 'national agreement' in place that all schools sign up to. While this view about a national agreement was stated in at least two focus groups and by two different providers, it was not a point that was asked of or mentioned by the majority of interviewees. Yet all those tasked with doing the school-university negotiations on SP say it is extremely challenging work.

The reality is that now students are visibly on SP as learners as well as teachers. This is a big cultural shift, more challenging, it appears, at post-primary level and on consecutive programmes than at primary level and on concurrent programmes. Tutors report that schools are very aware of this shift. While clearly this is positive in terms of the policy, the downside, according to some tutors, is that it is way more 'troublesome', 'inconvenient' and 'intrusive' on schools/classrooms. With a view to understanding the challenges at school level one senior post-primary tutor and programme leader describes her experience currently compared with the previous arrangement when students were primarily in the role of class teacher while on placement:

STs in school prove most inconvenient for the staff, they have a lower status than the subs. Teachers and management see it as being another inconvenience and they don't delegate any co-ordination of it to a staff member, despite the Teaching Council expectations. Really in most schools for us there is no one person responsible for integrating ITE students into the school and we have no power to change that. In the old system – there was a mentor who took responsibility – there are now different principles for operation. We have an expectation that there is some inter connectivity but it is not there. The fact is that now students are in school as learners not just as teachers like they were before, and also now its 2 year run, it was 9 months. This makes a big difference. On the (names the undergraduate programme by the same provider) they are seen as learners more readily, they are better accommodated at that level. Schools don't know how to deal with new PME student.

Along with referring to the time factor, the following HEI tutor also expresses concern how she feels as a public provider the work she does is not sufficiently valued. She refers to another provider who she perceives to be less organised than her own programme:

The TC talks about developing collaborative partnerships with schools. We need to make sure relationships are positive. This takes a huge amount of energy and time on our part. We do a lot of work in developing partnerships – it's very time consuming – we need to develop partners in a valuable and successful manner. … The work the public provider endeavours to do – needs to be appreciated / valued. Private providers ask students to secure placement so a principal may have had 10 calls from private provider students and when you call with your co-ordinated approach you hit a negative response. …It jars with our professional development and professional partnerships and the relationships that HEIs are brokering. It results in negative reactions for us - Our approach is much more co-ordinated –more meaningful.…

Although it is the view of HEI tutors that most CTs need more training, recognition and time devoted to the development of their role, some pointed out that teachers are not necessarily willing to devote time to additional training when it is made available. As one Director of SP reported to us: 'last year we offered a free summer course on coaching/mentoring in schools – but the take up was extremely low. 4 teachers expressed an interest and in the end there was no take-up from teachers'.

The perceived lack of power on the part of HEI tutors to require schools to take students combined with limited resources devoted to the training of CTs is a major constraint to the faithful enactment of the new arrangements. The general view is that the HEI is tasked with implementing the new arrangements in the absence of any mandatory pressure on schools such as a reference to it by the DES in School Self Evaluation documentation, which one HEI tutor and senior person in the HEI argued would confer some status on a school's engagement with the process of initial student teacher learning. As one of our programme leaders observed:

The HEI is the only body that has enacted the policy, but we find ourselves in selling rather than negotiation mode; we have nothing to negotiate with. We are

always selling. Schools are giving us a gift when we secure placements, they are giving us a gift. We can't afford to be assertive with schools – we would be left high and dry – with students appealing. So yes we are risk averse in case schools refuse us, look what happened to Droichead (primary tutor and programme leader).

The last sentence in that quote refers to the fact that teachers have refused to give judgemental feedback to the Teaching Council about newly qualified teachers in the induction process. The fear among some HEI tutors is that schools can easily refuse to take students on school placement, potentially triggering appeals from student teachers and, at a minimum, putting further pressure to seek out new schools for students.

HEI tutors expressed their understanding of the dilemma CTs face insofar as they are not incentivised by having paid training days as happens in the case of Droichead which they argue sends a message about what is really valued: as one programme leader commented:

> CTs are not incentivised … on Droichead they get days away for training. Lots of resources put into Droichead but no supports in ITE, no time, resources… In terms of the developmental continuum this makes no sense…

In one very animated focus group interview with HEI tutors, the view was expressed that the only solution to the current dilemma is the idea of a 'professional learning school' for ITE students:

> what comes down to our responsibility is the basic qualification and then the profession takes over … opening the eyes of profession to earlier intervention … professional responsibility for ITE student… comes back to the idea of a professional learning school and a link with resources from Droichead. It has to be something like Nursing, they have their clinical teaching hospitals, somebody has time in their workload to do it; instead of 22 hours have 20… And ultimately it comes back to ownership, having a mentor, who knows the role but this does not exist in ITE. Difficulty leaving it to the discretion of school…it has to be opt out rather than opt in.

All HEI tutors were in agreement, unsurprisingly, about the importance of clarity of expectations as to what student teachers have to do on SP. One Director of SP typifies the point about the need for communication with individual schools but also the considerable cost of this:

> A key thing for schools is that they need communication from HEIs. No one size fits all –if SP is to be successful time has to be invested in communication, not just letter / email, actual face to face, we had 180 students going on SP – we contacted and spoke to each school, not reflected in budgets or financial support and yet it has to be done and is working.

We mentioned principals' views in a positive way above. However, some principals were more critical in relation to brokering SP partnerships with HEI providers, and expressed concern in particular about the diversity of requirements on STs from different programmes and colleges which in turn the school has to deal with:

> I realise the differences between the colleges: we take it for granted – there is huge variation. I received one courtesy visit from a HEI and an email but that is all. Another HEI provider – well they are people who care about the ST and us [school], they don't just say they care but they <u>show</u> they care. You can get a lovely letter from another HEI but not any sense of caring. Harm can be done if the ST doesn't understand the way the school works and how SP works here.

A major 'take home' message communicated to the research team especially by programme leaders and directors of SP is the need to develop a more coherent, national solution to the problems of securing suitable school placements. The argument advanced by this key group, regardless of sector, is that the solution has to be a national rather than merely a local one. The concern is that it is national policy that STs are in schools and classrooms with co-operating teachers and as such the development of the CTs for their role should not be the total responsibility of the HEI, how that has to be resourced appropriately. The view is strongly expressed that 'it should not be down to any one HEI to work out how the CT behaves and prepares for a ST' and HEI programme leaders resist what they perceive to be the current emphasis on 'what we will do for you if you take our students'. A key question for all involved is how best can the various stakeholders contribute to the learning of the ST? It may be that the various interested parties from unions to professional associations and from DES to TC need to revisit that searching question. Rather pessimistically, one Director of SP confirmed the views of his counterparts in saying:

> At the moment we talk about partnership...it's a one-side partnership. There is no onus, no responsibility for the school to partner with the HEI. Until there is an onus or responsibility...you can't have a partner with only one institution in the partnership! We are doing a lot of flirting and trying to engage but schools can either take it or leave it. Some schools decide not to engage with any HEI and the only time they contact us is when they have a teacher shortage.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The main finding from this chapter is that the development of school-HEI partnership is hampered and dominated by the challenge of securing school placements for student teachers. Uncertainty and unpredictability about the supply of places mean that senior HEI staff are unable to devote adequate time to other aspects of partnership development such as co-teaching/team-teaching and the sharing of action research studies. HEI programme leaders and SP Directors are at one in pleading for a national solution to this difficulty.

It is noteworthy that some HEIs have set out to develop and design online and technological resources to support the administration and organisation of school placements. Custom-built environments have been developed as existing VLE (virtual learning environment) platforms lack the necessary functionality to serve the organisation and administration of placement (Donlon, 2017). METIS, developed by Mater Dei Institute of Education (now incorporated with DCU Institute of Education) is currently in a development process which aims to support the management of placement. Also, the custom-built TUS platform (Teacher, University and School Placement System), developed by Mary Immaculate

College and University of Limerick, also seeks to support the administration of school placement.

While the development of these platforms is undoubtedly beneficial for the HEIs and schools concerned, it is clear that there is a need for a nationally agreed approach to ensure greater systemic coherence and ease the administration burden on HEIs and schools alike.

It is clear from the evidence presented in this chapter that it is also necessary to devote more attention to the nature of partnership expected and more specifically there is a need for the Teaching Council to clarify further the roles and responsibilities of schools and HEIs in relation to supporting STs on SP.

CHAPTER 7: PERSPECTIVES OF COOPERATING TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter outlines the perspectives of cooperating teachers (CTs) and principals and deputy principals (DPs) in the study as they experienced the changes in the Teaching Council requirements over the course of the study. Data was gathered in two phases: Round 1 involved conducting focus group interviews and issuing questionnaires in schools attached to the six selected case studies. This process was repeated in Round 2 although the participants differed due to issues of access in some cases. Those who participated in both rounds of data gathering provided a sense of continuity in the evolution of the process. Conversely, those who contributed views in one phase only provided an important snapshot of teachers' views and experiences captured 'midstream' as it were, without recourse to a previous discussion with the research team or contextual basis. We believe that the combination of evidence drawn from different sources, at different stages, and from both the primary and post primary sectors has enabled us to avoid research bias. Moreover, the interweaving of perspectives brings an authenticity and validity to the data.

This chapter provides insights from schools from the perspective of cooperating teachers at primary and post primary levels in the first instance. Views of school leaders are also incorporated and these are also addressed in a discrete section in the latter part of this chapter. The main themes addressed in the chapter are as follows: Knowledge of the Teaching Council policy; Policy at school level for accepting a student teacher; Awareness of a formal partnership amongst CTs; Professional preparation for the role; Classroom practice with student teachers; Availing of discretionary time; Engaging in dialogue with the HEI tutor; the Role of CTs in assessment and grading; Formal grading; Cooperating teachers' view of how they see themselves professionally; Future CPD for the role of the CT; Benefits of the extended period of SP including the 10-week block; Principals' and Deputy Principals' view of SP. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the main points.

7.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA FROM COOPERATING TEACHERS

In approaching schools associated with each of the case studies, we sought to represent cooperating teachers from as many different types of schools as possible within the confines of our sampling. Variation in school type was largely achieved through the questionnaire data where the sample was drawn from a range of schools across: size, gender, level, sector, economic status, medium of instruction, patronage and location. The respondents were almost evenly divided between primary and post primary teachers, almost all of whom were mainstream classroom teachers, of which two-thirds were female and one-third male. Principals and deputy principals who contribute to the coordination of SP were also included. (See Tables 4.2 and Table 4.3 for details of participants in Round 1 and Round 2 of the data gathering.)

7.3 KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEACHING COUNCIL POLICY

From the perspective of cooperating teachers, knowledge of the current arrangements for taking a student teacher for SP tended to be vague in many instances. About half of the teachers who responded to the survey in Round 2 of the data collection (n=52) indicated that they were aware of the Teaching Council guidelines on SP. In relation to knowledge of a written policy in their own school, again about half of primary teachers and a quarter of post primary teachers indicated that there was one, while just over one third stated there was none and the remainder did not know if their school had one or not. This was also reflected in the interview data as the comments below illustrate:

> [CT] I'm not as familiar with the policy from the Teaching Council. We do get guidelines from all the colleges and all that but I wouldn't be as aware. I'd have to read up on those ones.

> [CT] I know about the extra time on the course and on school practice, beyond that I don't know. I presume the extra year is the main change.

7.4 POLICY FOR ACCEPTING A STUDENT TEACHER

In terms of policies and procedures for accepting a student teacher, arrangements seemed to be *ad hoc* across all settings. We are mindful that the schools who participated in the current study have, by definition, long associations with the HEIs and many years of experience of supporting student teachers and therefore patterns of involvement can reflect previous practices as well as the transitions towards the new arrangements, as alluded to in the following statements were typical of primary contexts:

> [CT] There's some kind of agreement with the institution and these are the guidelines of what to expect of the students, 3 lessons, or whatever the case may be. Yes, it is more that kind of thing but we have an informal talk before the students come sometimes.

> [CT] Usually a student comes along looking for a place and we can then opt to take a student. We usually take several every year. The principal would ask and you opt then to take the student.

Knowledge of the procedure can vary among teacher as the following CT remarks:

> [CT] No, I don't really know, not really, they (students) just arrive and they let us know what they have to do.

In some cases, the contrast with previous arrangements is quite marked in that post primary schools in particular might have had a small or limited number of Higher Diploma (HDip) students on a one year programme who was in situ for the full school year. This has been replaced by huge variation in the PME PP and the four-year concurrent teacher education programmes in both nature and duration, i.e., in terms of SP blocks of particular days,

mornings or afternoons, semester-long, year-long, or year 1 and year 2 requirements or expectations; as well as specific requirements for particular programmes such as home economics, physical education or religious education. Managing the logistics of the allocation of placements in schools is therefore highly complex, even when the addition of student teachers to the staff is largely welcomed, as the following quote from a post primary deputy principal illustrates:

> [DP/CT post primary] It has been growing exponentially in the last number of years since we first started in the school with 3 HDips and now to 17 students, between year 1 and year 2 and between the block placements from different universities. There are lots of positives but there are also negatives with regard to space …space for everyone in the staffroom… and the same students [pupils] getting student teachers each year. I suppose the positive is that it brings a fresh approach and new blood into the school and lots of new ideas. And professionally it helps both ways in learning from each other.

Notwithstanding the recommendations of the Sahlberg Report (2012), the number of providers of programmes in teacher education remains high and we have noted the enormous variation among programmes, even within the same HEI. It would appear that in trying to distribute the SP requirement and provision to schools and perhaps lighten the pressure for placements, HEIs have configured the SP requirements in unique ways across the school year. However, from a school perspective, this has created other organisational challenges for CTs and school level SP coordinators in preparing for, mapping and supporting STs.

7.5 AWARENESS OF A FORMAL PARTNERSHIP

During the focus group interviews, responses from CTs suggested that they were unaware of a formal partnership with a HEI in relation to school placement. Survey data gathered in Round 2 (n=52) sought further information on whether SP had been discussed at school level and the nature of communication with the HEI. The survey data revealed that SP had been discussed at a meeting in the school according to 60% of primary teachers and 67% of post primary teachers. The vast majority of CTs had not been invited to attend a meeting with their local HEI to learn about the new arrangements, nor did they know if a colleague had attended such a meeting. The existence of a formal partnership arrangement with a local HEI in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement (MoU/A) was also appeared to be absent with just 4% of teachers declaring that there was one, and almost three-quarters of teachers stating that that did not know of one, or believed there was none (16% of primary and 19% of post primary teachers). Knowledge of a courtesy visit by a HEI member of staff was also low with about 20% of primary teachers and 7% of post primary teachers being aware of such a visit. Despite this lack of awareness of formal arrangements, the majority of teachers (80% at primary and 89% at post primary) indicated that they have a say in whether or not they host a student teacher in their class.

7.6 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR THE ROLE

A key document in preparing teachers for their role as a CT is found in the Teaching Council guidelines which is an essential document that explains the new requirements and is freely available on the Teaching Council website. In terms of professional preparation for the role

of cooperating teacher, less than half (44%) of primary teachers and 22% of post primary teachers in the Round 2 survey stated that they had received adequate professional preparation for their role as a cooperating teacher; these figures are similar to statements by the teachers in terms of their familiarity with the HEI requirements for SP. Teachers' views on the helpfulness of the guidelines on SP again reflect their uncertainty surrounding these documents with only about one-third of teachers in both sectors having no opinion on their usefulness but as noted above about half said they were aware of the Teaching Council policy on SP. Just 12% of primary teachers and 41% of post-primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that 'the guidelines on SP for CTs are helpful'. Similarly, over half (56%) of post primary teachers agreed with the statement that that these were reasonable, while only 4% of primary teachers held such views.

Observation is considered a central element in the student teacher's development according to the Teaching Council guidelines. Among primary and post primary cooperating teachers who responded to the survey, there was a clear 100% agreement that student teachers should have a period of observation of teaching in the SP class. In relation to student teachers team-teaching with their cooperating teacher, again, there was a high level of agreement among both primary teachers (80%) and post primary teachers (78%) that this was a good idea. In practice however, the experiences of observing a student, being observed as a cooperating teacher and team teaching varied considerably, depending on the school culture, context and sector as we shall see later in this chapter.

Our evidence from primary cooperating teachers in the study was that they had not received formal CPD for the role and tended to draw on previous experiences with their various HEIs. In this regard, not all CTs were positive about their preparation for their role as the following comments illustrate:

> [CT] It would be useful to have focused guidelines, for the HEI tutors to come and meet with us, tell us what is expected, there is no onus on the HEI tutor to find out what we thought about a ST, you feel like you don't have a structured role, in an ideal world you would like something concrete, some criteria to use …we could work on aspects throughout the SP if we had these …very unstructured currently…they don't see the development during and over classes …if we have concerns…where do we go, what do we do …they only see the snapshot …

> [CT in rural school] Grey area. They [student teachers] just land in and teach x lessons a day. Our role was never really worked out I think.

> [CT in rural school]. There's a fuzziness about the role of the CT. When I was a student, other teachers helped and from my teacher I got lots of feedback. [But now] I'm not sure on whether and how to give feedback on all lessons or some lessons.

Ten questions in the survey instrument in Round 2 (n=52) addressed the issue of the cooperating teacher's readiness for the role and drew attention to various dimensions of day to day teaching such as classroom planning and teaching and assessing pupils' work. Both primary and post primary teachers expressed a high level of confidence in their capacity to support student teachers, although post primary teachers expressed a higher level of agreement with all the statements, i.e., in supporting students with classroom planning

(primary: 84%; post primary: 96%); teaching and learning; classroom management; and assessing pupils' work (primary: 96%; post primary: 100%); addressing matters of professionalism with student teachers (primary: 80%; post primary: 89%); providing feedback to the student teacher on the quality of their teaching (primary: 72%; post primary: 82%).

However, during Round 2 data gathering, a more proactive approach was evident in some instances, building on other initiatives, such as Droichead.

> [CT in large urban school] Now with the Droichead as well I would be familiar with students coming in and out to me—that's been happening as well. So a student would come in for certain lessons and also another colleague is doing it because the school is so big there's all that kind of stuff going on. She was doing a peer learning project so that was teachers observing teachers, so I was involved in that as well.

> [CT in rural school] You feel fine, depends on how willing they are to work with you, some disinterested, you have to motivate them and it's harder. It's easier when they are enthusiastic. Mostly I would feel very confident about taking a student and helping them.

> [CT in rural school] I have confidence in my ability to coach. I have more than enough experience at this stage. I would feel very confident.

7.7 CLASSROOM PRACTICE WITH STUDENT TEACHERS

The frequency with which cooperating teachers and student teachers engage in various practices in the classroom—from every day to once per placement period—was considered in a set of 14 questionnaire items in Round 2 (n=52). It would appear that having a student teacher observe the cooperating teacher occurs about twice as often in primary classrooms (everyday: 40%; 2-3 times a week: 24%) compared to post primary settings (everyday 17%; 2-3 times a week 17%). The higher frequency is repeated for primary teachers in almost all the activities that occur in the classroom, for example as show in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: Frequency of cooperating teachers' practices with student teachers

Classroom practices	Primary		Post primary	
	Every day	2-3 times a week	Every day	2-3 times a week
Giving guidance to the student teacher on school and classroom planning	56%	24%	22%	30%
Assisting the student with classroom management issues	68%	20%	22%	15%
Giving guidance to the student teacher on teaching and learning	56%	24%	33%	15%
Sharing assessment information with the student teacher	20%	32%	44%	19%
Observing the student teacher teach	80%	12%	15%	4%
Giving feedback to the student teacher on the quality of his/her teaching	56%	12%	19%	11%
Engaging in critical reflection with the student teacher	44%	12%	19%	4%
Discussing the student teacher's teaching plans	48%	16%	22%	11%
Facilitating the student teacher in trying out alternative ways of doing things in the classroom	56%	32%	26%	4%
Providing guidelines on how to meet State examination requirements	8%	4%	26%	4%
Team-teaching with the student teacher	12%	24%	19%	4%
Availing of discretionary time while the student teacher is teaching	52%	16%	26%	26%

In general, it would appear that primary teachers engage more frequently with student teachers in various classroom practices, including observing the student teacher teach. However, observation experiences could be mixed. When CTs were asked if they observe the student and give feedback and if the student got a chance to observe the CT, the practices varied according to schools as the following comments illustrate:

> [CT rural primary school] Yes definitely; they informally observe us. It is informal. Depends. Some students look for you some don't. Some students ask, some don't.

> [CT urban post primary school]. I sit at the back. I would advise them to be more forceful, to make sure they know how to get silence and tips for doing that. I show them and tell them what to do. Hands on the table first so you can't move when I'm talking to you, etc.

From the point of view of cooperating teachers, it would appear that requirements for observation were unclear for schools, due in part, to the variation in requirements from different HEIs, as the following quote illustrates:

[CT PP urban school] We don't get information from all the HEIs…I am going by what the student tells me. It might be nice to have some kind of formalisation of that. One student might say that I have to be there for the whole year whereas another student [from a different HEI] might come in and say I don't need to observe for the first few weeks, depending on their subject.

We noted however that the more formal specified type of observation occurs at pre-set periods in many programmes and usually involves some note taking and written commentary that is part of the student's teaching file and as such woven into reflection. In primary programmes, our evidence suggests that observation of teaching would appear to also occur during the period of the student's own practice insofar as the CT typically teaches some classes and the student observes and makes notes. Thus, this aspect of observation is more informal, opportunistic and *ad hoc*.

7.8 AVAILING OF DISCRETIONARY TIME

While primary teachers appear to have more opportunities to observe and be observed, how they avail of discretionary time also appears less structured than what occurs with their post primary counterparts, given the responsibilities of primary classrooms. In the survey data, post primary teachers indicated that they engaged in team teaching with the student teacher more often than primary teachers, however, the nature of this practice was not explored. It could be interpreted as teaching the same class on separate days, with neither student teacher nor classroom teacher meeting each other, for example. Practices among primary teachers also varied as the following comments from different CTs illustrate:

[CT urban school] That totally depends…I would still be in the room. There were times where I had to work away at the side of the room, but still was in earshot so if there was anything…I'd look up and say 'Are you all right there?' if I felt that there might have been anything that might need some help. . . [otherwise] I'd be bringing children down and doing some reading with them or assessing them in their maths or whatever.

[CT urban school] Some students need you more than others, some are more confident and more comfortable and have kind of gotten a handle of it way quicker than others so it kind of varies really.

[CT rural school] In a year 3 and year 4 are you allowed to leave the classroom? I would always stay with the student and use the time for small group work.

[CT urban school] Week 1 I'm in the classroom all the time. After that I am in the corridor. If I have a 4th yr student on SP, I do paperwork, planning, or take students out for assessment.

[CT urban school] I do half and half - working on the Green Flag in school

7.9 ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE WITH THE HEI TUTOR

We noted in conducting interviews with teachers nationwide how the previous nomenclature associated with the HEI tutor such as the term 'inspector', 'examiner' or 'college tutor' prevailed in many instances, suggesting to us a disconnect between the aspirations of the policy documents and the realities for schools and HEIs. Given that the concept of partnership underpins the Teaching Council Guidelines on SP, a key set of questions explored the experience of partnership between schools and the HEI from the cooperating teachers' perspective. Cooperating teachers did not appear to be as aware of communications from the HEI, largely because information tends to be directed centrally, to the principal or SP coordinator in the school. Deputy principals and principals spoke of invitations to HEI events, receiving explanatory letters from the HEI in advance of placement, and thank you letters, cards or tokens of appreciation following the completion of a placement period, and emphasised their appreciation of these gesture for what they were. A comment from an experienced CT illustrates how the detail of each placement might not be a major concern for her and the sense of continuity with previous practices:

> [CT] To be honest, I'm not great on reading all that probably because I've had so many students over time and I know what to do.

On the occasions when the HEI tutor visits the ST, primary teachers, by virtue of the nature of primary classrooms, have greater contact with the HEI tutor since they maintain overall responsibility for the class compared to post primary teachers who are among a number of CTs with whom the ST works. Because of this, communication between post primary CTs and HEI tutors can be inconsistent. Primary teachers are more likely to declare that they discuss the ST's teaching with the HEI tutor and matters such as how the ST handles the class and maintains discipline. Post primary teachers have a much lower rate of engagement with the HEI tutor and detail of the ST's progress is therefore not discussed (See Table 7.2 below).

Table 7.2 Cooperating Teachers' views of partnership with the HEI

	Primary		Post primary	
	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
I have adequate contact with the HEI tutor when s/he visits the student teacher on SP	52%	32%	19%	56%
I discuss the quality of the student's teaching with the HEI tutor	80%	8%	22%	56%
When talking to the HEI tutor, I usually focus on the student teacher's ability to handle the class and maintain discipline	56%	20%	7%	56%

Qualitative data reveals the nature of the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the HEI tutor in greater detail as the following illustrates:

> *Interviewer: Do you engage in conversation with the HEI tutor?*
>
> [CT large urban school] Well I always make it my business to make sure that I talk to them but generally they would say you know 'How are they getting on?' So we would have a chat either before or after on both visits and yes I would make it my business [to engage them in conversation].
>
> *Interviewer: And what would you talk about in those conversations?*
>
> Well the thing is they will see their folder and they'll see student teacher's planning and their lesson contents so they know what's going into that and then they see student teacher on the day but I would be able to give [the HEI tutor] a little aside saying they're very good for taking on any advice, everything I've told them they're able to put into practice—so things that the HEI tutor can't see, they wouldn't know if student teacher is taking on board whatever the teacher said. Also I can tell [the HEI tutor] they're very obliging, they're willing to help out in any way, anything you can ask them they get stuck in, they have the initiative to get stuck in and to do it. So you just need to tell [the HEI tutor] about the general all over things that they can't tell in one visit.

Cooperating teachers can also experience a sense of indignation and perhaps disrespect when their views on the ST are not invited:

> [CT rural school] Some HEI tutors don't ask my opinion – you can have a great lesson sometimes and not great other times, or having an off day. It's really important [for HEI tutors] to ask us how they are doing. And this doesn't always happen.

> [CT rural school] Yes, I would tend to meet the tutor and have a conversation about the student which so far in the past year was just fine and I thought very helpful all round but the tutor from (naming another provider) doesn't really want to engage with the school and we were being critical of that student who appeared to us not to be really serious about his work – but he passed.

> [CT rural school] They don't engage it has to be said, but it varies. One HEI tutor can be very keen to engage and hear what I had to say but not always. Very much asking my opinion and I've also had the opposite. I was asked to leave the room. I felt it wasn't my class.

7.10 ROLE OF THE CT IN ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Evidence from our study reveals a lower inclination on the part of the cooperating teachers to be involved with the formal assessment of student teachers' teaching compared to their willingness to be involved in more formative and informal assessment. However, post primary teachers indicated a greater willingness to engage in such work (Table 7.3) despite their comparatively very low incidence reported in Table 7.1 of observing STs teach. CT interviewees were not keen to have a role currently in the summative assessment of student teachers. While they are an invaluable formative support, a typical comment was, 'they do not wish to have anything to do with grades'. The following quote also draws attention to the notion of professional distance and the objective judgement of an external assessor:

> [CT] Well I'm there all the time and a pretty good judge so it's important to listen to what say the teacher thinks but I wouldn't want to be judge and jury over the student's final grade or anything; that's best left to the inspector. I think as it's all too cosy at times with past pupils etc and it's difficult to be in position of passing judgement.

On the other hand, CTs are uniquely positioned to observe STs learning to become teachers in a range of different teaching and learning situations, as well as within the wider school context in ways that may not be evident to the visiting HEI tutor. The following quote from a post primary school illustrates how CTs see their role and how they might contribute to the overall ST evaluation:

> ...Not the assessment, but I would like to have a discussion with the HEI tutor that they are only seeing forty minutes of a student's time and we are working with them for the whole year. For them to come in and not even acknowledge that we are there and what we are doing with this work...and that we have inside information maybe about the student...If they are concerned about something we could maybe alleviate

that concern and say, 'We know, we have observed them, and I wouldn't think that is an issue.'

Here we note the disjunction in communication that can occur and the potential for misunderstanding in the absence of dialogue, as one post primary CT observes:

> In a way, we are kind of left out...the relationship is obviously between the student teacher and the tutor. The tutor comes into the school and leaves the school without any acknowledgement or any hello or goodbye. But I have never formally met any of the tutors.

Primary cooperating teachers were also unclear in relation to the boundaries and possible scope for consultation with the HEI tutor, as the following remarks illustrate:

> We support them but we are not their inspector. We don't know how far to go. We would like guidelines that are universal to all HEIs but this is unlikely. In England and in other jobs (Nursing) we would have documents to help us.

Yet, the potential to gain a deeper understanding of the ST's learning can be greatly enhanced when communication flows, as described here, shedding light on diverse aspects of ST learning, on the dialogic nature of learning between ST and CT, and ultimately developing ST agency and self-efficacy.

When asked if they had a role in the formal assessment or grading of a student teacher's competence to teach, one-fifth of primary teachers agreed with this statement while the level of agreement for post primary teachers was one-third (see Table 7.3 below). Similarly, when asked if they *would like* to have such a role in formal grading or assessment of student teachers, 36% of primary teachers agreed with the statement while 67% of post primary teachers declared an interest. In terms of their capacity to undertake the task of grading or assessing of student teachers' competence to teach, just 36% of primary teachers indicated that they felt equipped to do so in comparison with 63% of post primary teachers.

Table 7.3: Cooperating teachers' views of assessment

	Primary		Post primary	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I am skilled in providing feedback to student teachers on the quality of their teaching	75%	25%	82%	19%
I would like to a have a role in the assessment/grading of ST's competence to teach.	36%	60%	67%	33%
I feel equipped to grade/assess my student teacher's competence to teach	36%	60%	63%	37%

Further illumination of feedback and assessment is found in the qualitative data as follows:

> *Interviewer: Have you ever sat in while the HEI tutor was giving a debrief to the student teacher?*
>
> No I haven't.
>
> Interviewer: And do you think you contribute to the student's overall assessment?
>
> I mean insofar as they chat with me… but I do believe that the STs should have one-to-one time as well. I like that I can talk to the assessor [HEI tutor] but they need to have their time as well you know because there might be things the ST wouldn't be comfortable saying in front of the teacher.
>
> *Interviewer: How do you think the HEI tutor sees your role?*
>
> Well to an extent we are assessing them as well, but on a much more informal way. That's why those little chats are important you know because we can tell [the HEI tutor] what's been going on in all the days that they're not there and it does help the student as well because you know they're putting in so much into this and when they're only out for the two short visits, you want to really give them the best, paint the best picture that you can. When they're putting in so much into [SP] they really deserve it.

When asked about the nature of feedback that the cooperating teacher gives to students, responses included:

> [CT rural school] Strategies for improvement, looking for variety, pacing of lessons, class management.

A more progressive example comes from a teacher in an urban school who advocates co-teaching and sharing lesson ideas with the student teacher.

> [CT urban school] Students have come to me as well and said 'Look I'm not really sure what to do with this lesson' and I'd say, 'You know what, what are you trying to cover? 'And they will talk about and I'd say, 'Do you want me to actually take that lesson? ' and then sometimes I would just model a lesson and I'd say, 'Right well I'm doing this now and I want you to write down, take down as many notes as you can' and then I'd say 'Then the next time you can actually you have your little notes there and you have them and you go and practice it now...There's loads of different ideas, here's a few, do you want me to do some?'

7.11 FORMAL GRADING

In a similar vein when asked if the HEI tutor should grade/formally assess the student teacher's competence to teach, 92% of primary teachers responding to the Round 2 survey (n=52) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while the equivalent from post primary teachers was a little lower at 78% (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.4: Cooperating teachers' views of their role in assessment in relation to the HEI tutor

	Primary		Post primary	
	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
Assessment and grading of the student teacher's performance on SP is a key focus of the conversation with the HEI tutor	36%	44%	15%	60%
The HEI tutor welcomes my feedback on SP	76%	8%	26%	41%
I feel valued by the HEI in my role as cooperating teacher	68%	8%	22%	48%

However, in looking at the possibility of the ST, HEI tutor and CT having a three-way conversation about the nature of SP, the level of agreement among all teachers was similar (primary: 76%; post primary: 78%). It would appear that assessment and grading of the student teacher's performance on SP is key focus of the conversation with the HEI tutor in a minority of cases (primary: 36%; post primary: 15%).

When asked if they would like to have their voices better heard in the feedback and grading process, cooperating teachers at primary level were equivocal in their responses:

> [CT rural school] Yes. Although that would be adding to your own work.

> [CT rural school] Fairness is an issue. Maybe not the grading but definitely an input.

> [CT rural school] What I don't like is the Inspector gives a glowing report and I couldn't believe it as I didn't agree. But I wasn't asked.

Primary teachers also expressed a stronger level of agreement with the statement that 'the HEI tutor welcomes my feedback on SP' (76%) as opposed to 26% of post primary teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Moreover, 68% of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that they feel valued by the HEI tutor in their role as cooperating teacher, in contrast with just 22% of post primary teachers sharing their views.

In summary, it would appear that cooperating teachers welcome dialogue with the HEI tutor about the student teacher's progress and are also open to the possibility of a three-way conversation involving the student teacher. However, they believe that responsibility for the formal grading of the student should rest with the HEI tutor.

7.12 COOPERATING TEACHERS' VIEWS OF HOW THEY SEE THEMSELVES PROFESSIONALLY

The emergence of the cooperating teacher's professional identity and agency was explored in the focus group interviews and also captured in a set of questions on the survey instrument in Round 2 (n=52). An example from a post primary cooperating teacher working in a more specialised programme illustrates the closeness of the relationship between her and the HEI, her understanding of the culture of the institution in relation to assessment, and how her identity as a cooperating teacher relates to her own experiences as a undergraduate:

> [CT urban post primary] I was fine with it as my own experience from [names HEI] and could really understand where they were coming from. I knew all the examiners, the people who were coming in to assess them, and I knew I could help them address the issues as they arose. I was really excited about doing it as I felt I wasn't too far gone from it.

In a small number of cases, cooperating teachers are proactive and are inspired by the model of mentoring that has emerged from the NIPT and Droichead process, others feel constrained by the absence of clear definitions of their role as the following quote illustrates:

> [CT urban, primary]. We don't get opportunities to talk about our students. If feedback from cooperating teachers was a part of the structure, part of the job, then you would feel ok doing it. At the moment if you gave feedback the student might say 'you are not my tutor'.

A tension also exists between the frequency or depth of observation that a cooperating teacher experiences in observing the same student teacher for an extended period, in comparison to the experiences of a HEI tutor who may not appear to spend as much time in the classroom, but who can reference what s/he observes against a much larger pool of student teachers observed over the course of the week, placement block or year, as evidenced in the comments here:

> [CT urban, primary] The tutor visit is unrealistic, a big show, and we see them every day. I see them every day but I would not be confident to mark them as we all have different standards as teachers – could be conflicting.

Notwithstanding the challenges inherent in the role of the cooperating teacher, Table 7.5 illustrates responses to the survey questions which generally reveal positive views of the role. Overall, cooperating teachers in both sectors expressed a strong level of agreement with statements such as 'Being a cooperating teacher has benefitted me professionally' (73%) and 'I feel empowered to influence how student teachers will develop' (67%). The extent to which teachers saw the Teaching Council Guidelines as helpful to them professionally was less strong (29%) with over half of respondents maintaining a neutral position on this but only about half had claimed awareness of the Guidelines in the first place (see above). Just over two-thirds (67%) of teachers indicated that they needed professional development on SP to enhance their role as a cooperating teacher and 56% indicated that the HEI was best placed to provide this. In addition, cooperating teachers indicated overwhelmingly (89%) that SP was a positive experience for student teachers in their classroom (Table 4). Moreover, almost

three-quarters (73%) stated that they were well-placed to support the student teacher as s/he learns to teach. Finally, cooperating teachers strongly indicated (83%) that SP was a positive experience for them as cooperating teachers.

Table 7.5: Primary and post primary teachers' views of themselves as cooperating teachers

	Primary		Post primary	
	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
Being a cooperating teacher has benefitted me professionally	76%	4%	70%	7%
I feel empowered to influence how student teachers will develop	80%	4%	56%	4%
The Teaching Council Guidelines on SP are very helpful to me professionally	36%	12%	22%	19%
I need professional development on SP to enhance my role as a cooperating teacher	60%	24%	74%	7%
The HEI is best placed to provide professional development on SP	64%	4%	44%	17%
I am well placed to support the student teacher as s/he learns to teach	84%	4%	63%	11%
SP is a positive experience student teachers in my classroom	92%	0%	85%	4%
SP is a positive experience for me as a cooperating teacher	84%	0%	82%	7%

The professional satisfaction experienced from taking a student teacher emerged in Round 1 of the data gathering and is illustrated in the comments below:

> [CT] I'm 100% for taking a student, I get huge benefit from it, I'm hearing the young stuff, the new technology, it is a two-way process for me, it keeps me young and focused, it is a refresher course for me each year taking a student.

> [CT] It is always good to reflect on practice, you observe them (the students) but this allows you to reflect on your own practice, you see a lot more in the classroom; you can spend extra time with certain children ….

These two quotes from two different cooperating teachers in two different settings point to the reciprocity of the learning relationship and benefit accruing to the cooperating teacher from being involved in SP. Further positive comments emerged from teachers in Round 2.

> [CT primary] I generally love taking students and I suppose as I've gotten older and more experienced in my teaching, I have treated it kind of differently. So at the start I would have let them just come in and go about their business and I would have given

them feedback and stuff like that, but not as much to the extent as I do now. Like now, I'm ready when they come in for their observation day…I do a lot more team teaching as well.

There's not me saying 'I'm a teacher this is the way it's done' at all. I just say 'Sometimes I find this works' or whatever but it's all a very positive thing and I've definitely gotten positive feedback from the students and I know this whole thing is a result of me changing my style as well…like I'm 11 years out now so I'm definitely not the same teacher I was in year one.

Interviewer: What are the benefits to you professionally from being a co-operating teacher?

Professionally . . . well I just get enjoyment because I feel like I'm helping another teacher who's going out into the world to teach so many different classes. I just feel like I'm imparting my knowledge, skills and expertise. I feel if I was back at day one that they would have helped me if I had them—so I'm really just trying to like give them as much help as possible to set them up.

Interviewer: And you think this is a benefit to the life of the school as well?

Definitely yes, because you're really promoting—as we say to the kids—learning from each other—but teachers can learn from each other as well.

[CT post primary] We pick up things from the students as well, so it's not all one way.

7.13 Future CPD for the role of the CT

Our evidence shows that the preparation of the CT for the role is unsurprisingly very varied for a number of reasons. One reason is that not all CTs are located within easy distance of the HEI where the ST is studying. Participating schools/CTs are spread across the entire country and, depending on the programme in question and the kind of SP the student is engaged in, it may be that only one CT in a school is involved in SP and that the school itself has no particular connection with any HEI. On the other hand, very many schools, as noted above, have a long tradition of involvement with their local HEI and so many CTs have had some experience of STs being in their schools and have experience of supporting them. However, for all CTs the new arrangements have brought new requirements, expectations and challenges.

When asked in open-ended written response what type of professional development might be available to cooperating teachers, almost all respondents stated that there was none, or none that they were aware of. The exception to this was one respondent who mentioned the PDST. In relation to identifying the specific professional development opportunities that might be required of for SP, cooperating teachers were forthcoming with ideas. Responses ranged from the importance of the physical proximity or convenience of CPD—such as it being provided

locally—to having a simple conversation about the process with a HEI. Other suggestions were more prescriptive:

- Guidance and clarity around the roles and expectations of the CT;
- Understanding the requirements of the HEI for the student;
- How to give constructive or formative feedback in a professional manner;
- How to liaise with the HEI and establish greater communication between the cooperating teacher and HEI tutor.

These suggestions could usefully serve as a basis for CPD for CTs.

When asked to specify two things cooperating teachers felt that they are best placed to do and two things they felt that the HEI Tutor was best placed to do, the responses were most constructive and pointed to unique but complementary areas of expertise.

A content analysis of comments from the cooperating teachers revealed that the role they felt best served was to "provide guidance and support to the student teacher in general". Following that, other aspects that they felt they could provide were: assistance with classroom management, in real time; assistance with planning, pacing and content of lessons; providing or advising on resources and materials; developing the pupil and student teacher relationship, advising on pupil assessment, and informing the student teacher about various school policies including discipline procedures.

In contrast, the aspect that cooperating teachers identified as the area that HEI tutors were best placed to provide was overwhelmingly identified as "to assess the student teacher". More specifically, this included assessment of the student teacher's use of different methodologies and pedagogies in class, as well as individual aspects of the student teacher's teaching such as classroom management, classroom presence, engagement, movement, voice projection, professional conduct and professionalism—according to the Teaching Council guidelines, and the student's progress over time. The extent to which the cooperating teacher and HEI tutor might collaborate or consult each other on the student teacher's progress was articulated in a just three instances where it was suggested that the HEI tutor might seek advice from the CT 'on how the student teacher got on', 'meet for proper feedback with the cooperating teacher'; and 'give the cooperating teacher clear expectations so that the CT can support the ST'. Each of these examples go some way towards building the dialogue between the CT and the HEI tutor, although there is a sense that STs might be excluded from these conversations. One respondent suggested that the HEI tutor should "enter and leave the school incognito".

7.14 Benefits of Extended Period of School Placement including the 10-week block

As referred to earlier in this chapter, because of the differing interpretations and models of placement in each of the HEIs (including those not selected for a more focused approach as a case study within this report), interpretations of the '10-week block' vary considerably among the HEIs, and consequently at school level. Given that teachers generally appear to be unaware of the Teaching Council guidelines, and that their interpretation of them is filtered through the HEIs, schools respond to whatever configuration is communicated either through

the HEI itself or by the student seeking a placement. That said, at primary level there was a universal perception that a 10 week block was too long as the following quotes illustrate:

> Now I didn't experience that, but there were 10 week blocks in this school and I personally think that's too long.

> Even just from informally asking the teachers I've said, 'How's that going?' and they all felt it was a bit too long. So nearly the guts of a term . . .

There was a sense, too, of the potentially disruptive nature of a block from one CT who remarked that 'blocks can have a big impact on class routine and management', which stands in contrast to conceptualisations of co-teaching or team teaching model and their potential benefits for pupil learning. However, in some instances, the model proposed by the HEI appeared to be more amenable to primary teachers, while still maintaining the extent of the placement:

> Nobody can give up a class for 10 weeks—that's too long but the [HEI – primary] students don't do this anymore, at least our two students this year didn't –they had 5 weeks in one classroom and then 5 in another; it worked ok

In a small number of cases, senior staff in the school expressed concern about issues of confidentiality if a student teacher were to spend up to 10 weeks in a school, including the conversations in the staffroom.

> [Principal, urban school] The other problem that we tend to have is the staff room and we put a great deal of emphasis on professionalism and ethics and matters of confidentiality since nearly always the students are pretty local so they end up being privy to all kinds of conversations and information about pupils and families that can be very sensitive so I put a lot of emphasis on making sure they know the protocol about these kinds of issues.

The issue of confidentiality was also raised in relation to shorter blocks of placement, for example in SEN settings, where a student teacher might spend time in their local school and where sensitivities could arise in relation to local knowledge of a family situation.

In contrast, post primary teachers who observe the various configurations from the larger number of HEIs associated with post primary programmes were more decisive in their views in relation to the flow of the year, as was evidenced in the focus group interviews and in open-ended responses on the survey instrument, as the following quote illustrates:

> [CT post primary] Continuous to me would be a massive benefit. To be in school for the full year would be ideal. It would be such a support to have the same person for a year.

In the survey, two-thirds of the post primary respondents favoured a continuous, year-long model, whether that was in the form of a day a week (even if only one class was taught and the rest observed), to two days a week, to being in school for five days a week (even if only teaching one class per day), followed by a gradual building up of responsibility over the

course of the year. Key areas of learning outlined by post primary CTs in their justifications for a longer placement period were identified as follows: the capacity of the ST to:

- develop confidence;
- build expertise in classroom management;
- be considered as a member of staff by colleagues and students in the school;
- build a rapport with students;
- experience continuity in teaching;
- develop a sense of what school life was like over the course of the year;
- understand 'real teaching'.

The question of how the student teacher might experience 'real teaching' is the crucial one here as it should include experiences that extent of the school day, week, month, or year as well as all its variations, opportunities and professional demands.

7.14 DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' AND PRINCIPALS' VIEWS OF SP

While a small number of deputy principals and principals participated in the focus group and in the cooperating teacher questionnaires—particularly if they served a coordinating role for SP in the school or facilitated ST in their own classrooms, a separate survey was conducted with DPs and Principals (n=18) in post primary schools to ascertain their views. In this survey, the respondent gender was nearly exactly balanced with the majority (61%) holding posts as principals and just over a quarter (28%) in DP roles. These were all experienced professionals with almost three-quarters (72%) having over 21 years experience and approximately 17 years of facilitating student teacher school placements. Their schools were distributed across mainly mixed, non-disadvantaged, urban, suburban and rural schools in the four provinces.

The majority of respondents (83%) indicated that they were aware of the Teaching Council Guidelines for SP. The average number of student teachers hosted by their school in the last year was approximately six. There was a wide range from 2 to 20 student teachers, with 50% of responses being between 3 and 11 student teachers. This data concurs with the experiences of post primary teachers as described earlier and draws attention to the complexity of accommodating STs from a wide range of HEIs. The majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they did not have a written policy on school placement but in an equal measure, stated that they had discussed SP in a staff meeting.

Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that they had discussed the new arrangements with a local HEI although they did not have a partnership with a local HEI or a formal agreement, such as an MoU/A with them, as stated in 61% of cases. However, the majority of respondents (61%) indicated that none of their teachers had attended an information meeting at a local HEI. This data concurs with our findings from the CT perspective and reiterates the point that information about SP can be held centrally in a school but not always communicated to teachers on the ground.

In terms of screening ST for placement in their schools, the vast majority of respondents (89%) indicated that they did interviews with prospective student teachers before accepting them and all (100%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they like to have

a say in who comes to their school on placement. From our qualitative data, we are aware that some schools post information for prospective STs on their school website. Similarly, the majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that HEIs should be allowed to allocate students for school placements. Elsewhere in this report we describe the challenges for STs in securing placements in schools and the most unlikely scenario of being accepted on their first attempts. These statistics underline the fact that Principals and DPs in post primary schools serve as gatekeepers of the professional standards of teaching for their schools, even for those starting out in the professional programme.

A number of questions addressed views on the Teaching Council Guidelines in terms of their usefulness and the majority (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were. Similarly, almost three-quarters (73%) indicated that the expectations for CTs in the guidelines were reasonable. Furthermore, a very high proportion (89%) of principals and DPs agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers were well placed to be cooperating teachers, reflecting a strong belief in the professional capacity of their teaching colleagues.

In responding to questions about the teachers in their schools, the principals and deputy principals were almost unanimous (95%) in their views that student teachers should have the opportunity to observe teachers teach, that their teachers were willing to support student teachers on placement and that their teachers were well placed to give guidance to student teachers, including on teaching and learning. They were slightly less likely to agree or strongly agree (78%) with the statement that their teachers had the necessary skills to offer feedback to student teachers about their performance. From our interview data we learned how in one setting, a member of the leadership team devised a system for CTs to enable observation in their classrooms which has been moderately successful.

Questions that related specifically to student teachers sought views from principals and DPs on whether STs should participate fully in the life of the school. No respondents disagreed that they should have this opportunity. They also showed a high level of agreement (94%) with the statement that STs should begin their SP with a period of classroom observation. Moreover, the vast majority of respondents (83%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that student teachers should be in for most week days throughout the year. As one DP observed in an individual interview: 'They get a better sense of the reality of being in school over a year. They get a better sense of the classroom'. This DP also noted the pressures that some STs can be faced with in trying fit all the SP requirements into a fixed block and having no leeway when additional school or university demands present themselves. Likewise, Principals and DPs also showed a high level of agreement (84%) with the statement that STs should get experience of both junior and senior cycles, and that such learning experiences should occur in more than one school. To a greater degree than their counterparts teaching in classrooms however, the vast majority of principals and DPs (89%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that student teachers co-teaching with the class teacher was a good idea. One DP expanded on this point in an interview in drawing attention to the professional isolation that teachers can experience:

> [DP] You are on your own for the bulk of your day. It's still solitary…and on that basis it's really important to have people coming in to sit and observe which is difficult, and something I would not have been used to. But the people [STs] coming in now to sit in your class is not such an issue as people are increasingly used to it.

A final set of questions explored the concept of partnership with HEIs and schools from the principals' and DPs' perspectives and this is illustrated in Table 7.6 below. Here, half of the respondents were of the view that the HEI communicated information clearly and in a timely manner. The majority of respondents (72%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with HEI requirements for student placement each year. In an individual interview, one postholder explained how she had attended information sessions with a number of HEIs:

> [CT/postholder]: One (HEI) was asking the school become an 'academy school' for the HEI but it would mean that we would take only their students and we wouldn't do that. There is a range of expertise among all of the HEIs and we did not want to go with one.

Just over two-thirds of respondents (67%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they had discussed the quality of a student teacher's work with the HEI tutor. Whereas earlier in this chapter we noted that CTs showed less interest in being involved in formal grading of students, almost three-quarters (72%) of principals and DPs (n=18)indicated that CTs should be involved in this dimension. The question of affording CTs' opportunities to contribute to student feedback was also discussed in focus group interviews. However, from a management perspective, imposing other document requirements on CTs could be problematic, as one interviewee highlighted:

> [CT]: It would be useful to have a template, or something you could fill in on a ST and share with the HEI tutor.
>
> *Interviewer: Would you like this to be a mandatory aspect of your work, to formalise the arrangement?*
>
> [CT] (laughs) Wouldn't like to see it as mandatory! Then we would complain about workload!

In recognising the partnership dimension of SP, the majority of respondents (67%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the HEI tutor valued teacher feedback on student teachers. However, they indicated a lower level of certainty (44%) regarding whether their own opinions were taken into account when devising HEI's school placement requirements.

The final set of questions point to a very positive view of SP by principals and DPs in relation to the professional benefits for their colleagues in the classroom (89%), and for STs in their schools (89%). As one DP remarked in an interview:

> [DP] The students bring a vibrancy and an energy to the place. They revitalise the place and we are very fortunate that staff are willing to engage with student teachers. Without the staff cooperation it simply wouldn't happen.

However, the need for professional development for CTs is strongly underlined by 94% of respondents, where the vast majority (89%) recognise that the HEI should provide professional development, although just 67% agree or strongly agree with the statement that the HEI is best placed to do so. Clearly, there are resource implications in providing CPD for

schools that enhances and builds the partnership between schools and HEIs. Finally, in looking at the experience as a whole, the almost three-quarters of respondents (72%) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that being involved in school placement was a positive experience for them as a principal working with their local HEI.

Table 7.6: Partnership between HEIs and Schools and Involvement of Staff in SP

	Agree or strongly agree
The HEI communicates all information in a clear and timely manner	50%
I am familiar with the requirements of the HEI for ST during SP each year	72%
I discuss the quality of the student's teaching with the HEI tutor	67%
Teachers should be involved in the assessment and grading of the ST's performance on SP	72%
The HEI tutor values teacher feedback on student teachers on SP	67%
My opinion is taken into consideration by the HEI in devising SP requirements for STs	44%
Being involved in SP has benefitted teachers professionally	89%
The Teaching Council Guidelines on SP are helpful to teachers at a professional level	73%
There is a need for professional development on SP for teachers involved as cooperating teachers	94%
The HEI is best placed to provide the necessary professional development for schools in supporting student teachers on SP	67%
Professional development opportunities should be provided by the HEI to enhance the schools' role in supporting STs	89%
Generally speaking SP is a positive experience for STs in my school	89%
Generally speaking, SP is a positive experience for me as a principal working with my local HEI	72%

Accommodating STs seeking placements before the start of the school year and matching them with supportive CTs in the relevant subject areas presents many logistical issues for post primary schools. Our experience from interviews with those in leadership and management posts in schools is that this work can be streamlined and maximised for the benefit of the school when it is coordinated by an individual with responsibility for this work—typically the deputy principal in post primary schools who may liaise with several HEIs and manage timetables and the day to day teacher supply in schools. Similarly, we are aware of some schools (non-fee paying) where management allows scope for CTs to act in a mentoring role as part of their overall workload, as the following DP illustrates:

> [DP]: They get one period off per week if they act as a CT. And we would make sure that this period is called a mentor period and we would ensure this coincided with free

time for the student, so they can sit down and plan and get feedback, and discuss how things are developing.

7.15 CONCLUSION

Insights on school placement were sought from cooperating teachers at primary and post primary levels, as well as from school leaders (principals and deputies). The following statements provide a summary of the main findings in this section:

- The majority of CTs are not aware of the detail of the Teaching Council guidelines, nor of formal details of partnership arrangements with the HEIs.

- Despite a lack of awareness of formal arrangements, the majority of teachers (80% at primary and 89% at post primary) indicated that they have a say as to whether or not they host a student teacher in their class.

- CTs have not experienced CPD for their role, but they believe that they have the expertise to act as CTs. Those in leadership positions in schools concur strongly with this view. Moreover, all believe that HEIs are best placed to provide such CPD.

- CTs have had mixed experiences with HEI tutors and would welcome clarity on their own role vis-à-vis the ST's progress, how they can complement the work of the HEI tutor, and arrangements for dialogue with the HEI tutor during visits.

- The majority of CTs believe they can support STs in a general way, offer advice on classroom management, resources, lesson planning and relationships with students/pupils. However, they are less eager to be involved in formal grading of the ST's progress.

- In terms of extended placements, primary CTs are generally not in favour of the 10-week block as it is viewed as ceding control of the class for almost a full term. Models of team teaching or co-teaching exist only in a very small number of cases. For post primary teachers, a block placement is considered restrictive compared to the developmental process and valuable learning that can occur over the course of a year, especially if this is a graduated experience where responsibilities are added and supported incrementally.

- On balance, the vast majority of CTs in both sectors, and their school leaders, believe that SP is a rewarding experience that benefits them professionally. Moreover, they strongly believe that the experience is a positive one for student teachers in their schools.

CHAPTER 8: STUDENT TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON SP

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Research on learning and professional learning in particular shows that knowledge and competence are always situated, context-dependent and collaborative. School placement allows STs participate in the authentic, actual settings where professional competence is demonstrated and shared. Whatever the professional learning setting available to the STs, SP powerfully impacts that learning as shown in Chapter Two (e.g. Sjoer & Meierink, 2015; Furlong and Maynard, 1995; Waldron, 2014, 37) and confirmed by our evidence from STs themselves in this chapter.

SP happens across the range of settings in our study: urban and rural schools, single sex and co-educational schools, multi-grade and single class situations, DEIS schools, Special Schools and Gaelscoileanna and Scoileanna Gaeltachta. For STs, SP is about learning skills and competencies, developing personal, productive and professional working relationships with colleagues. Becoming a teacher is transformational: it is about developing a personal and professional identity. The success of SP depends on the 'affordance' of partner schools, on school principals, co-operating teachers (CTs) and HEI tutors and SP Directors. This chapter focuses specifically on the student teachers' experience of SP. It has five main themes:

- Integration of Theory and Practice, Self-Efficacy, Emotionality
- Extended SP: Belonging and Contributing to the life of the School
- Observing, Being Observed and Being Assessed
- Evaluating and Reflecting
- Intensity and Pressure of Workload

8.2 INTEGRATION OF THEORY & PRACTICE, SELF-EFFICACY, EMOTIONALITY

We start this section with a telling story from an interview with a post-primary ST that speaks to how SP is the vehicle for the integration of theory and practice and for empowering learners:

> …a couple of weeks ago was the first dawning of the day where I actually could see the value of what I thought was time-wasting lectures in the background coming into action actually in front of me…this idea of giving the students 'ownership of the learning' that we heard about so much. I have a student … she can be awfully disruptive. I took a chance and gave her the responsibility during the week for minding rock samples … she comes into my class now and she sits as quiet as a mouse, she is volunteering to help, she is telling everyone to 'Shut up and listen will ye!' …she has been an absolute gem for me and I have not a bad word to say …I made a deal with her with the rocks…The same girl is only allowed in to school three days per week for a half day, she is very troublesome. And she wouldn't flinch in my

room when I am there …When you develop the relationship the rest will fall into place (2017).

Our student teacher interview data is redolent with such tales of accomplishment: STs perceive themselves as growing in expertise and competence. The heading of this section captures the feelings conveyed by all our ST participants. SP is without doubt the most significant and positive experience of one's ITE experience. The vast majority reported being confident and competent about their SP and feeling well prepared for it (Table 8.1) while the vast majority also agreed SP was a positive experience for them (Table 8.2). Their feelings of self-efficacy stem from knowing the procedures and being able to plan ahead and being supported professionally by their HEI tutors and CTs as claimed by the vast majority (Tables 8.1 and 8.2). The vast majority for instance were aware of the procedures for securing their SP, notwithstanding some of the associated problems. SP Handbooks and guidelines provide important support for students. The HEI Handbooks contain information on orientation to teaching and SP, schemes of work template, outline lesson plans, areas of observation, guidance on assessment of learners and feedback to ST and possible structures for post lesson discussions.

Table 8.1: Knowing Procedures and Feeling Confident

% saying Yes	PrimR1(R2)	PostPrimR1(R2)	Total R1(R2)
I feel confident and competent about my SP	87	79	83
I felt well prepared for being on SP	78 (71)	73 (65)	76 (69)
I knew the procedure for acquiring SP	85 (100)	91 (98)	88 (95)
I received a HB from my HEI that helped me know the requirements of SP	90 (85)	78 (93)	84 (88)

Table 8.2: Experiences and Perspectives about Support

% Agreeing	PrimR1(R2)	PostPrimR1(R2)	Total R1(R2)
SP is a positive experience for me	87 (81)	86 (80)	86 (80)
The guidelines from my HEI are helpful	94	68	80
My HEI tutor supports me professionally	92 (82)	78 (80)	84 (81)
My CT supports me professionally	77 (91)	85 (88)	81 (90)
I engage in other aspects of school life besides class teaching, e.g. sports events, drama/musicals	41 (85)	77 (85)	60 (85)
I feel I contribute to the life of the school	83 (92)	83 (75)	83 (85)

Our interviews with STs provided very many examples of how SP had fostered their development. What came across time and time again was how their professional growth is also suffused with the emotionality of that learning. There is the intensity of struggle to move forward and gain expertise but there is also the thrill of success and a sense of achievement. One example from a final year post-primary student, who felt she had won round her class, demonstrates the point very well:

> …last year I was completely out of my depth and I got along most of the time at school but there were a lot of…very challenging behaviours that I hadn't expected because I was in a very privileged school …there were fellas down on the floor doing push-ups and everything, complete disregard for the fact that there was even a teacher in the classroom. And then one day one of the students started an argument with another one in the class based on facts in the book…their nationality was being insulted by the facts. … I said to him, 'I understand where you're coming from but you have to accept that no matter what country you come from, no matter where you are there is going to be a good side and a bad side and the bad side of this fact is that this happens and that this occurs.' they had put me through so much trouble that year between September to the middle of January… I had had year head meetings and class tutor meetings, I had detentions, whole class detentions and everything and I would come out of the classes some days and I would just go into the staffroom and cry. Because they had been so disruptive, they had been throwing things around at me … And then after that [incident] they were completely on my side and it was, 'Why are you arguing with her, she's the teacher, let's just get on with this' kind of attitude and they completely embodied everything that I had hoped that they would and by the end of it… I was heartbroken having to leave them… they realised that I was on the same page as them and that I was on their side …by the end of it they were actually really engaged in the tasks that we were setting and they were engaged in what we were learning and we did project work and presentations and everything and they did fantastic work, they did so much work for it and really got a lot of value out of it, they were able to critique each other in a positive way (2017).

We chose this particular example (and the earlier one) because for STs managing the class is a major concern and featured strongly in their accounts of their experience on SP. This is completely in line with the literature on the experience of the ST on SP insofar as classroom management, especially the management of pupil behaviour is often an overwhelming concern for the ST and even the beginner teacher (e.g Reupert and Woodcock, 2010). Again the majority, regardless of sector, reported getting assistance on this from their CT, their HEI tutor and also, interestingly, from their peers (Table 8.3). In sum, our evidence supports the claim that SP is the space where theory and practice meet for students, where skills are honed, where idealism and desire for teaching gain expression and are revitalised, and where self-belief in their capability is affirmed.

8.3 Extended SP: Belonging and Contributing to the Life of the School

We probed the experience of the extended SP mostly in interviews and the second round of fieldwork also pursued comparisons between the 10-week block SP and the continuous SP

whereby STs are in school say for 3 days per week for the year. Of course students can only comment on their own experience but the views are helpful in understanding the different opportunities afforded in both contexts.

The extended SP, whether 10-week block or continuous throughout the year, offers a range of positives, which can be summed up as offering an authentic experience of being a teacher and the opportunity to get to know pupils. As one PME primary student commented, 'the 10 weeks in the one school allowed me feel part of the furniture, I felt I was really part of everything'. Understandably STs need to experience themselves as genuine teachers with responsibility for their students' learning over a period of time; they need time to see the impact of their teaching on pupils and it is clear from their responses that the major benefit of the extended SP is seeing at first hand the impact and influence they have on children's learning and their own learning. They talked about the importance of 'feeling and looking like a real teacher' and 'being part of the school community'. Of note regarding the latter is that Table 8.2 shows an increase over the period of the study to their participation in the broader life of the school. Above all, they were keen to see themselves as 'working' in the school. The following quotes from various STs across the different programmes demonstrate their enthusiasm for the more extended SP:

> You are there all the time …block is better (than the previous shorter SPs)… you are there from once students came back in September so they think you are the teacher; they don't know…the kids think this is my teacher for the year.

> Another teacher in the school asked to sit in on my class…I felt like I am contributing something …relationships of equality can develop when you see people so regularly…

Pedagogically, STs felt they benefited because they became aware over the longer SP of children's needs, of the complexity of teaching and the need to be able to address the diversity of needs. The depth afforded by this experience is contrasted, by some, with the shorter SPs of their previous years:

> Block a lot better, you get to know the children, the staffroom etc., you develop a more realistic relationship with school life (Student Teacher, Year 4 primary, 2017).

> I think last year having placement on Mondays and Fridays was so difficult because it felt like you were in the school and Friday was far away and the school had changed so much whereas this year you have that continuous idea of what's going on in the school, you get more classes, you get more time with the students and you get to know them a little bit better (PP ST 2017).

Some PP and primary STs mentioned how in their second PME year they are treated and behave more like real teachers in the school and like other research conducted on STs on 'teaching practice' in the past (Hall et al, 2012) are pleased to pass as 'the real teacher' as opposed to their actual status of student teacher:

> Because I have a year's worth of experience and we're given the opportunity to act in the school as, I suppose, actual teachers as opposed to the student teachers who come

in on a Monday and a Friday. We have more of a presence. Like last year it was extremely obvious that I was the student teacher and I had the students play to that whereas this year I'm in the school three days a week. They don't even realise that I'm not there on a Monday and a Friday, they just think I'm always there, but that's it. I'm their teacher and I have one class that I see four times a week and I'm their teacher for that subject. So, it's just more continuity (2017).

Being trusted to assume control of the class and 'get on with it' is facilitated by the extended SP which students very much appreciate. This was especially the sentiment expressed by PME2 STs, regardless of sector, as they compared and contrasted their year one and year two experience in interviews. Now in year two they appear to enjoy the freedom extended to them by the CT and are quite confident in their ability to teach. In their minds even teachers change towards them seeing them more as equals:

> As a second year they look to you as if you're more experienced, they give you more autonomy within the class then and they know that you have the experience and they know that you are well able to, number one manage the class, and number two, go through the material effectively. And ensure all students have access to that material…(2017).

One PME2 primary student reported filling in for a teacher who was ill and the Principal failed to secure a substitute teacher for two days. She interpreted this as a measure of her competence and the professional regard in which she was held by the school. Such accounts were not unusual especially in our second round of interviewing when the problem of teacher supply had become more common.

Another advantage of the extended period in school is the opportunity to participate in whole-school events and engage in activities across the school. This was highly valued by all students, again conferring feelings of belonging and a sense of making a contribution to the life of the school:

> On the block placement, the 10-week block, you get to work in other areas of the school other than my classroom which was really good. I was involved in staff meetings, I was involved in staff decisions, I was involved in rotas for trips…being involved in the school community like that was really, it gave you a sense and a place …(2017).

8.4 CONTINUOUS AND BLOCK COMPARED

Overall, STs felt that continuous SP offered rich opportunities for professional learning over and above a block SP. The main word used is 'realistic' and the main message would appear to be commitment and investment in the school and class when one is placed there for a year rather than a block of 10 weeks. Students spoke of seeing all the elements of school life from the preparation of the Christmas Nativity Play to the excitement of Sports Days and from the preparation of the mock and real exams through to the mounting of Transition Year events. The following are illustrative:

You can get so much more invested in the school because if you start getting involved in extracurricular, say like hurling or something, if you're on a 10 week block they might have the semi-final or something the week after you finish and you'd be raging you missed it. Or just missing school events like if they had a rag day or something like that (2017).

And on your block as well you wouldn't have time to actually reflect on what you're doing and implement any changes as it's not long enough (2017).

It gives you a reality check of what real school life is actually like. And it has actually made some people realise early last year – this is, or this is not for me …a lot left last year (2017).

On continuous SP …you could be less prone to a burnout …(2017).

STs did not cite any negatives about continuous SP.

We can conclude that firstly STs appreciated the opportunity to have an extended placement and believed that their learning developed considerably as a result. That is the main message from this section. It appears that STs on the continuous SP perceive it as less intensive than their counterparts experience on the 10-week block placement. However, SP is, in general, perceived to be financially expensive and we discuss that later in the chapter.

8.5 OBSERVING, BEING OBSERVED AND BEING ASSESSED

8.5.1 OBSERVATION AND CTs

All of the HEI case study providers recommend that each SP is preceded by a period of observation and classroom assisting so that the ST has the opportunity to become familiar with individual students, class routines, and classroom management approaches prior to beginning teaching responsibilities. STs themselves overwhelmingly support this practice. Table 8.3 shows that absolutely all primary students and the vast majority of post-primary students agree that it's a good idea to have a period of observation in their SP class. The vast majority of primary STs also believe that it's a good idea to team teach with their CT. The corresponding statistic for post-primary STs is significantly lower at 43%. Having the opportunity team teach with another person shows the similar sectoral differences.

Observation is valued and cultivates a friendly and supportive professional relationship with their CT. One ST commented on the difference between observation at different points in the process, how initially it is formal and the ST is not interacting with learners as they observe but once they start to teach the class themselves they can benefit from observing more actively through participating and helping as the CT teaches the class. Students appreciated this opportunity:

I think there's a different feel to the observation at the start of the year, and the observation you do after you have the class by yourself when you're in the same

class. So the start of the year you're at the back, you're observing, you're the green horse in their eyes. And you're just looking at the teaching, but you're not really too much involved…Then when you've taught the class and you've got a good relationship with the teacher, I found even coming into the class when you're not taking them, you can be part of the class. And they'll bounce suggestions off you or, if someone is struggling they'll ask you to help them out …(ST, 2017).

The experience of observation varied from school to school yet a significant percentage of STs outlined the value of observing experienced teachers teach but also commented on how receptive some teachers were to being observed. Some teachers, in primary and post-primary schools invited STs to come and observe certain lessons that they thought they would benefit from:

> …we had 4 weeks before we ever started teaching to do observation. We had 'strand work' was what it was called; basically different curricular areas like special education needs within the school… So that eased us into it all right but it just was daunting at the start to be kind of dropped in (PrimST,2017).

> I found that with two of my co-operating teachers, that I could just walk into their class one day unannounced …but I could just do that, and they'd welcome me in…(PP ST, 2017).

> Last year, the school I was in, they were great, teachers would just pop into the staffroom and say, are you free, come on in, see what I'm doing – it was great (Prim ST, 2017).

As we explained at some length in Chapter Five, the opportunity to observe is not available to all in equal measure, it depends very much on the willingness of individual teachers to be observed by students. In some schools, experienced teachers would not afford STs opportunities for observation and it seemed to be a school-level choice in a minority of cases:

> I did say, look, can I sit in ……she said no, she was too nervous… I just would have appreciated it (2017).

> … some other teachers didn't really want me there, so I was like, that's fine, it's OK, I don't want to affect your classroom (2017).

> At the start of the year actually the principal did say …some of the teachers don't like new fresh teachers coming in and telling them about all these new methodologies, you know, teaching them. And I said 'Oh, well I wouldn't go preaching or anything anyway.' I wouldn't be like that. But I think it just goes to show sometimes there are certain teachers who just feel like they don't want you sitting in there, maybe judging the way they're teaching. And, like, we just want to learn from them. We wouldn't be sitting there going 'Oh, that's wrong, this is the way we do it.' We want to learn their way as well…(2017).

ST experiences of observation varied and reflect the voluntary nature of the school-based support to student teachers within the overall SP partnership (Teaching Council, 2013, 10). Learning how to observe an experienced teacher and identify and understand the different skills that he or she is using is an achievement in itself; it is something that students need support in learning how to do (Furlong & Maynard, 1995, 183). However, our data confirms that experienced teachers within schools remain at liberty to refuse student observations. According to one ST, 'your SP experience depends on how seriously the school takes SP. Co-operating teachers either tend to be very helpful or not' (2016).

8.5.2 OBSERVATION AND HEI TUTORS

We already described in considerable detail the practices of HEI tutors in observing STs teach in Chapter Five. In that chapter we analysed evidence of the feedback process which included feedback from HEI tutors based on their observations of STs teaching. Student teacher interview data was generally positive in relation to the HEI tutor visit during SP. One of the advantages of probing the same issue e.g. observation with all players: STs, CTs and HEI tutors is the opportunity afforded the research to triangulate the evidence. The account offered in Chapter Five on the nature of feedback and how it is given together with the accounts of how observation is conducted tallies exactly with the accounts offered by STs.

Some STs felt that the tutor visit detracted from their overall SP experience due to nerves and anxiety. And even though STs were positive about the impact on their learning of being observed teaching, most experienced some tension at being observed or as some said 'inspected' because ultimately, they argued, 'it is an assessment'. Invariably there was at least one ST in every focus group interview who gave accounts of inconsistency in the feedback which was a concern for them. Very many students in different focus groups talked about what they believed was a need for a more standardised approach on the part of the HEI tutors observing them. A fascinating feature of the narratives of being observed by their tutors is their frequent dramatic nature, linked to fear, surprise, unpredictability, feelings of panic, even terror. The physicality of the observation/assessment process is also expressed. The following indicate these points:

> We are told the names of our tutors but we don't always know what they look like so I'm at the window and if I see anyone who looks a bit professional with a bag, my heart is in my mouth until I figure out who they are.

> It's really terrifying, awful. It's that element of surprise. I have no window so they're in the room before I know it. Sometimes the night before we might get an inkling of a visit by another student getting a visit so we know the tutor is on the rounds. This happened a few of us. We were expecting a visit and we had incredible lessons planned but no show. Sometimes another teacher might spot them coming and a child legs it down the corridor to alert you.

The ST who expressed the last point here went on to say how she would feel much more comfortable and not suffer from nerves with her CT and argued for a shared 3-way communication between the ST, CT and HEI tutor. As we know from the literature this scenario offers the potential for meaningful professional learning and a shared appreciation of knowledge exchange (see Young and MacPhail, 2016). It also points up the advocacy role of

the CT which was also brought out in Chapter Seven. STs are very accepting of the assessment role of the HEI tutor but a majority also believe that CTs should have a role in their assessment (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3: Opportunities, Reflection, Assessment

% Agreeing	PrimR1(R2)*	PostPrimR1(R2)	Total R1(R2)
My CT assists me with class management	75	80	78
My HEI tutor assists me with class management	70	56	63
My peers assist me with class management	75	75	75
It's a good idea to have a period of observation in my SP class	100	86	92
It's a good idea to team teach with CT	72	43	57
I have opportunity to team teach with another person (ST or CT)	66 (71)	66 (36)	66 (58)
My CT facilitates me trying out alternative ways of doing things in the classroom	76 (92)	64 (74)	70 (85)
I'm encouraged to teach independently	78 (99)	93 (96)	91 (98)
My CT helps me to critically reflect on my practice	47	33	38
My HEI tutor engages in critical reflection with me	77	78	78
The CT should have a role in assessment / grading of my competence	57	63	60
My CT is best placed to assess my teaching	62	41	52
My HEI tutor is best placed to assess me	77	67	72
My HEI tutor, CT and I have 3-way discussion	11 (32)*	19 (28)*	15 (30)*

*wording slightly different in R2 questionnaire so not precisely comparable year on year

8.6 PLANNING, EVALUATING AND REFLECTING

STs are encouraged to become 'reflective practitioners' during the course of their ITE. To support them in doing this, they are required to keep a personal journal recording their experiences of the SP. Reflection is regarded as a key activity during this teacher development process (Postholm, 2008). Russell (2005) further argues that teacher educators should create discursive context/communities to situate student teachers for reflective practices. Student teachers in our study are required to set learning goals for themselves based on their reflections and learning through programmes. They are required to reflect on varying aspects of teaching and learning and to report their reflections and evaluations in their professional portfolio and discuss them with their tutor.

Writing up reflections on their lessons and experiences on SP is a major component and all students have strong views on the process. There is a consensus among students that reflection is important, it fits with their notion of what it is to do a complex job and be part of a profession. In no focus group interview with groups of students could one detect any objection to the need to reflect, to learn how to be a reflective practitioner, to write one's reflections, to share them with others and to act on them in subsequent lessons. It is clear that students valued being taught how to evaluate their practice and for most this was part of their HEI assignment demand. It is noteworthy that HEI tutors were seen to play a major role in enabling students to engage in reflection, a greater role than their CTs (Table, 8.3). Some did not come to reflection easily, the relevance of it had to be demonstrated to them by their tutors and several were sufficiently persuaded by its importance to continue to write reflections into their career as teachers:

> I think when I started it seemed kind of airy fairy… And then as I went on I kind of started to understand how to and I think it has an awful lot of value…. And even the idea of reflecting on something makes it more worthwhile than just doing something and getting on with it to tick a box. So coming down to it now we have a lot in college with, we have reflective assignments and things like that to get us into the practice of it and it's definitely worthwhile. I'd consider keeping it on (2017).

> For me critical reflection is vital in the career we have chosen. The name of the game is teaching and learning and they change… the students change every year. I think if we become complacent we don't offer the kids the teaching and learning that they deserve and the amount of potential and opportunities that they should get in school. I think it's vital for our professional development, for our ongoing learning … (2017).

However, what is an issue for students is the scale of the demand of critical reflection. Most students argued that it detracts from their time and ability to plan teaching, prepare resources and participate in other school work. Most argued that the scale of it detracts from their enjoyment and opportunity to experiment and could even lead to burn out. The following quotes from those interviews are very typical STs:

> I don't think that it's realistic to be able to reflect in every single class that you plan for throughout the day (2017).

It's a pain!! If I reflect any further the men in white coats will be coming to bring me away!!! It's about evaluation. . . We have to do far too much of it. It's taking away from your lesson planning. Class and teaching so positive and then you have to do this evaluation and reflection and it has to be academic writing and it has to be referenced. You get insane from it. I think it should be far less, and maybe just verbal and record it verbally. (2016)

8.7 EXPENSE[3] AND PRESSURE OF WORK

In this final section of the chapter we present evidence on two related issue on which STs also feel extremely strongly – the twin dimensions of the intensity of the workload while on SP and its cost, both of which add to stress levels.

In some cases, STs have to travel significant distances, from their SP school to their HEI College and from their homes to their SP school in order to undertake SP. One ST noted, 'I was placed very far away from my home which incurred very large transport and accommodation costs over three weeks …approx. 900 euro …' (ST, 2017, Year 3). Another ST observed, 'it was very difficult to find schools to facilitate placement and often schools are far from home and college and this leads to it being very expensive as accommodation has to be paid for' (ST, 2017, Year 3). Students were concerned about having to pay for their accommodation at/near their College while living at home and thus not using their College/city accommodation. According to our survey data in Round 2 (2017) the mean time and distance of an SP school from a HEI college was 115 minutes and 88 kms. The time and mean distance of an SP school from the students' home was 40 mins and 27 kms.

Costs also arose from preparing resources and printing documentation: 'resources add up and overall they can be quite expensive… '(ST, 2017). The expenses outlined included paperwork, printing of lesson plans and resources for the classroom. Primary PME and BEd students were concerned about the cost of teaching resources such as Art materials. Several students recommended the use of laptops instead of having to have 'endless folders for everything'.

Others claimed that STs ought to be paid for SP, much like in other professions, to relieve the financial strain of becoming a teacher:

SP is very financially demanding …nurses go on placement and get paid and some engineers, student teachers should be paid on SP (ST, 2017, Year 4).

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[3] The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) along with the teacher unions reported on the cost of SP, showing that 42% of STs consider dropping out of college due to financial pressure (USI, 2018).

Workloads are considered 'excessive', 'highly pressured' and 'unrealistic' and those words were used liberally in relation to the detail required in lesson planning/scripting and in writing evaluations.

In 2017, STs identified an additional concern that they were being timetabled to teach classes separate from the classes of their CT. This posed a dilemma for some STs as they felt they could not refuse a potential employer when asked to help out. One ST noted that she 'felt torn' and 'rudderless' when asked to take extra classes and mark exam papers at home by her CT (ST, 2017). As we reported in Chapter Five HEI tutors are aware of such demands and seek to mediate where possible.

8.8 CONCLUSION

SP is a significant and positive experience for the vast majority of STs. It is the space where theory and practice meet for them. It is hugely affirming and life-enhancing: it powerfully communicates to them in the most direct way what their strengths and skills are as emerging teachers; equally, it exposes their weaknesses but it clarifies what they need to do to overcome them; it reminds and re-affirms their idealism, optimism and passion about their chosen career. The evidence shows how STs are highly appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the life of their placement school and the extended placement is key to this opportunity. Both the 10-week block and the continuous SP allow for establishing working relations with learners and colleagues and thus to experience and sustain deeper and more meaningful curricular activity with pupils. Students value the opportunity to observe teachers and to team-teach but, as shown in other chapters, this experience is very dependent on their CTs and can vary significantly from student to student. Thus it is arguable that this could pose an equity issue and is a theme worth addressing where possible in the future.

Students recognise the importance of reflection and planning but they are very critical of the scale of evaluating that they are typically required to do. Some are also critical of inconsistencies in feedback and assessments they receive from their HEI tutors although the vast majority are extremely positive about their experience of being observed by their tutors. Being observed brings stress and this combined with the very heavy workload of SP mean that SP is overall a very intense and tiring experience. Finally, students are very conscious of the considerable expense associated with training to be a teacher and much of the expense is associated with SP.

CHAPTER 9: ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOOD PRACTICE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Case study research is often used to glean 'real life' insights into professional learning and organisational change be it at an individual or systemic level (Merriam, 1998). Case studies have a capacity to tell 'stories from the field' from which the reader/listener can draw his/her own conclusions (DES, 2015; Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Findings by O'Grady (2017) in her four case studies of how post-primary schools are experiencing implementation of the Guidelines on School Placement (Teaching Council, 2013)[4] is a case in point. It is not the placement 'procedures and paperwork' (Furlong et al., 2006: 43) *per se* that dominate the perspectives of principals and teachers in O'Grady's (2017) research; rather, it is the very nature of communications (in-school, and between the HEI and the school) together with perceptions of mutual respect and trust that emerge as the most significant variables at play in the bedding-down of the Guidelines. Interestingly, the variables are all process-related.

This chapter will explore six vignettes drawn from placement-related practices in Ireland that we believe indicate good practice in the context of HEI-school partnerships in school placement. Whilst the vignettes are categorised under school/domain names, it is important to highlight that the good practice cited in some instances grew out of HEI initiatives or gnuinely collaboratively HEI-school innovations in school placement.

9.2 THE VIGNETTES

We believe also that the heuristic nature of vignettes, cases or scenarios contributes to one's understanding of placement-related complexities and their interrelatedness with a range of different factors; 'insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected to result from case studies' (Stake, 1981:47). The benefit of hindsight can be drawn into the present. In what follows, six vignettes (three primary, three post-primary) are presented as exemplars of good practice in school placement. 'Good' is understood to be that which contributes to learning in its broadest sense, and to the processes that promote strong sustainable school-HEI partnerships. This is in line with creative school-HEI collaborations elsewhere (Kruger et al., 2009; McLaughlin et al., 2006). It is also in line with what it means 'to be' and to know in Delorian terms (Delors, 1996) and to function as networked communities of, for, and in practice (Engeström, 2001). The underpinning conceptualisation of 'partnership' in this chapter is therefore one in which schools and HEIs view school placement as a process requiring mutual engagement, sharing of professional repertoires for example around knowledge and knowing, and a sense of joint enterprise (Wenger et al., 2002). In that context, no one party has a monopoly on craft and/or theoretical knowledge.

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[4] Hereafter referred to as the Guidelines.

For ease of reading, the exemplars are explored under three headings, namely, description, discussion, and key take-aways. Each of the vignettes is anonymised and each is bounded by its own unique situated contextualities. The vignettes are not intended to be prescriptive or simplistic but rather 'a label of convenience for a complex' (Schostak, 2002:22). They are merely illustrative of how a school/community and/or a HEI have responded to implementation of the Guidelines within the context of 'partnership' in school placement. The hope is that the vignettes will provide a grounded framework or a set of broad principles for discussion around placement (Yin, 1994). Any generalisations are a matter for the reader in line with the view that 'responsibility for determining universality rests with the reader' (Sugrue, 1997:52).

VIGNETTE 1: ORCHARD VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY: A PARTNERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SP

DESCRIPTION

Orchard View is a large urban, mixed gender primary school with an administrative principal. The majority of the children are from affluent homes in the school catchment area. The school has been involved in a number of curriculum innovations and projects over the years. School communications to parents are a regular feature of school life; they include welcoming new student teachers (viewed as 'members of staff') and citing their importance to children's learning and school development. The communications also outline the duration and classes for the various placements and the student teachers' involvement in the broader school life for example, the whole school basketball blitz. In-school leadership communications with staff tend to be relaxed but focused and there is a strong ethos of 'let's give it a go' and 'we'll learn' approach when it comes to decision-making around participation in projects. The school has a longstanding tradition of offering placements to student teachers from a range of HEIs. It has a whole-school approach and policy in relation to school placement. Prior to the issuing of the Guidelines in 2013, the school was involved for many years in a partnership project on school placement with its nearest HEI: Metropolitan University (MU). The project included professional development around mentoring student teachers and teacher learning more broadly. The professional development provided by the HEI enabled teachers, student teachers and HEI tutors to explore roles and responsibilities in a partnership model of placement and in a very organic and collaborative way. The learning was not rushed but allowed to grow in line with the capacity of the teachers and the stage of development of the school. Mentoring materials were developed by the project participants.

When the Teaching Council Guidelines were issued, the teachers who had participated in the MU-school partnership project were key people in generating discussion around school placement. This in turn got teachers talking about their own experiences of placement, their current learning needs, and what teachers would consider as the 'essentials' in strong school-HEI relationships and partnerships in school placement.

The school offers placements to a range of HEIs but has a preference to work with HEIs who have invested in the professional development of its teachers and with whom strong relationships have developed over the years. During school placement periods, teachers

continue to use the project mentoring materials that grew out of their collaborative partnership experience with MU more than a decade ago.

DISCUSSION

A strong feature of Orchard View Primary school is that 'professional conversions' (Young et al., 2015) around school placement tend to be informal a great deal of the time and at other times formally structured for example at staff meetings. School Placement is discussed at staff meetings. Student teachers are viewed as important resources for children's learning bringing fresh new ideas about pedagogies and curriculum to the school, and this is communicated by the Principal to staff, parents and the Board of Management. Equally so, HEI staff are viewed by the Principal and staff as important capacity-building agents for teachers in working more confidently with student teachers through joint CPD opportunities such as those that led to the development of placement support materials. Similar findings were cited in Project Supervision (Sim, 2010) an Australian project where placement supervision materials were co-designed by teachers and HEI staff. In Orchard View Primary School, the actual process of getting to know HEI staff at a human level (through the CPD seminars) and vice versa over a period to time seemed to have built strong good-humoured relationships with HEI tutors (and vice versa) which have endured over time. Mutually positive relationships have enabled all involved to take and share risks together and feel jointly responsible for placement processes and outcomes. Jones et al. (2016) would likely view such school-HEI relationships as key in the development of a generative and a transformative partnership. It is worth noting that in Orchard View's approach to placement, parents are part of the conversation around school placement. This is turn helps students to feel like a 'real teacher'; feelings which are incredible important in 'human flourishing' (Heron and Reason, 1997; Noddings, 1997) and in developing students' own professional identity (Clandinin and Connolly, 1995). One senses in Orchard View a good fit in the alignment of different supportive processes and structures around school placement with the school's own educational goals; it is a dynamic fit that changes over time and seems to have a self-sustaining effect on the school's commitment to partnership with HEIs in school placement. One senses also that a meaningful and shared experience of 'partnership' with MU some years earlier provided a deeply rich and enduring reservoir of knowledge, skills and dispositions around placement from which the school and MU continue to draw. A number of key take-away messages can be drawn from the Orchard View exemplar.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. The development of placement-related materials can be the seed that enables 'partnership' in school placement to be experienced, understood, and grown.
2. Opportunities to talk about teaching, learning, knowing, and knowledge in shared spaces make explicit the implicit in teaching, learning, and school placement.
3. The human dimension in teacher learning is important; mutual trust and respect build strong school-HEI relationships (Higgins et al., 2013)
4. How and who we communicate with in relation to school placement matters a great deal; communication helps to align thinking, resources and actions.

The next vignette explores the communication dimension in a school placement setting.

VIGNETTE 2: FOREST VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND BIRCHWOOD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE: A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

DESCRIPTION

Forest View Primary School is a small, mixed gender, ethnically diverse urban school serving a large number of children from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Like Orchard View Primary School, it has a strong tradition of facilitating students from a range of different HEIs. The school does not have a written policy on school placement but the school's unwritten policy is visceral. The Principal is strongly of the view that students from different ITE institutions bring different kinds of expertise in terms of curriculum, methodologies, assessment and orientations to planning and preparation. As 'guests bringing gifts' (Edwards, 1997) that enrich children's learning, students are welcomed and supported by the school's customised interpretation of the Guidelines. Two particular structured support systems deserve mention; firstly, the Welcome Pack, and secondly, the professional learning invitations from a HEI to placement schools.

The Welcome Pack

Prior to students' initial visit to their placement school, students receive a 'Welcome Pack' from the school (an innovation by a Principal in a similar type school). The Welcome Pack is available to students via the HEI Placement Unit. The Welcome Pack comprises a 'Welcome to our School' letter from the Principal and Board of Management in which the values, goals and *raison deter* of the school are outlined; the importance of student teachers to the children's learning and overall effectiveness of the school is stated. The school views placement as a partnership process with the HEI. Enclosed in the pack is a map of the school, roles within the school, and school contact details (including an emergency number). Included also is a short paragraph on expectations; what the school expects of the student teacher during placement, and what the student can expect of the school. Students are viewed as members of staff but it is clarified for students and staff that the ultimate responsibility for the children's progress and wellbeing rests with the co-operating teacher/s.

HEI Invitations to HEI-based Professional Learning Events

Over the past three years, Forest View Primary School has received invitations from one of its HEIs to various professional learning seminars/mini-conferences held at the HEI. The HEI invitations are sent to schools that offer placements to its students on an on-going basis. Staff from Forest View have attended evening seminars at the HEI on 'Inclusive School Cultures', 'Literacy across the Curriculum', 'Assessment Approaches', 'The Environment in Learning'; these themes were suggested by the schools in response to expressed needs. The seminars are highly valued by Forest View and are perceived as a meaningful initiative by the HEI in sharing different types of knowledge and expertise in a friendly learning space. The seminars are also perceived as an important pragmatic benefit of partnering with the HEI in the area of school placement. There is a sense of reciprocity in the goodwill of the HEI towards Forest View and the other schools that are invited to attend.

The Principal of Forest View emphasises that not only do staff learn new knowledge and skills at the HEI seminars but they also provide opportunities to get to know HEI tutors in a relaxed setting and to have professional conversations about learning and teaching and teacher education. Parties do not feel rushed as happens oftentimes during placement supervision visits. While the Principal appreciates the workload of HEI tutors, she is of the view that HEI tutor time with co-operating teachers during placement is not sufficiently enabling (due to time constraints) of authentic engagement by teachers in discussions around student teacher progress and professional learning. The HEI seminars therefore open up new spaces for deep professional dialogue and help to build school-HEI relationships. Critically the seminars are viewed by Forest View as an important way of sustaining the goodwill of the school towards the HEI in school placement. In the process, Forest View feels valued by the HEI and does not feel 'taken for granted' when requests for placements are received by the school. These are important feelings from the perspective of the Principal and staff of Forest View.

It should be mentioned also that getting-to-know HEI staff in contexts beyond the school-based supervision visits have contributed to a new confidence among the staff of Forest View when problems arise on placement. While in the past there might have been a reticence on the part of the school to contact the HEI on placement matters especially if problems arose, this stance has all changed according to the principal. There is now no hesitation on the part of the school to contact the HEI where challenges arise but with a view to finding a solution on a joint basis; one example being how best to support a student teacher who does not seem to be responding positively to school-based mentoring. Arising from one such situation in which both the school and the HEI took joint responsibility in drawing up a learning development plan with and for the student, it is now current practice of the HEI to issue guidelines to partner schools on ways to assist students in difficulty whilst on placement. The practical resource draws on a shared language and shared understandings around student teaching learning that grew out of the collaboration with its placement schools.

The Principal of Forest View commented on how school staff and HEI tutors bring different types of expertise to problem-solving and through sharing and discussion, a more effective solution is found than might be the case if the school (or the HEI) decides to deal with the matter solely on its own. There is a real sense of a school-HEI community of practice at work, in the eyes of the Principal. It would be remiss not to mention that out of this initiative has grown a new project; on an annual basis, the HEI invites sixth class children in its placement schools to the HEI for some arts-based learning activities and a tour of the HEI as a way of encouraging the children to consider teaching as a career. For many of these children, factors such as their socio-cultural background and little or no tradition of third level education in their families might have been perceived by them as barriers to accessing routes into teaching. The HEI initiative is therefore opening up new horizons for these children, an initiative that grew out of a school placement context and a desire to create new horizons in that regard.

DISCUSSION

Student teachers often cite the importance of feeling welcomed and wanted on placement as a positive springboard for their learning during placement (Edwards, 2005).

The importance of practical information being available to students at the outset of placement should not be underestimated in terms of its contribution to helping students feel at ease. It also helps in reducing understandable placement-related stresses around for example knowing where to find things in the school, and policy and procedural information. The vulnerabilities of student teachers are well-documented and the role of emotionality in learning to teach (Higgins et al.,2013); the Welcome Pack in Forest View therefore attended to some of the important student needs that help to reduce learner anxiety and fear of change. Having clarity around expectations of student teachers is a strong motivational tool for students; the dual dimension (students knowing what they can expect of the school, and the school setting out their expectations of the student) enables students to experience mutual respect as a learner and as an emergent professional (Ní Áingléis, 2008).

One might speculate also that it is the personalisation dimension of getting to know HEI tutors in a professional setting beyond the classroom placement context that enabled better communication and more open school-HEI relationships to blossom; this sense of relational agency could be drawn upon in joint dialogue and in finding creative solutions around real placement challenges. It also helps to foster a culture that encourages teachers and HEI tutors to critique assumptions about teaching and learning in a shared inquiry-based professional learning space. A shared language around placement therefore grew organically in Forest View and could be drawn upon in the information resource sheet co-created by the school and the HEI. It is this sense of shared reflective 'practical theorising' (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006) between the HEI and placement settings that is, in our view, the essence of professional learning communities.

The 'deprivatisation of knowledge' (Kruse et al., 1995), both craft and theoretical, through discussion and reflection taking place in learning spaces beyond the school would seem to have yielded valuable communication dividends for both Forest View Primary School and the HEI that provided the various seminars. There is also the sense that feeling more relaxed with HEI tutors encouraged Forest View to communicate more frankly about matters relating to school placement.

Three key take-away messages can be discerned from the Forest View vignette.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Clarifying expectations for student teachers is an opportunity for schools and HEIs to clarify and articulate how their respective expectations will assist student teacher learning in a meaningful way. It is also an opportunity for both HEIs and schools to give visible expression to a voice for student teachers on placement.
2. Practical information about the placement setting meets an important knowledge-related need that student teachers value and require.
3. HEI-based professional learning seminars responsive to the needs of placement schools are valued by schools and help build school-HEI relationships; they also hold wider potential in terms of widening access to ITE.

While the Forest View exemplar illustrates how a HEI-led initiative supported the professional development of school-based teacher educators, there are also case studies in

which student teachers have led professional learning and development in schools (Martin, 2011).

Vignette Three provides insights into how some final year student teachers have done so and in the process contributed to the development of the Stenhousian idea of 'teachers-as-researchers' (Stenhouse, 1975).

VIGNETTE 3: STUDENT TEACHERS (PRIMARY) LEADING TEACHER LEARNING

DESCRIPTION

Final year student teachers in the particular HEI undertake a research project on a self-selected theme with relevance to pedagogy and learning. Some students undertake the research element of their project during the course of final placement. Ethical consent of the school and the HEI are required in advance of commencing any school-based research. Projects are planned in consultation with the co-operating teacher/s. Final year BEd students Anita, Kevin, and Louise chose the following inquiry questions for their respective school-based research:

Table 9.1 Student Teacher Research on School Placement

Student Teacher	Research Question	Collaborators
Anita	Can collaboration between co-operating teachers and student teachers during the school placement mentoring process be constructively used by existing teachers to further facilitate their own potential professional development?	Anita Two co-operating teachers (Anita was in two different schools for final placement)
Kevin	How does assessment contribute to children's learning and school-wide learning and improvement?	Kevin Co-operating teacher Whole staff
Louise	Who are the learners in mentoring on school placement?	Louise One co-operating teacher

The three students were in different schools located in different parts of the country.

Spotlight on Anita

Anita's research topic grew out of her specialist knowledge in drama in education and a liking for teaching drama and using drama-based methodologies across the curriculum. Some teachers in Anita's placement school had expressed a desire to learn more about arts-based methodologies. Anita therefore planned lessons with two co-operating teachers and modelled her drama lessons for both teachers followed by discussion and potential application of the methodologies for teaching across the curriculum. The children were also involved in planning the lessons, resource-making and in lesson-assessment. Both teachers subsequently used drama methodologies with their own class and recorded their feelings and sense of professional development if any. While both co-operating teachers did teach some drama prior to the student teacher intervention, challenges around time, lacking subject knowledge and confidence in teaching drama meant that its potential as a methodology for pedagogy and learning was not fully explored by either teacher. Similar findings have emerged elsewhere (INTO, 2009). Both teachers were inspired by Anita and critically have found a new professional confidence through experiencing new drama methodologies and working collaboratively with Anita as a student teacher. They also got to know Anita through mutual mentoring; both commented on how they enjoyed their learning and perceived the student teacher as a legitimate professional mentor in her own right. The experience of mutual engagement in co-planning and co-learning gave rise to many conversations in the staffroom about the benefits, challenges, and wider application.

Spotlight on Kevin

Kevin's research project involved a collaborative project around innovative assessment-for-learning approaches with his co-operating teacher and the children in the class. It was an opportunity for Kevin to draw on the up-to-date research and knowledge in the area and its applicability to the classroom setting. Kevin shared ideas, methodologies from his HEI, research, and a large range of resources in the area with his teacher. Collaboratively they explored a number of new approaches in the classroom during the course of the placement. Discussions around assessment-for-learning and of-learning made its way into the staffroom and generated a lively buzz of interest. In considering how good practice in assessment might be shared across the school so that multiple benefits would be experienced by many classes, Kevin was invited to present at a staff meeting followed by a facilitated discussion with staff on assessment approaches, benefits to children's learning, and research on assessment. The staff meeting was the catalyst for review and updating of the school policy on assessment. Critically, the new knowledge, shared learning and resources were subsequently used by individual teachers to inform and improve their assessment approaches in their own classrooms.

Spotlight on Louise

Louise's action research project explored how structured feedback (verbal, written) can be a pedagogic tool for learning (student teacher learning, co-operating teacher learning). Louise and her co-operating teacher over the course of the ten-week placement explored the concept of effective mentoring on school placement. They shared literature in the area, examined cases studies (of successful, and unsuccessful mentoring), worked through the mentoring resources from the HEI, experienced giving feedback (verbal and written) to each other

following co-taught lessons, and recorded how they felt about the process including benefits, learnings, and any downsides. Louise drew on the expertise in her HEI to source and share research literature on learning styles, reflective practices in learning to teach, dilemmas in teaching, professional accountability, reflective mentoring approaches, observation, feedback and communication, and more generally, research on teacher professional development models. The project was also the subject for conversations between the teacher and the assigned HEI placement tutor during tutor visits to the student. While Louise's co-operating teacher was broadly familiar with the mentoring documentation from the HEI, she did not know how to exploit its full potential to support student teacher learning through structured mentoring. Accordingly, she did not use the HEI materials sent to her in the initial placement documentation. However, the actual experience of working collaboratively with her student Louise where the relationship had built up over a number of weeks provided an opportunity for experiential learning. The outcome brought a new meaning and a new relevance to the HEI documentation; it also provided Louise's co-operating teacher with a range of skills in how to use structured mentoring to support student teacher learning and her own learning as a mentor teacher.

DISCUSSION

As referenced in earlier chapters, 'partnership' is a foundational tenet of the Guidelines (Teaching Council, 2013). Student teachers are an important cohort of learners in enabling and sustaining partnership processes. Vignette Three highlights the significance of student teachers as valuable resources for teacher professional development. The student teachers were part of the vibrant communities of practice in which they were located for placement which enabled them to feel that they had something to contribute to enriching teachers' pedagogies, children's learning and in at least one case (Kevin) to school-wide improvement. Teacher-talk that grew up around the various topics provides evidence of teachers moving beyond a preoccupation with delineated roles and responsibilities in school placement, what might be called the technical bricolage of 'partnership'. We have seen how the collaborative research projects gave rise to professional conversations around how teachers and student teachers teach and learn, why teachers do things the way they do, and what might be done differently. Student teachers contributed therefore to lifting up conversations about teacher learning in classrooms, on corridors, in staffrooms. They encouraged imagination, mutual engagement and sharing of professional repertoires to critically explore notions of learning, teaching, knowing and knowledge. This is in line with the placement-related recommendation of Martin (2011:30) when she suggests that 'continuous professional development needs to cover not only themes of mentoring, giving feedback, lesson analysis, etc. but also the broader theme of what constitutes good practice in teacher education today'. A further observation might be that the collaborative research projects helped to elevate to a more professionally edifying level the perception that the role of the student teacher was merely to provide 'an additional and useful pairs of hands to work with children" (Edwards, 1997: 28). Student teachers as powerful and practical agentic learners are well-documented elsewhere (Ní Áingléis, 2009).

It is worth reflecting therefore on these placement case studies as exemplars of teachers-as-researchers (Stenhouse, 1975) and schools as sites of learning not just for children but also for teachers (and student teachers) and HEIs. Teaching is and must continue to be a researching profession.

An appropriate way to lead into the take-away messages from Vignette Three might be to reflect on the words of the two co-operating teachers in Anita's research project:

> *Down the line when we get the placement letter from the college, it would be nice maybe if the college would put a little appendix to the placement teachers that maybe the student teachers and the teachers would work more collaboratively; that the class teacher would try one new thing, one new focus – perhaps the drama perhaps something in the arts and they would try that over the course of the month while the student is in the room and that would maybe encourage the class teacher to try something new* (Co-Operating Teacher 1).

And in doing so, *all the new ideas would filter better in through the system, rather than new teachers having all the new ideas and the teachers that are qualified longer entrenched in their ways* (Co-Operating Teacher 2).

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Student teachers are an important learning resource for teacher professional learning across the continuum; how student teachers on placement contribute to school-wide learning and improvement provides a rich research context.
2. Co-operating teachers seek to derive practical benefit from working with a student teacher on placement in a way that contributes to developing their effectiveness as teachers in their own classrooms.
3. Teaching as a researching profession includes an emphasis on learning more about craft knowledge and expertise and applications to classrooms/schools; placement opens up research opportunities for partnership work on placement.
4. If research projects are undertaken by students during placement, ought there be some professional responsibility to share the outcomes of their research with their placement settings? How might the HEI/school/student teachers showcase the finalised projects in a way that celebrates partnership on placement and opens up further learning for the school-HEI-student teacher partnership?

Vignette Four explores how a HEI in its efforts to develop its partnerships with schools focused on responding to teacher needs around professional competence; this provided a strong foundation for its relationship with placement schools.

VIGNETTE 4: SEAVIEW POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL AND OCEAN UNIVERSITY

DESCRIPTION

Seaview Post-Primary School is a large urban post-primary school serving the needs of a diverse student cohort. The school has a policy of offering placements to HEIs when the school has available subject areas to match the HEI needs. With increasing and more frequent demands for placements on a year-round basis from a range of HEIs, the school is more favourably disposed towards Ocean University, a HEI which provides CPD to staff in areas of need as expressed by staff. In such cases, the school reciprocates by providing as many placements as possible within the school year and providing both a welcoming school environment and a range of supports e.g. regular support meetings with student teachers during the course of the placement.

An ethos of 'teachers-as-learners' prevails in the school and every opportunity is taken to pursue CPD learning as a whole school or individually be teachers in their respective subject/specialist area. However, there is no obligation on any teacher to attend CPD. The Principal is of the view that all it takes 'is the power of one' to generate interest and enthusiasm for partnership activities that are learning-oriented. CPD activities led by the HEIs or others are perceived as partnership activities. CPD provided to support placement at ITE level is located within Seaview's integrated policy of learning across the continuum. It is also aligned with the school's perspective on whole school improvement (DES, 2016).

Ocean University's School of Education has aligned their requests of schools for placements with teacher professional development needs. It offers a suite of 'Partnership for Learning' CPD evenings (two hour sessions) over the course of the year to co-operating teachers. The range of topics includes digital learning, assessment, and participative methodologies for classrooms. The CPD seminars are provided in order to reciprocate the goodwill of schools firstly, in accepting student teachers for placement and secondly, for providing supports to students over the course of the placement. All partnership schools that offer placements to this HEI receive a CPD booklet in early September in which the details of the CPD seminars are outlined. The seminars are HEI-based, HEI-funded and facilitated by post-primary teachers or HEI staff with specialisms in the seminar areas. The Ocean University CPD certificates are valued highly by the co-operating teachers. Participant-evaluations are hugely positive citing the strong relevance of the CPD topics to improving co-operating teachers' own subject teaching and understanding of teaching. Evaluations also point to the value of meeting and talking about teaching and pedagogy with practising teachers from other schools. It would seem that the seminars are valued more for the contribution they make to teachers' own teaching than any particular new insight into school placement processes.

DISCUSSION

While accepting the critique that the Guidelines (Teaching Council, 2013) are thin on the practical implications of placement principles (Harford and O'Doherty, 2016), the non-prescriptive nature of the Guidelines allows for the kind of creative HEI 'Partnership for Learning' initiative to emerge organically. The vignette is an exemplar of the alignment of HEI values and resources in responding to school-based needs and values. It is also an exemplar of a school culture that nurtures and nudges teacher learning; it is a ripe

environment for a learning-oriented HEI-school relationship. The HEI-based seminars provide real learning and listening opportunities for the HEI while at the same time building and sustaining professional relationships with teachers and placement schools. Seminars provide therefore the context for growing professionality (Hargreaves, 2000) and a professional knowledge landscape rooted in community, in inquiry and in line with how people learn:

> The communities can build a sense of comfort when questioning rather than knowing the answer and can develop a model of creating new ideas that build on the contributions of individual members. They can engender a sense of the excitement of learning that is then transferred to the classroom, conferring a sense of ownership of new ideas as they apply to theory and practice (Bransford et al., 2000:25).

At a practical level and from a HEI perspective, the organisation and coordination of the CPD is undoubtedly resource-intensive but the dividends are rich in terms of successfully securing placements for HEI programmes that have a placement component. A further knock-on benefit of the Partnership for Learning initiative is that participating schools value the efforts of the HEI in tight budgetary times where there are other competing priorities at HEI level.

Three key-take away messages might therefore be drawn from this vignette.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. CPD that focuses on developing craft knowledge and subject competence of co-operating teachers tends to be responsive to teacher need; teachers want their own teaching to improve and this desire is a key motivational aspect for participation in HEI-led CPD and therefore in accepting a student teacher on placement.
2. A partnership initiative that focuses on one partner's needs holds benefits for all; this is an important 'connective' form of 'partnership' (Jones et al., 2016).
3. HEI-school relationships are enriched through structured CPD partnership activities where the school culture is positively oriented towards learning.

Another perspective on 'partnership' is to conceptualise it as a network of relationships that crisscross before, during and after school placement periods. Edwards and Mutton (2007) favour this conceptualisation over one that focuses on discrete roles for HEIs and schools. The penultimate vignette (Lattice) has emerged at a regional level at post-primary level in response to the Guidelines and illuminates a networking, web-like orientation as a way-of-being in school placement.

VIGNETTE 5: LATTICE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY FOR SCHOOLS (POST-PRIMARY)

DESCRIPTION

Lattice is an approach developed at regional level by a school representative body designed to connect continuum-wide structures that enable teachers to feel supported in learning and teaching whether that be at ITE or induction level or continuously throughout their careers. It is an approach based on interrelated webs of relationships crisscrossing each other in order to maximise existing regional resources and expertise. Lattice attempts to join up thinking, actions and the deployment of resources for teacher learning across the continuum in a pragmatic and creative way. While not aspiring to be a panacea for the scaffolding of teacher learning, the resulting process and 'product' is one which is in development and seeding new possibilities for HEI-school partnership activities in the context of school placement.

The region in question has 15 post-primary schools (under the direct management of an Education and Training Board) that are located about three hours from the nearest HEI. The schools have varying traditions of offering placement for students. Increasingly, HEIs who support teachers in their learning are the HEIs to whom placements are offered. The schools are served by a regional induction co-ordinator (IC) whose role is to coordinate the arrangements at regional level for induction support across the 15 schools and to support the work of the induction co-ordinator in each of the schools. The IC also supports student teachers on placement. The regional IC's work is undertaken in tandem with his day-to-day work as a practising subject teacher with some reduction in teaching duties to allow for fulfilment of the IC role. The IC has a postgraduate qualification in models of teacher professional development and works collaboratively with and under the direction of the Director of Schools for the region. As an Associate (NIPT) for a number of years with a large HEI, the regional IC has significant expertise in mentoring.

Lattice has a number of interrelated and interdependent elements.

Element One: Welcome Pack

All schools in the cohort have prepared a composite Welcome Pack for newly-appointed teachers, retired teachers (who may be returning to do substitute work), substitute teachers, and student teachers on placement. Each pack is customised to suit the unique context of the school, its pupil cohort, school programmes, policies and procedures. Essentially, the Welcome Pack comprises information for the recipient with commonalities in the contents for all recipients for example an emphasis on teaching as a life-long learning process and the importance of collaboration in planning and teaching within a whole school framework of improvement. There is an emphasis on the sharing of expertise across the school in order for support to be responsive to the challenges and needs of the particular school context. Rather than building a culture of dependency around the school-based coordinator, teacher learning for example at ITE level is being nurtured as a shared collective enterprise for the whole school. Support structures for student teachers are outlined in the Welcome Pack.

Element Two: Induction Day for All New Teachers

On an annual basis, the ETB holds a one-day Induction Seminar for all new teachers in late September. This day introduces the teacher to the range of supports available within the network of the 15 schools. There is an emphasis on teacher learning throughout with brief presentations on various teaching tools available to the new teacher such as Instructional Leadership, Restorative Practice and Teacher Collaboration. Student teachers who may be on year-long placement or on placement for the early part of the school year are also invited to the Induction Day. It is envisaged that a Placement Support Seminar will be part of Lattice in the 2018/19 school year. The seminar will focus on exploring student teacher needs and models of responding in a flexible and manageable way to those needs at both classroom and school level.

Element Three: Shared Online Learning Platform

All 15 school-based induction coordinators have access to a shared online folder (using Google Drive) as a platform for the sharing of teaching and learning resources, ideas and perspectives on pedagogies, and planning and assessment tools. These resources are shared with teachers in the school and while initially devised to support newly-appointed teachers, they are available to all teachers including student teachers. The shared learning platform has been the catalyst for a teacher collaborative project involving clusters of teachers using the resources within their schools and across schools to design new methodologies, assessment strategies, and content for lesson planning for Junior Cycle Science and English. It has opened up teacher dialogue about effective teaching, meaningful learning, and achievement; this dialogue is continuum-wide. A shared folder of resources for placement exploring the affordances of online learning platforms is currently in development for student teachers and their cooperating teachers. One already exists for newly-appointed teachers and mentors. The emphasis throughout this multi-layered Lattice project is building a culture of sharing learning, peer support, and active engagement of student teachers and teachers in learning.

Element Four: Role of the Regional IC

The Regional IC while supporting the work of the school-based coordinators is also the person who is developing ways of building partnerships with HEIs. This work is conceptualised within an activity theory (Engeström, 2001) framework where placement activities straddle school and HEI boundaries in order the serve the needs of student teachers, co-operating teachers and ultimately the pupils in the schools. The learning of all (HEIs, schools, student teachers, pupils) involved is enriched when ideas and perspectives from different cultures and contexts are aired and shared to provide the basis for better and improved ways of doing things. In the process, a new transformed 'space' is created which is owned by those who have contributed, critiqued and contemplated a better way of doing things in teacher learning and pupil learning.

DISCUSSION

The notion of creating the conditions for 'expansive learning' (Engeström, 2001: 137) is therefore at the heart of the work of those involved in Lattice. These conditions have been nurtured through NIPT seminars for teachers but the need to augment these with the kinds of Partnership for learning seminars available to Seaview Post-Primary School is real to ensure equity in access to supports for teacher learning irrespective of geographical boundaries. Shared learning seminars focusing on how to support student teacher learning in meaningful ways is a new focus for the direction of Lattice in its communications with HEIs.

Geographical location is currently a barrier to schools in Lattice accessing HEI-based seminars. It is neither feasible nor realistic to expect co-operating teachers to travel long distances to access HEI-based CPD. Lattice is now seeking to explore how online access to HEI-based CPD for its 15 schools might be enabled and supported structurally in the region. The Guidelines (Teaching Council, 2013) have been interpreted by Lattice as an opportunity for 'expansive learning' (Engeström, 2001:137) but this requires a strong commitment from HEIs and schools supported further by the school-based coordinators and regional structures to explore creative ways of enabling this to happen. If supporting student teachers in their learning is perceived as the 'boundary object' (Engeström, 2001) then all systems with a legitimate interest in that boundary object ought to converge in its direction. The boundary object ought to be the focus of partnership activities in a way that does not compromise the education and achievement of pupils in the school.

Working in boundary zones is complex and challenging; it forces all who are 'brokering the boundaries' to have outward-looking dispositions, be strongly committed to sharing complementary repertoires of expertise in a culture that encourages inquiry (Edwards and Mutton, 2007). In this boundary-crossing work, relationships founded on mutuality of respect and trust are therefore key (Tsui and Law, 2007; Young et al, 2015). This is particularly important to offset the fall-out from uneducative experiences in some placement partnerships where CPD for school-based teacher educators is deemed to be inadequate (Chambers and Armour, 2012).

In the exemplar of Lattice, the webs of interrelated networks with a range of local partners through ITE, induction and beyond sits comfortably with the notion of a shared 'reciprocity of accountability for capacity' (Elmore, 2006:93). However, a missing link in this relational partnership jigsaw might be to explore further the role of student teachers in sharing their school-based research project outcomes undertaken during placement. In this way, student teachers, as agentic teachers, are reciprocating in terms of sharing their expertise with co-operating teachers.

A number of key take-away messages might be drawn from Lattice as an exemplar:

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Conceptualising 'partnership' as webs of relational networks holds potential in terms of understanding situated teacher learning across the continuum.
2. Partnership in school placement requires innovative ways to engage teachers and to support them in their work and in their on-going learning.

3. Partnership 'brokers' are ideally placed to ensure that discourse around big teacher education issues such as values, pedagogies, knowledge and knowing are part and parcel of the local discourse around school placement.

The final vignette in this chapter tilts the discussion from boundary-crossings in webs of relationships to the kind of boundary-crossing that occurs in a post-lesson observation dialogue between a HEI placement tutor and two student teachers. Both student teachers, Susan and Catherine, are on placement in two different post-primary settings serving pupils with special educational needs. Entitled 'On Dialogue', the vignette exhibits what we believe are strong features of high quality post-lesson dialogue around learning, communication, and relationship.

VIGNETTE 6: ON DIALOGUE (POST-PRIMARY): MENTORING AND TEACHING ACADEMY

DESCRIPTION

Susan is a final year student teacher on a post-primary ITE programme. She is nearing the end of her penultimate placement in a special school. The HEI tutor observed Susan teaching a home economics practical to pupils who have diverse learning needs. The practice in Susan's HEI is that lesson notes are submitted via the student portal to an online platform customised for placement. This enables placement tutors to assess student planning in advance of their visits to students. Catherine is also a final year student on her penultimate placement on a post-primary ITE programme in the same HEI as Susan. The HEI tutor also observed Catherine teaching a home economics practical to pupils with special educational needs. Catherine works with one Special Needs Assistant (SNA) in her classroom. The HEI tutor is a recently retired HEI member of staff with expertise in learning, teaching, and evaluation in both mainstream and special educational settings. In addition, he brings a wealth of research experience and a strong reflective approach to his role as a placement tutor. He places a particular emphasis on developing students' reflective capacities in how he facilitates the post-lesson observation discussions.

The post-lesson discussion with Susan lasted circa 50 minutes and over an hour with Catherine. Prior to each discussion, the HEI tutor spoke with the students' co-operating teachers. This enabled him to gain an overall sense of the unique contextualities of the respective classroom/school setting and the perceived level of engagement and progress of the students on placement from the school's perspective. In addition, the discussion with the co-operating teachers provided him with an opportunity to build the HEI relationship with the respective school. The HEI tutor did this largely through active listening to school views about placement in general and about the kinds of challenges being experienced at school level that impact on offering placements.

DISCUSSION

From the outset of the post-lesson observation discussions with both student teachers, the HEI placement tutor placed a strong emphasis on three key areas:

(1) The quality (and evidence) of the learning of each individual pupil in the class;
(2) The quality (and evidence) of rapport in the classroom (student-pupil, pupil-student, pupil-pupil, and student-others (e.g. SNA in Catherine's classroom).
(3) The articulation of tacit knowledge and its link with student teacher goals and values.

(1) The quality (and evidence) of the learning of each individual pupil in the class;

While the learning outcomes were written as a collective for the pupils in the class, each student teacher had an opportunity at a very early point in the discussion to articulate their unique contribution to the learning of each pupil emanating from the lesson that had just been taught. This enabled students to funnel a generic concept of 'value-addedness' in their teaching to a focus on what each individual pupil derived from the lesson in terms of his/her learning. Both student teachers were asked to frame their responses against the learning outcomes for the particular lesson. Having given each student time to do so, they were then asked by the HEI tutor to reflect on how they could improve the learning of each pupil mindful of the important and ultimate goal of independent living for the pupils in question. This enabled students to connect the specific lesson objectives with the overall curriculum aims. To scaffold the students' thinking and participation in these discussions, the HEI tutor's questions were focused, probing, and helpful (without leading) in the prompts provided. There was a good balance in the range of higher order and lower order questions posed by the HEI tutor. For example, 'What did you add to each pupil's learning today, academically, socially, practically?' and made more specific by the HEI tutor naming each pupil for example 'What do you think you added to Anna's attainment regarding literacy, numeracy, practical skills? and 'What have you added to Seán's life?' Time was then given to exploring the nature of each pupil's learning and how the student teacher contributed in his/her teaching to that learning, and how pupils' learning could be further enhanced. This enabled student teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge to be discussed. Numerous 'why?' and 'why not?' were interspersed throughout by the HEI tutor. All the while, the HEI tutor sought evidence from the student for his/her assessments of each pupil's learning. The language of critical pedagogy was strongly evident in the dialogue. The articulation of students' tacit knowledge about pupils' progress was foregrounded, providing opportunities for both student teachers to check their taken-for-granted assumptions and to learn from tacit knowledge 'out loud' so to speak. Learning from tacit knowledge is a powerful transformative process in an effective 'socially skilled teacher' (Elliott et al., 2011). Tacit knowledge is also fundamental to the concept of practical intelligence as a key intelligence in both teacher and school effectiveness (Stemler and Sternberg, 2006; Sternberg and Horvath, 1999). The HEI tutor's skill in making students' tacit knowledge explicit was in our view a key contribution of the tutor to the learning of both student teachers during the post-lesson observation discussions.

The tutor discussions with the students had a discernible focus on learning at three levels; the pupils' learning, the students' learning about their pupils' learning, and the students' learning about themselves as teachers. The layering of meta-reflection therefore incorporated the learning of pupils and the learning of student teachers and this in turn enabled the student teachers to link theory and practice and to cite examples of how theory informed their actual practices in the classroom. Course content taught at the university was therefore brought to bear in an iterative way on the school-based work (planning and teaching). Conceptualisations of differentiation and models of inclusive classrooms were teased out in the discussions by the HEI tutor in dialogue with the students; this provided opportunities for the students to reflect (with scaffolding by the HEI tutor) on how theory informs day-to-day teaching and how practice can in turn re-inform theory to create new theories about learning and teaching. At various points the HEI tutor advised the students to follow up further on relevant research and theories. For example, Catherine needed to do further reading on Vygotsky around the zone of proximal development, and in particular to consider the kinds of scaffolding that are required to ensure pupil X felt sufficiently supported to enable him develop his independence in a more graduated manner. But the rationale to do so was provided by Catherine in the first instance; the HEI tutor's role was in fleshing out the theoretical and practical applications further in weaving theory with practice and practice with theory. It was also interesting to note that the HEI tutor provided both students with opportunities to view their pupils as important resources for all children in the class and for teaching/learning processes more broadly. Both students were asked to articulate ways in which the pupils could assist pupils in their learning in more dynamic and participative ways than perhaps were happening. Applications of such theories as learned helplessness emerged in a very naturalistic way during the post-lesson discussions, and what students might do to counteract the negative potentiality of learned helplessness. Students were therefore helped to see themselves as active boundary-crossing agents in making sense of their own teaching, their own learning and their own reflections on learning (school-based, and university-based). In turn, this enabled both student teachers to contribute to new knowledge development for themselves as teachers, as learners, and as theorists in their own right, and with powerful control over those learning processes. New knowledge developed through 'boundary-crossing' is always deep and meaningful (Wang and Wong, 2017).

It was notable also how the HEI tutor affirmed both student teachers particularly in his non-verbal communicative style. Affirmation for both student teachers was embedded first and foremost in how the HEI tutor actively listened and nodded respectfully to the student teachers as they responded. The non-verbal communication was as powerful as the verbal. No sense of the tutor being pressed for time (although the tutor did have a heavy schedule of supervision duties) was conveyed to the student teacher and the calmness of the dialogic ambience enabled the HEI tutor and the student teacher to process the words and contributions of each other in a profoundly respectful and meaningful way. This is very strongly evocative of the concept of ideological becoming in a dialogic learning space defined by communication that is underpinned by trust and respect (Bakhtin, 1981). Within this dialogic space, and evident in HEI's approach to lesson discussion, there was plenty of room for difference in perspective and in expertise. Indeed, our view is that differences that emerged in the tutor-student discussions were the bedrock for student teacher growth and development. It was how difference was so skilfully mediated (verbally and non-verbally) by the HEI tutor that became the all-important enabler in the space. This observation became

further evident in how the HEI tutor oriented student teacher thinking during the post-lesson discussion to the quality of webs of rapport in the classroom.

(2) The quality (and evidence) of rapport in the classroom (student-pupil, pupil-student, pupil-pupil, and student-others e.g. SNA in Catherine's classroom).

The HEI tutor explicitly asked both student teachers, Catherine and Susan, how they had developed their rapport with their pupils and how relationships in the classroom had contributed to creating a participative and purposeful learning ambience for the pupils. Getting to know their learners (as individuals first and foremost, and as a group) and the rationale for same was therefore focused upon by students in their thinking and ultimately in their individual responses. This enabled the discussion to move on to a focus on the quality and nature of progressional lines of learning for each child and how lessons were linked in terms of outcomes, methodologies, modes of assessment and utilisation of assessment outcomes in planning. Students' perceptions around pupils with special educational needs were teased out, and their underestimation of pupils' abilities prior to the placement in question. This brought the dialogue back to the person of the student teacher, and their own professional identity and growth. Susan was 'terrified' at the outset of the special educational needs placement; she 'felt sorry' for the pupils and 'totally underestimated them, their potentialities'. However, it was only through the process of getting to know her learners that her thinking about their capacities to learn changed and changed utterly. Susan confirms this transitional process in her own learning:

> Susan: As I got to know them, they would tell me about their hobbies, they have interests, the choir…I always thought of them as a separate group of people. I never realised they are all into music, sport, everything other teenagers are interested in, but they are so happy…. I realise that everybody is an individual. I said that before this school placement but hadn't experienced it before. I've learned that these kids are amazing, their potential….

Throughout the post-lesson observation discussions, the HEI tutor consistently probed student teacher perceptions in a deep but supportive way while at the same time challenging the student to reflect on ways to improve that were meaningful to the situated context. For example, in helping to track the individual progress of each pupil, Susan would in future use an acronym for each pupil's name, citing the specific target for each child in the various areas and supports for that child (using the children as resources for each other also) and revisiting relevant literature such as Vygotsky. This was all part of the scaffolded discussion with each student. It was also interesting to note that the HEI tutor welcomed Catherine's evaluation of preparedness for placement when she stated that she felt ill-prepared by her college for working effectively with an SNA in the classroom. The HEI tutor signalled to Catherine that he would welcome additional feedback from the student after the placement as to what needs to happen in university-based course work in order to improve students' capacities to collaborate more effectively with SNAs and other support staff in the classroom. The seeking of feedback by the tutor of how the HEI could improve reflected a two-way learning orientation in the post-lesson discussion. This enabled the student to view the HEI tutor as an authentic learner also. The respectful nature of the HEI tutor's communicative style was

mirrored in how he sought feedback from the student teacher and how he validated student teacher agency in the process. It was also a powerful way of legitimising what Lave and Wenger (1991) envisaged in their conceptualisation of student teacher peripheral participation in a community of learners. The potential for student teacher voice to refresh teacher education pedagogies is indeed great (Kidd, 2012); in our view, post-lesson observation discussions with student teachers is a fertile space for this type of HEI-self evaluative work to flourish.

It is worth reflecting further on how the HEI tutor foregrounded an emphasis on the articulation of tacit professional knowledge grounded in the student teacher's own professional goals and values as a way of scaffolding the student's reflectiveness and improvement. Student teacher personal/professional identity was the golden thread in our view throughout the post-lesson discussion; this dimension forms the third and final focus in our discussion of this vignette.

(3)The articulation of tacit knowledge grounded in student teacher goals and values.

Given the hidden, taken-for-granted nature of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958), it is particularly helpful to a student teacher when a HEI tutor is explicit and clear in post-lesson observation questioning. When Susan was asked 'What difference has it [this placement] made to you as a teacher?', there was no escaping an obligation on Susan to pause, reflect and articulate her own innermost goals, values, dreams and aspirations around teaching and wanting to be a teacher. Critically, it required Susan to interrogate how she herself as a person was changing (if at all) and being changed by the situated context. In a recent address, Coolahan (2017) highlighted the person of the teacher as the most critical dimension in the quality of educational provision; he cited the inseparability of personal/professional identity in effective learning and teaching. Both Susan and Catherine, as student teachers, got opportunities in their post-lesson discussions to unpack the three Sternbergian dimensions of tacit knowledge, namely, knowledge about self, others, and tasks (Sternberg, 1997). So, questions around the students' own goals and values led to discussions around how well the students believed they fared in term of matching pupil tasks and learning outcomes and how this work sat with their own goals and values as student teachers. There was a strong sense therefore of the tutor opening up the students' thinking and drawing them into a deep learning space but valuing first and foremost what students themselves had to bring to that dialogic space. The quality of the tutor's own relationship with the students was particularly significant in this creative endeavour. Of course, learning can also take place when mentoring relationships do not work out (Chambers and Armour, 2012). But in this particular vignette under scrutiny, there was a strong sense of a Buberian philosophy in how the HEI tutor facilitated the 'I-Thou' post-lesson discussion space (Buber, 1958); the student teacher was enabled (through authentic dialogue with the tutor) in the process of becoming. This dovetails well with the notion of mentoring student teachers as a process of 'assisted becoming' (Edwards, 1998; Edwards and Collison, 1996). The strength of the tutor's ethical regard (at a number of levels) for the student teacher in that process seemed to allow the tutor to walk in the shoes of the student in the situated context, and it was this sense of tutor attentiveness to student 'becoming' that made all the difference. This is very much, we believe, in line with Rule's idea of diacognition, 'coming to know through a situated process of positioning and

repositioning in dialogic exchange with oneself and with others' (Rule, 2015:143). Relationship, communication, and becoming are therefore inextricably linked in post-lesson observation discussion.

It may well be that having online access to students' teaching notes in advance of the teaching day was one of the factors that enabled the HEI tutor to be much more fully present in the dialogic space than might have been the case otherwise.

We conclude our discussion with some key take-away messages from this vignette 'On Dialogue'.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Student teacher learning is enriched by reflective processes that focus on the probing and articulation of students' tacit knowledge, goals and values.
2. Post-lesson observation discussions that mirror ethical regard in dialogic spaces contribute to learning, improvement, and human flourishing at a number of levels.
3. Getting to know individual learners in classrooms and discerning the optimal alignment of professional actions to their situated needs are foregrounded in high quality post-lesson observation dialogue.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

10.1 CONTEXT

The Teaching Council guidelines on SP provide the context for this study. The reforms in teacher education introduced new arrangements for SP that require an extension to the duration of ITE programmes as well as an extended period in school during which students have opportunities to participate in the life of the school as well as direct teaching in classes accompanied by a co-operating teacher. A more broadly based professional experience is thus expected. A major change is that all STs on placement have a co-operating teacher who, along with their HEI tutors, supports them in their professional learning. A key element in this support is the opportunity to observe teaching, co-plan and co-teach with their CTs. Having experience in more than one school is also necessary and STs are expected to get experience of teaching across all the levels of the school e.g. infant, junior and senior classes, including multi-grade, at primary level, and junior and senior cycle classes at post-primary. Among the educational purposes of the changes are the strengthening of the integration of theory and practice, the development of an inquiry orientation, and an appreciation of the need to base professional decisions on evidence. HEIs and schools are expected to build partnerships in the interests of maximising the professional learning of student teachers and a much stronger emphasis is placed on the student teacher as learner while in school than was the case in the past. Both the CT and the HEI tutor are expected to collaborate and share expertise in fostering the student teacher's learning. In this context the Teaching Council is encouraging new kinds of relationships across CTs, HEI tutors and student teachers (STs). The school itself is viewed as fundamental to the acquisition of the sophisticated repertoire of skills and competences needed by teachers in contemporary society.

10.2 THE STUDY

Research was needed about the implementation, bedding down and impact of the reforms and so the Council commissioned this research. The research set out to document how the new policy is being enacted, to track how HEIs, in collaboration with schools, are giving STs access to high quality professional learning opportunities. The experiences and perspectives of the major players in the system: student teachers, HEI tutors (including programme leaders and directors of SP), co-operating teachers and school principals were central to understanding the extent to which the new policy was being put into practice, and the issues that were influencing its enactment. The commissioned study spanned four years with fieldwork continuing until December 2017. The project incorporates a review of relevant international literature, and interviews and questionnaire surveys of the key stakeholders were paced in a way to capture development and change. Two rounds of fieldwork with the key players provided a wealth of quantitative and qualitative evidence which sought to establish the nature and extent of the implementation of the changes. Since effective practice was of particular interest, this was fore-grounded in the examination of the literature and throughout the empirical analysis. In view of the design and scale of evidence assembled and analysed for the study, the findings reported below provide a fair and representative account of practice nationally. Incorporated in the main empirical study are many accounts of good

practice and practices that align with the new policy. An additional aspect of the study presents (further) illustrations of effective practice involving partnership between schools and HEIs which are designed to provide case material for development and discussion.

10.3 MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Research highlights the importance of SP. Having diverse and extensive opportunities to learn the art, craft and science of teaching, appropriate mentoring, feedback and constructive dialogue are all important for the professional learning of the ST. Good working partnerships between HEI and schools are also vital. The Irish reforms involving an extended placement and the opportunity to work in different settings with co-operating teachers align with the international evidence. The diversity of contacts and settings maximises chances for observation, reflection and co-constructing knowledge. A major message from the review of literature is that both the HEI and the school are fundamental to the professional development of the student teacher and that how these partners relate, share and integrate their various contributions matters a great deal. The HEI and the school are needed to enable the integration of theory and practice and the notion that theory is associated with the HEI and practice with the school is outmoded. STs benefit from having assignments set for them that link with both settings. Opportunity to observe teachers teach is vital but the literature would suggest that on its own it is inadequate. Observation needs to be balanced with opportunities to reflect on and discuss the observed practice. The literature would suggest that to be a reflective practitioner, reflection needs to be modelled by the school staff as otherwise it is simply not valued by the student and not taken with them as part of their identity into their future practice.

The literature indicates that CTs need to be carefully selected and trained for their roles and that their roles need to be made explicit in terms of responsibily and approach. Training in mentoring is important but training in matters of research/inquiry and innovative practices would also appear to be relevant in view of the tendency in the existing research for STs to mimic the practices of their CTs. HEI tutors working alongside teachers and student teachers in school would appear to be one way, identified within the literature, of building effective partnerships between HEI and school. Any such development has resource implications since effective mentoring requires investment and it cannot be assumed that good teachers are automatically good mentors for student teachers. Some jurisdictions devote considerable time and resource to this dimension of teacher education. In Singapore for instance many school-based mentors are senior teachers who have gone through a six-week, full-time course to enable them mentor STs with a deep understanding of both college and school-based requirements while in Australia state-based, online programmes are available to CTs/school mentors. In general, STs do not typically source their own school placements. In Scotland, for instance, there is a national system in operation for placing students in schools

10.4 MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

10.4.1 IN A NUTSHELL

SP is a deeply meaningful professional experience for the vast majority of STs who report that they felt competent and confident about it and feel well prepared. It is the major vehicle

for the integration of theory and practice. STs teach in a variety of schools and all STs have experience of teaching in more than one school over their ITE programme. All have an extended SP of at least the equivalent of 10 weeks in duration, with strict adherence in all programmes to the Teaching Council requirements on direct teaching. It is common practice for STs to have at least one SP in their home area and most likely in a school they themselves attended as a pupil. STs have a gradual increase in teaching responsibility and in no case do STs assume a 100% teaching load. The concept of 'co-operating teacher' is established insofar as STs, HEI tutors and teachers themselves are very familiar with the new terminology and there is strong evidence that all STs are allocated a CT who offers guidance and feedback on their developing practice. The vast majority of STs have the opportunity to observe teaching. There is a great deal of communication between HEIs and schools about SP and its processes. While partnerships between HEIs and schools are still mainly informal and 'ad hoc', there are aspects that suggest greater formality in procedures are emerging. While it is clear that the reforms are being enacted, there is much variation in the experience of students in schools. HEI tutors have experienced considerable intensification in their work and this is especially the case for programme leaders and directors of SP.

There are two major elements that merit further consideration in policy and practice to foster better implementation and adherence to the new arrangements: the process of securing school placements and the training for CTs. There are inescapable resource implications.

10.4.2 FEEDBACK

STs are observed teaching and get detailed feedback against professional criteria from their HEI tutor on all aspects of their teaching. HEI tutor feedback tends to be detailed, criterion-referenced, challenging, focussed and bearing on professional performance including lesson planning and critical reflection and evaluation. There is considerable consistency across how HEI tutors formatively assess their students. Feedback is offered orally and in writing and the debrief provides for in-depth discussion and dialogue around pupil learning, and targets for the ST's own professional development. HEI feedback is highly regarded by STs. Students are observed and evaluated by more than one tutor on their extended SP. The vast majority of STs report that they receive guidance on a comprehensive range of aspects of professional practice but only a minority reported receiving guidance on some broader aspects of school life such as participating in staff meetings, dealing with parents, and cross-curricular activities like Sport.

STs also get guidance and support from their CT which they value highly. CT guidance and feedback is more varied in that it is not as 'standardised' as that of the HEI tutor since much depends on the context and especially the available expertise and time of the CT. In general, CT guidance is strong on planning, classroom management and teaching/learning of specific learners and curriculum elements. It is usually informal and rarely if ever written down. The vast majority of STs have conversations with their CTs about their progress. A key difference in the nature of feedback from the HEI tutor and the CT, apart from formality, is that the focus of the tutor is always the ST's learning whereas the primary focus of the CT is pupil learning and this partially explains the difference in orientation. HEI tutors focus on a wide range and in considerable depth on areas of professional practice and pay attention especially to reflective practice and students' own evaluations and responses to earlier feedback. CTs

are very much less inclined to pay attention to STs' developing reflective and inquiry capacities.

10.4.3 OBSERVATION, TEAM-TEACHING AND REFLECTION

All students have some opportunity to observe teachers teach with greater opportunity for this in the primary sector. There are sectoral (primary/post-primary) differences with primary STs more likely to be observed by and to team-teach with (and get feedback from) their CT. Students value the opportunity to observe teachers and to team-teach but this experience is very dependent on their CTs and can vary significantly from student to student. Thus it could pose an equity issue. Team-teaching could usefully be part of a professional development programme for teachers possibly linked to other collaborative pedagogic aspects such as lesson study as described in Chapter 2.

Reflection, as in the development of the reflective and critical professional, is happening across the board on all programmes and it is a key requirement for all students. It functions as a key mechanism for integrating theory and practice, for enhancing and moving to more nuanced practices, for attending to and understanding learner responses, for appreciating the role of evidence in decision making, and for beginning the action research journey as a professional from which more than they themselves can benefit. As such it is clearly a vital component of the initial teacher education programme and its role is recognised by students and is highly valued by HEI tutors. CTs' understanding of critical reflection, and how to engage students in a structured dialogue that supports critical reflection, is not yet evident in CTs' practices. Students themselves believe they are over-asked in regard to reflection and for some it is perceived as 'overwhelming' and a source of stress.

10.4.4 ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

HEI tutors are exclusively responsible for grading and there is a reluctance on the part of schools to share this responsibility. There isn't a consensus, even among HEI tutors, about the potential role of CTs in assessing/grading STs although the balance of evidence is away from such a role currently. Summative assessment and grading is not based on individual observed lessons but is based on a holistic judgement of the range of factors and areas of professional practice. All assessment, formative and summative, is based on direct observation, is performance-based with high validity. STs' assessments/grading are also high on reliability given the scale and emphasis on quality assurance mechanisms for maximising the consistency of interpretations. This ensures faith in the fairness of results to students and maximises equity. HEI tutors seek to meet and do meet CTs on visiting their STs and have conversations about student progress. These encounters are informal. HEI tutors, CT and ST meeting together to discuss progress is a very rare practice. Conversations between HEI tutors and post-primary CTs are more problematic since the CT is not necessarily available. (HEI visits are not announced in advance with the exception of one of our case study programmes).

10.4.5 SCHOOL-HEI PARTNERSHIPS

School-HEI partnerships are developing with high levels of communication and sharing of documentation from HEIs to schools, including communication between STs and schools

about the requirements of their SP. There is evidence of some very effective practices that are well established in some schools such as a link teacher who is the liaison person with the HEI provider and a support person at school level for the STs; SP teams of CTs who meet regularly about SP and the STs in the school; school policy document on SP; CT Handbooks prepared by the HEI for schools in consultation with schools, providing guidance on various aspects such as giving feedback and participating in observation; newsletters from the HEI to its partner schools about developments of relevance to the schools; and, training sessions at the HEI for CTs. However, in general, development of school-HEI partnership is hampered and dominated by the challenge of securing school placements for student teachers and this is an overarching finding of our research. Uncertainty and unpredictability about the supply of places mean that senior HEI staff such as programme leaders and directors of SP are unable to devote adequate time to other aspects of partnership development such as co-teaching/team-teaching and the sharing of action research studies. HEI programme leaders and SP Directors are at one in pleading for a national solution to this difficulty. Currently, STs and HEIs share some of the responsibility of securing schools with STs taking the lead in securing a school for their extended placement and the HEI sourcing schools for shorter placements.

10.4.6 THE EXTENDED SP: 10-WEEK BLOCK AND CONTINUOUS SP

Both the 10-week block and the continuous SP allow for establishing working relations with learners and colleagues and thus to experience and sustain deeper and more meaningful curricular activities as well as see progression in pupil learning. The extended SP allows STs experience a range of classes in the school system. Students were unanimous in their support for the extended experience in schools, comparing it favourably with their earlier, shorter placements. The continuous SP is especially liked by STs. Both STs and HEI tutors are very positive about the value of the extended placement. The extended SP is pivotal in allowing students experience professional life across the school, including participation in cross-curricular and cross-school activities, such as musical and sports events and trips. However, CTs are generally not in favour of the 10-week block as it is viewed as ceding control of the class for almost a full term. For post primary teachers, a block placement is considered restrictive compared to the developmental process and valuable learning that can occur over the course of a year, especially if this is a graduated experience where responsibilities are added and supported incrementally.

10.4.7 PAYMENT

Primary students, while on SP, do not get paid and tend to be precluded from taking up positions of substitute teacher. Their HEIs are strongly opposed to this until into June when their academic year is over. There is a tendency for post-primary students to receive payment for some teaching in their placement school: a quarter of the STs reporting that they are paid for teaching or doing other work in school. Some post-primary students are timetabled in their subjects outside of their allocated quota of CT classes but do not get paid. In these cases tutors encouraged their students to tell them about such arrangements and any pressure from schools to teach extra hours but it seems to be a grey area. It was noted by a minority of STs as a source of stress to them since they find it difficult to refuse to help out in schools given the potential for securing employment in the school on completion of their programme.

10.4.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF SP TO STS AND ST CONCERNS

Evidence from students themselves demonstrates that SP is a significant and positive experience for the vast majority. It is the space where theory and practice meet for them. It is hugely affirming and life-enhancing: it powerfully communicates to them in the most direct way what their strengths and skills are as emerging teachers; equally, it exposes their weaknesses but it clarifies what they need to do to overcome them; it reminds and re-affirms their idealism, optimism and passion about their chosen career. The evidence shows how STs are highly appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the life of their placement school and the extended placement is key to this opportunity. The vast majority reported that they feel well prepared and well supported on SP and that they contribute to the life of the school.

Students recognise the importance of planning and evaluation but they are very critical of the scale of lesson planning and evaluating that they are required to do. Some are also critical of inconsistencies in feedback and assessments they receive from their HEI tutors although the vast majority are extremely positive about their experience of being observed by their tutors. Being observed brings stress and this combined with the very heavy workload of SP mean that SP is overall a very intense and tiring experience. They are very conscious of the considerable expense associated with training to be a teacher and much of the expense is associated with SP.

10.5 ADDITIONAL ELEMENT: ILLUSTRATIVE EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The development of placement-related materials can be the seed that enables 'partnership' between a school and a HEI to be experienced, understood, and grown. Opportunities for teachers, student teachers and HEI staff to talk about teaching, learning, knowing, and knowledge in shared spaces contribute to the effectiveness of school placement by making explicit the implicit in teaching and learning. Graduated expectations are useful in helping to align mentoring support with the stage of development of the student teacher. HEI-based professional learning seminars responsive to the needs of placement schools are valued by schools and help build school-HEI relationships. Student teachers are a rich learning resource for teacher professional learning across the continuum. If research projects are undertaken by students in placement settings during placement, ought there be some professional responsibility on all students to share the outcomes of their research with their placement settings? How might the HEI showcase the finalised research projects in a way that celebrates partnership on placement and opens up further learning potential for school-HEI-student teacher learning? Conceptualising 'partnership' as webs of relational community networks has merit in terms of understanding situated teacher learning across the continuum.

10.6 IMPLICATIONS

While the new arrangements introduced by the Teaching Council have been introduced and are bedding down in practice as shown by the evidence presented in this Report, there are

significant implications for the enactment of a more coherent and consistent approach nationally. These implications concern the development of the partnerships that are needed between schools and HEIs to maximise the learning potential of SP for STs. On the basis of the evidence presented in this study the following implications merit consideration.

1. That a mechanism be found so all schools are part of ITE through allowing access to STs for SP. Specifically, this would mean that all state-funded schools would agree to give access to STs for placement and that they would co-operate in line with the Teaching Council requirements on such aspects as observation. This would greatly alleviate the pressure on the system in securing SPs. It may be that the official processes of whole-school evaluations and school-self evaluations could feature in opening up schools to this possibility.

2. That support be extended to CTs to prepare them for their role especially in relation to offering feedback on observed teaching, providing recommendations for improvement, and in formatively assessing and discussing student teachers' performance. This suggestion, in particular, requires that attention be paid to resources for training. The training of CT is entirely under-resourced and is currently dependent on HEIs providing some opportunities for CTs to attend meetings. If CTs are to be effective supporters of STs on placement, they need appropriate training and ongoing opportunities to share their practice in this regard. This is crucial in schools especially in those that do not have a tradition of supporting STs on SP. The Dutch system (and others) whereby school-based teacher educators straddle both school and HEI would be one aspect worth consideration in this context. Another is the potential for clustering of schools or cross-school collaboration for CPD. If all CTs could be released for the equivalent of one period per week to plan and feedback with their STs, to meet with HEI tutors, engage in some 3-way conversations with tutors and students, and engage in professional development on the support of their STs on placement, this would go some way towards more effective and consistent provision for STs on placement.

3. The current level of variation in the experience of the ST would be reduced if the first two implications noted here are enacted. HEIs are not in a position, nor do they wish to be, to oblige schools to allow their students engage in such activities as observing CTs or team-teaching or to demand that their STs are not time-tabled for lessons outside of those of their CT, yet these are vital issues impacting the learning of the ST. The bigger point here is that there is a need for greater clarity about the role of the CT. There is an urgent need for interested parties to revisit the roles and responsibilities of all the players in school-HEI partnership with a view to greater clarity and a deeper, shared notion of what constitutes partnership in the first place. In this regard it is vital that the partnerships enacted are genuinely meaningful to and 'owned' by both parties in the partnership.

4. That resources be provided to allow HEIs and schools together to consider the potential for joint inquiries. If reflective practice and an inquiry stance is to be valued by student teachers, they need to see this enacted in their placement schools. HEI tutors have a role in supporting this process and would be well placed to provide the support to schools. This could be linked to induction and

ongoing teacher learning and may support the continuum of learning over the teaching career.

5. That further consideration be given to the pressures on schools of the requirements of SP, including the pressure of engaging with multiple providers and that greater opportunity be provided for schools and HEIs to liaise and communicate about SP, all of which are resource-dependent.

6. That the current national framework be revisited and revised to encourage a consistent approach for STs but one that also has enough flexibility to be responsive to particular needs and school contexts. With regard to the latter for instance, some school concerns about releasing classes for the ten week block could be mitigated by encouraging more team-teaching on the part of STs and CTs during the block.

7. There is strong merit in addressing the development of school placement within the overall continuum of teacher education. This would place school placement side-by-side with Droichead and Cosán in terms of processes, structures, resources and overall coherence in teacher education. A continuum-wide lens would support capacity-building across the continuum of teacher education and build on the practice of collaborative professional dialogue encouraged through Droichead.

8. That a Working Group be convened to consider how greater alignment can be obtained between the policy on SP and its enactment, bearing in mind the findings and implications of this study. It may be that the Working Group on SP that was established some time ago could be revitalised to develop a timeframe for the enactment and monitoring of a framework that would address roles, responsibilities, resources, and CPD. This group, chaired by the Teaching Council, would need to include members drawn from key interest groups: the Teaching Council itself, HEIs, schools, the DES and HEA. In particular, it would need to include CTs as well as STs, i.e. representatives who were not part of the original Working Group.

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APPENDIX 1

DEBRIEFS/PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN HEI TUTORS AND STS.

SAMPLE 1

The words of the HEI tutor are in italics.

Opening questions

How do you think that lesson went? The ST refers to the good relations with the class and the fact that she was trying to build social skills as well as the skills associated with the subject.

Yes they are learning for living. What can they take from this lesson that they can use? ST refers to the learning outcomes for the lesson and how she thinks all of them were achieved; refers to health and safety and the scientific content being developed. The tutor advises her to make sure that learning outcomes are not too technical.

Scaffolding reflection

Tutor commends her on her use of peer teaching and says *you already did excellently, what would you differently?* ST says she might have been more learner-focused and gives an example of how she could have given them more jobs to do and given them more responsibility.

Referring to particular learners by name the tutor asks *what do you think you added to A's attainment in relation to literacy and numeracy?* Discussion ensues about greater potential for developing numeracy, how there were some missed opportunities but how literacy was very well integrated in the lesson.

As B lacks confidence in speaking out, what kind of prompts and probes could you use to encourage more participation from her? Who do you think benefited most from this lesson? Much discussion here between both regarding inclusion, linked to inclusion in the broader society. *As you really need to know your learners what can you say about C as a learner? Do you think he appreciates why he is being asked to learn this?* ST refers to C and previous lesson and incidents that occurred.

Focusing on pupil learning

How do you rate your promotion of higher order thinking in this lesson?

Did you have enough emphasis on the consolidation aspect? Enough repetition?

Did you draw on the spiral curriculum in your planning?

Take any learner you wish, let's sayB, where is she now in her learning of this topic, what are you going to target for her next time round?

The ST is also commended on the participative atmosphere she created and on her range of resources especially the visuals: *you used your resources exceptionally well.* ST explained how she sought to use the skills that learners themselves had as a resource while her tutor is encouraging her to be more conscious of *redirecting questions to others.* Throughout the tutor spends much time exemplifying and explaining aspects of effective interaction bearing in mind the lesson just observed. The ST is also commended for her ability to monitor the activity and the on-task participation of the class. She is invited to comment on how her rapport with the class is so good. ST comments on her knowledge of ongoing events in their lives e.g. forthcoming debs and the choir competition and how she is aware of their hobbies and interests.

Focusing on ST's own learning in SP

What difference has this SP made to you as a developing teacher? ST talks about differentiation and long discussion ensues about how the majority in a class can seem the same but how that is not the case, and how inclusion is hard, how it is never sorted but an ongoing aspect in every lesson. Tutor and ST talk about the notion of learned helplessness and he explains with examples from the lesson how she is moving towards promoting independence in her learners.

Affirming ST's approach

The tutor has read the student's evaluations along with the comments of another tutor who had also observed her teach in this setting. Towards the end of the debrief he reads out the summary report he has written of the lesson. He also has several notes made on the lesson which he gives the student. The summary, edited here, says *excellent for every category. You need to reflect further on attainment levels, think for instance of A and target a bit more for adding value to that learner's skill set. You have very effective integration of literacy and good too on numeracy. You make good linkage with learners' lives. Health and safety is fine. You have an encouraging teacher presence and you are able to build confidence in learners in the way you respond to them. You are pleasant and affirming with them. You use questioning well, your use of anticipatory questions is especially good. You show confident mastery of the subject yourself. You need to continue to reflect on the value added bit. You have excellent and thorough planning and preparation. Looking at your evaluations I can say you are very insightful about your own growth as a teacher.*

Challenging and extending ST's pedagogy and learning

Now tell me what's going to be your target for the next week and a half?

The ST mentions inclusion and social development to which the tutor asks her where she might go to get further advice and in particular asks her about her access to journals so she could read more about the topic of inclusion. An article is suggested. He suggests that she might consider taking the theme of Vygotsky's ZPD and with reference to just one learner make that the focus of reflection/evaluation. Because this is year four of the programme the ST is expected to make references to literature in her file.

Concluding the dialogue

Towards the end of the debrief the tutor comments on how the ST has been responsive to the comments of another tutor who observed her teach some weeks before, and how she too had written very positively in the ST's file about the teaching she had witnessed. Both the tutor and the ST sign the detailed observational report of the lesson.

SAMPLE 2

The second debrief to be illustrated here is in a post-primary senior classroom in a mainstream school and the student is on her final SP. It is not a practical lesson unlike the above. The ST teacher has just taught an Economics lesson to fifth years and has been observed by her tutor who has made extensive notes which the student will get at the end of the debrief. As in the example above, there is much dialogue and information sharing about the SP but our description here attends mostly to the focus of the discussion which is led in the main, as in the first example, by the HEI tutor.

Opening questions

How is the placement going generally?

How do you find moving between your two subjects?

Now how do you think that class went? The ST refers to how the pupils need to believe in themselves more and how if they know it's higher level they say they don't need it. She says they are improving.

Focussing on pupil learning

What is your evidence for better learning for the fact that you think they are improving? ST says how students were good at talking to each other in their small groups, how they responded well to her questioning, how they were contributing, and remained on-task.

That is a good feeling to have about the lesson. And I think what you say is very valid but I might have some suggestions for you as well.

Scaffolding reflection

If you teach that lesson again what would you change? How would you make it more effective? ST refers to managing the white board better. Long discussion about classroom management. *I think your pacing was really good. You had a good elastic task for them that stretched some of them really well and all could have a go and learn from it. Your structuring of it was good but I will make some suggestions on that too.* The tutor discusses other strategies with the student.

Do you think the pitch of the lesson was right? Were some actually capable of a bit more challenge? What spots can you identify that would allow for this?

We can talk about your subject knowledge in a minute.

Affirming ST's approach

You were very positive in your interactions with them and that was very good. I think those students were better today for you than they were last time. They were very responsive to you

and wanted to do it for you, you should take that as a complement from them, you were able to motivate and enthuse them and I'm very happy with that side of things.

Challenging and extending ST's pedagogy

In your planning, there are some gaps. The structure of the lesson is fine but there were spots where you need to insert more details about the subject matter and how you plan to develop those particular concepts. Your resource is supposed to be above and beyond the book. You must go beyond the textbook even more than you are doing. You need your plan to show how you are doing this, it needs to be better than this. You need to get more depth on that scientific /technical concept, you need to drill down a lot more. Did you cease all opportunities to drill down into that content?

Your activities and focus on independent learning are fine but don't forget recall, make sure you get that balance right. You were a bit casual on the recall and checking up – regardless of the standard of answering you still need to recap and sum up.

There were two students who seemed to me to be struggling with the textbook and getting the message. This is a literacy issue and you need to think about that a bit more. These same two didn't engage fully all the time so you need to think about their needs. The smaller the group the easier it is to do this so I know this is challenging in a big class like this.

You have made some links in your planning to previous lessons you did on this but in the lesson itself you really ought to remind them how what they did before, you need to make the link, help with the progression of their learning so they can see the relevance better. Tutor and ST talk about examples.

Probing for evidence of pupils' learning

*How do you know if they really know what you taught them? There is a lack of detail here in your file. And in the lesson you could have been more probing in your questioning and you could have followed up a bit more on key responses they were making (*tutor gives an example). *In relation to assessment for learning, there is no silver bullet you need to keep trying out new things but you should monitor the chatter just a little more so they are genuinely staying on task in their groups.*

You could use silence better – you didn't use a 'hands up' well throughout since you went for that strategy. How would you sell that to them, do you need to tell them why you want them to put their hands up? It's to help you tailor your teaching. Really it's a form of differentiation and it could reduce the level of chatter. It might work but you have to sell it to them, they need to understand why you are doing certain things and why you are asking them to behave in specific ways. You need to help them understand that all your strategies are designed to help them learn, how hands up can be a useful strategy, it is not childish.

Focussing on critical reflection

How does this lesson compare with others you have done?

And in relation to this lesson, if you handed me this plan would I have any sense of what content I should teach, the development of it? Could I take the plan and deliver it with those examples? You have lots of good ideas and detail in here but it is a bit limited in relation to the built in progression in learning of the lesson.

The tutor moves to discuss the student's evaluations where they have to write about two significant events and to discuss what made them significant in terms of their own learning. The evaluation/reflection is to focus on how the student felt while the event was happening, feelings after the lesson, and personal beliefs and assumptions surrounding the critical incident. In this the ST is encouraged to look beyond the immediacy of the classroom.

The tutor finally moves to the written evaluative commentary she has produced for the student which is written in triplicate, the top copy kept by the student in her file. A summary is offered in relation to personal communication with the class which is deemed to be very good, explanation and subject knowledge are deemed to be in need of further attention, and the planning is deemed to be in need of greater attention to content and to have more depth. The tutor invites the ST to read it all and think about whether there is anything missing or anything else she would like to talk about and in particular whether the report is reflective of the conversation they have just had. This happens and both sign.

CONCLUSION

In selectively focusing in on the key content of those debriefs/professional conversations, much of the social interaction and extended discussion of points is edited out and while the italics contain the actual words of the tutor, questions are bunched here without the inclusion of the ST's responses and further extended dialogue and the student was highly involved and interactive throughout about her experience and decision-making in the lesson.

It is important to emphasise that in both these examples relations between tutors and students were positive, warm and dialogic. While the tutor led the conversation, s/he did not dominate it. Interestingly in the second one described here the ST said to her tutor at the end 'I'm tired after that now, there is so much'!

Finally, it is noteworthy that in Droichead these de-briefs are referred to as 'professional conversations' (The Teaching Council, 2015). In the interests of obtaining better alignment across elements of the continuum in teacher education, the use of common terminology, where appropriate, would be helpful. In this regard, 'professional conversation' as a more precise term might usefully replace 'debrief' in initial teacher education discourse.

ENDNOTES

i http://www.gtcs.org.uk/about-gtcs/about-gtcs.aspx

ii https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx

iii http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_11019_01

iv http://www.trb.wa.gov.au/Professional_conduct/Legislation/Pages/default.aspx

v http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2012/86/introduction/made

vihttp://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/qualified-outside-of-scotland/important-policies-teachers-qualified-outside-scotland.aspx

vii http://www.gtcs.org.uk/about-gtcs/history-of-GTCS.aspx

viii http://www.oph.fi/english/about_fnbe

ix http://www.nd.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/122000/Professional-Exp-1-Primary-2014.pdf

xhttps://www.norssi.jyu.fi/info-1/Teaching%20and%20teaching%20practices%20in%20normaalikoulu%202012.pdf

xi http://www.nd.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/122000/Professional-Exp-1-Primary-2014.pdf

xii http://www.gtcs.org.uk/home/student-placement-system.aspx

xiii http://www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education/supervising-preservice-teachers

xiv https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/final-report-spt-program-review-(web).pdf?sfvrsn=b0beec3c_0

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