The Negotiation of Professional Identity of
Lecturers in Institutes of Technology in Ireland

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor in Education EdD
in the Faculty of Humanities

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Table of Contents

List of Tables ...................................................................................................................... 4
List of Figures ..................................................................................................................... 5
Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations ................................................................................. 6
Abstract ............................................................................................................................. 7
Declaration ........................................................................................................................ 8
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................ 9
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... 10
Chapter 1 Introduction ..................................................................................................... 11
  1.1 Aim ......................................................................................................................... 12
  1.2 Research Questions ................................................................................................. 12
  1.3 Rationale ................................................................................................................ 12
  1.4 Context ................................................................................................................... 13
  1.5 Historical Background ............................................................................................. 14
  1.6 Thesis Structure ...................................................................................................... 16
Chapter 2 Literature Review ............................................................................................. 18
  2.1 Identity ................................................................................................................... 18
  2.2 Identity as an analytic tool ...................................................................................... 19
  2.3 Academic Identity ................................................................................................... 24
    2.3.1 Discipline ......................................................................................................... 25
    2.3.2 Development ................................................................................................... 35
    2.3.3 Policy Decisions and External Influences .......................................................... 39
  2.4 Summary ................................................................................................................ 45
Chapter 3 Methodology ................................................................................................... 47
  3.1 Narrative ................................................................................................................ 49
  3.2 Interviews .............................................................................................................. 52
  3.3 Research Sample .................................................................................................... 55
  3.4 Trustworthiness and Credibility .............................................................................. 59
  3.5 Ethical Issues .......................................................................................................... 62
  3.6 Reflections on being an insider ............................................................................... 66
  3.7 Summary ................................................................................................................ 71
Chapter 4 Analysis ............................................................................................................ 72
  4.1 Analysis: The Approach ........................................................................................... 72
  4.2 Theme 1. Discipline – Summary Analysis ................................................................. 74
    4.2.1 Construct 1. Discipline .................................................................................... 78
    4.2.2 Construct 2. Professional Practice (Practice) .................................................... 79
    4.2.3 Construct 3. Teaching ...................................................................................... 80
    4.2.4 Construct 4. Research ..................................................................................... 80
  4.3 Theme 2. Professional Development – Summary Analysis ...................................... 81
    4.3.1 Construct 5. Professional Development (Development) .................................... 88
  4.4 Theme 3. Policy Decisions and External Influences – Summary Analysis ................ 89
    4.3.1 Construct 6. Community Orientated Values (Community) ............................... 98
4.5 Summary .......................................................................................................................... 100
Chapter 5 Discussion .......................................................................................................... 102

5.1 Introduction: Identity in context - Identity from a Sociological Perspective ........ 103
5.2 Themes and Literatures .............................................................................................. 105
5.2.1 The link to Academic Discipline ......................................................................... 105
5.2.2 The influence of Professional Development ......................................................... 110
5.2.3 The impact of Policy Decisions and External Influences .................................... 119
5.3 Using Gee’s Identity Framework ............................................................................. 125
5.3.1 N-Identity ........................................................................................................... 126
5.3.2 I-Identity ........................................................................................................... 129
5.3.3 D-Identity ........................................................................................................... 134
5.3.4 A-Identity ........................................................................................................... 138
5.4 Theorised Narrative Portraits using Gee’s identity framework ......................... 140
5.4.1 Aiden ................................................................................................................ 141
5.4.2 Andrew .............................................................................................................. 144
5.4.3 Beth .................................................................................................................... 147
5.4.4 Breda ................................................................................................................. 149
5.4.5 Cathy ................................................................................................................ 151
5.4.6 Colm .................................................................................................................. 153
5.4.7 Deirdre .............................................................................................................. 156
5.4.8 Dermot .............................................................................................................. 159
5.5 A Synthesised Understanding of Professional Identity ......................................... 162

Chapter 6 Conclusions ...................................................................................................... 168

6.1 Analytical Framework ............................................................................................... 169
6.1.1 Potential of the Analytic Framework .................................................................. 173
6.1.2 Analytical Framework - Summary ..................................................................... 175
6.2 Discipline (theme 1) ............................................................................................... 175
6.3 Professional Development (theme 2) ..................................................................... 179
6.4 Policy Decisions and External Environment (theme 3) ....................................... 181
6.5 Autonomy ............................................................................................................... 185

References ....................................................................................................................... 187

Appendix 1 Institutes of Technology .............................................................................. 195
Appendix 2 Interview Schedule (first interviews) .......................................................... 197
Appendix 3 Interview Schedule (second interviews) ...................................................... 201
Appendix 4 Initial Coding and Preparation for follow-on interviews ......................... 207
Appendix 5 Detailed Thematic Analysis ....................................................................... 215
Appendix 6 Vignettes ....................................................................................................... 283
Appendix 7 Higher Education Authority Criteria for a Technological University ...... 304
Appendix 8 Participant Information Sheet ..................................................................... 309
Appendix 9 Consent Form .............................................................................................. 312

3
### List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Four Ways to View Identity</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Nature Identity</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Institute Identity</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.3</td>
<td>Discourse Identity</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.4</td>
<td>Affinity Identity</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Research Questions and Themes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Vertical/Horizontal Discussion</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>Portraits through the Lenses</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.1</td>
<td>Andrew’s PIP through the Lenses</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.2</td>
<td>Professional Identity Profiles (PIP)</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APD</td>
<td>Academic Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIT</td>
<td>Dublin Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPER</td>
<td>Department of Public Expenditure and Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRHEA</td>
<td>Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTUA</td>
<td>Dublin Technological University Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdD</td>
<td>Doctor in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FÁS</td>
<td>Foras Áiseanna Saothair (Training and Employment Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Higher Education Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEAcademy</td>
<td>Higher Education Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HETAC</td>
<td>Higher Education Training and Awards Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSE</td>
<td>Health Service Executive (National Health Service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>International Business Machines Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU</td>
<td>Irish Congress of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFTA</td>
<td>Irish Film and Television Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOT</td>
<td>Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFHE</td>
<td>Leadership Foundation for Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIN</td>
<td>Learning and Innovation Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIRTL</td>
<td>National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDLR</td>
<td>National Digital Learning Repository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFETL</td>
<td>National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFQ</td>
<td>National Framework of Qualifications (Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIHE</td>
<td>National Institute for Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUII</td>
<td>National University of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBL</td>
<td>Problem Based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMDS</td>
<td>Performance Management and Development System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>Pension-Related Deduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTC</td>
<td>Regional Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Systeme, Anwendungen, Produkte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGI</td>
<td>Screen Directors Guild of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEDA</td>
<td>Staff and Education Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIF</td>
<td>Strategic Innovation Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUI</td>
<td>Teachers Union of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCD</td>
<td>University College Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKPSF</td>
<td>United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Abstract

Originally conceived as Regional Technical Colleges and located in regions across Ireland, the Institutes of Technology (IoT) have evolved as a major sector of the binary system of higher education in Ireland. The Institutes of Technology are identified as focussed on teaching however recent years have also seen increasing focus on research. Following convergence in the sector, recent policy measures and changes signal a 'future higher education landscape' which opens the possibility of technological university status to Institutes of Technology who merge as part of the process for recognition as technological universities. The traditional orientation to practical, vocationally focussed teaching in Institutes of Technology is now challenged by the potential changes being driven at policy level and it is in the context of this changing higher education system that this study examines IoT lecturers’ negotiation of professional identity.

The research uses narrative enquiry to access the stories and narratives of lecturers working in a number of the institutes located in the Dublin region. Through an in depth qualitative study of eight lecturers in four IoTs, the study, in line with the research questions, identifies three major themes that underpin the professional identities of the sample - discipline; professional development; and external influences and policy decisions. Associated with these three themes are six constructs - Discipline; Professional Practice; Teaching; Development; Community Orientated Values; and Research – that resonate with this changing and volatile higher education environment and that intersect in different ways for individuals in the study to produce varying ‘portraits’ of professional identity. An analysis of how these identity portraits emerge is facilitated by a theoretical framework proposed by Paul Gee (2000) that gives appropriate insights into the dialogic process of the negotiation of professional identity.

The study, through a synthesis of data generated themes and constructs and a theoretical identity perspective proposed by Gee (2000), contributes to knowledge in the field by creating a proposed framework for facilitating a generative analysis of the location and negotiation of professional identity. Such a framework enables, for example, explanations for both the strong links in the data between academic identity and subject discipline and yet also evidence of the fragmentation of an academic identity and an associated emphasis on practice-based experience. Given the way the framework allows for a multiplicity of factors to be combined in particular ways that reflect both structure and agency in individual lecturer’s negotiation of professional identities, an argument is made for its application in the design and implementation of development structures at the level of the individual and the organisation - one that recognises that a Higher Education professional development model based on a “one size fits all” approach will not work. Instead the temporal nature of the impact of policy decisions and external influences is highlighted with a call for more focus on discourses on higher education, the associated importance of lecturer autonomy and the nature of professionalism and professional identity.
Declaration

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I would like to thank my colleagues at the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown for their ongoing support and encouragement.

I would like to thank the participants who gave of their time freely and engaged in the research with enthusiasm and vision.

To my family, for their support and patience. Especially my children, Lucy, Luke, Charlie and Hannah for their generosity and love. To my wife Anita who has shared this journey with selflessness and grace I am forever grateful and humbled.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my mother Elizabeth.
Chapter 1 Introduction

My career in education took a new direction in 2001 when I took up a position lecturing at an Institute of Technology. Prior to 2001 I had taught at a Post Leaving Certificate college which was technically a post primary teaching position. This effectively led to a move from second level teaching to third level or higher education.

In changing and moving into higher education I had expectations and perceptions of what the Institutes of Technology did and how they operated. Some of these expectations and perceptions were met, but others were not. One perception, that there was significant research being carried out across the sector, was not confirmed and the extent of the focus on teaching was not what I had anticipated. Furthermore, given the level and extent of this focus on teaching I was curious as to how it appeared that there were relatively few of my new colleagues with qualifications or formal training in teaching or pedagogy and that there was no requirement for such qualifications or training.

This anomaly with regard to formal training in teaching has been addressed over the years since then, the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) and other initiatives have driven change in opening up qualifications and training in teaching in higher education, with much greater formal engagement by lecturers in programmes and qualifications in teaching and learning in higher education. While the impact of the global banking and financial crises have had a negative impact on SIF and related activities, teaching and learning in higher education now occupies a much more prominent position in higher education in Ireland and the scholarship of teaching and learning is being highlighted at policy and institute levels.
Nevertheless it was this anomaly that stimulated an interest in how lecturers in Institutes of Technology made sense of themselves professionally, in other words how they locate and negotiate their professional identity. This interest informs the aims and objectives of this research.

1.1 Aim
The aims and objectives of this research are to examine and explore how lecturers in Institutes of Technology locate and/or negotiate their professional identity and what are the important elements of professional identity.

1.2 Research Questions
To bring structure to this research, three research questions have been identified which define the parameters of the research.

(1) What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the negotiation of professional identities?

(2) In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how do these relate to issues of professional identity?

(3) What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional identity construction?

1.3 Rationale
The rationale for the research is to develop a better understanding of professional identity development of lecturers in the Institute of Technology sector in order to aid the design and implementation of professional development activities in more sympathetic, theoretically and empirically robust ways. In addition the study will contribute knowledge to the field on professional identity development through both the research evidence and theoretical developments.
From an institute or organisational or collegiate perspective the research highlights the diverse ways in which professional identity is negotiated and the different ways in which lecturers seek to develop their professional selves. The research provides insight into these processes and suggests ways in which to support professional identities and to initiate and enable change.

1.4 Context

The timing and focus of the research are also informed by recent policy measures that seek to drive a reconfiguration of Irish higher education with significant change anticipated in the Institute of Technology sector. The publication of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) has prompted and encapsulated many of these proposed changes. The Hunt report (DoES) was followed by the publication of criteria for recognition as a technological university in 2011 (Marginson, 2011) and subsequently the publication by the Higher Education Authority (HEA)\(^1\) of a ‘landscape’ document outlining its vision for higher education in Ireland (HEA, 2012).

The changes signalled above have the potential for profound change in the Institute of Technology sector as the documents outlined above, which effectively reflect government policy, seek *inter alia* to reduce the amount of higher education institutes in the country with the main drive to achieve this objective being the opening of opportunities for Institutes of Technology to achieve technological university status. With part of the criteria for technological university status being that there must first be a merger between Institutes

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\(^1\) Throughout this thesis HEA refers to the Higher Education Authority of Ireland and should not be confused with the UK Higher Education Academy referred to as HEAcademy.
of Technology, there is widespread anticipation and action towards these mergers so that consortia of institutes may apply for and achieve this perceived enhanced status.

Another significant change signalled by the possibility of technological university status is that the recognition will require a refocus of activity and energy on increasing research and provision at higher level qualifications (Masters/PhD), with the consequent knock-on effect on the traditional orientation of the Institutes of Technology on practical, vocationally oriented teaching.

The direction of change suggests a refocussing of the traditional orientation from vocational teaching to research and higher level academic teaching in larger technological universities. This has implications for lecturers as it signals changes in their sense of themselves professionally, in particular their ‘subjective meaning making’ around the location and negotiation of professional identity. It also signals changes in the traditional orientation of the institutes, originally conceived as Regional Technical Colleges (RTC) delivering a technical post-primary terminal examination/certification and sub degree programmes, to larger more research focussed higher education institutes. This change in the traditional regional focus of the institutes is something that emerged in the research as an important construct around the subjective meaning making of lecturers.

1.5 Historical Background

The history of the Institutes of Technology is not linear although it could be argued, as it is here, that there is a distinct trajectory which began in 1970 with the establishment of 5 Regional Technical Colleges (RTC). The 5 RTCs and the Dublin Colleges (later to become Dublin Institute of Technology DIT) have increased in number over the years to 14 separate
Institutes of Technology. As is suggested in their title the RTCs originally had a regional remit and were initially located in areas or regions in which there was an under-provision of opportunity for progression or access to higher education. Following their successful introduction RTCs were established in urban areas, sometimes building on extant technical colleges, such as Cork Institute of Technology and Limerick Institute of Technology, and also being established on greenfield sites, for example Tallaght RTC.

The name change from Regional Technical Colleges took place in late 1997 and early 1998 with colleges being retitled Institutes of Technology. There are now 14 Institutes of Technology that have, over the past five decades, evolved into a recognisable higher education sector characterised by a binary system in which, broadly speaking, the 14 Institutes of Technology occupy one side of the higher education system opposite 7 universities.

There has been, and still is, an historical diversity in the Institute of Technology sector and over the past five decades there has been divergence between them, most notably separate legislation for Dublin Institute of Technology and the remaining RTCs (as they were then called) in 1992. However, convergence began arguably with the change in title to Institute of Technology, and then more formally with the passing of the Institutes of Technology Act (2006). This act saw the sector coming under a single piece of legislation and significantly the governance and regulation of the HEA for the first time. It could be argued that this convergence has set the scene for the current policy measures outlined above.

The opportunity for groupings of Institutes of Technology to merge, apply for, and achieve technological university status opens up the possibility of further periods of divergence and
a disruption of the binary system and in particular to lecturers working in the sector. It is in
this context that the data gathering phase of the research took place over an 8 month period
from October 2012 to June 2013.

1.6 Thesis Structure
Chapter 2 reviews relevant literatures, pertinent to the research questions documented,
firstly with a focus on identity from a sociological perspective followed by other research
literatures exploring the themes suggested by the research questions. The literature review
also discusses a theoretical framework for examining identity proposed by Paul Gee (2000)
which is critical for the research and key to developing my own proposed analytical
framework.

Chapter 3 presents a discussion of the methodology of the research and outlines the
ontological and epistemological assumptions and orientation. This chapter also explores
the use of narrative enquiry in the research and how the stories of the participants provide
a rich and deep insight into the negotiation of professional identity.

Chapter 4 describes how the data and stories were analysed and the stages and iterations
of the analysis leading to the discussion.

Chapter 5 develops the analysis of the data and discusses how the data and stories suggest
ways in which professional identity is negotiated. The development of portraits or individual
case studies of the participants is explored in this chapter.
Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the research identifying an emergent analytical framework for the analysis of professional identity based on the synthesis of constructs emerging from the analysis and discussion with the theoretical perspectives proposed by Gee (2000). The conclusions also describe the important themes and constructs and the ways in which professional identity is negotiated.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

As this research is focussed on the negotiation of professional identity it is important to locate identity in the context of the research and to identify the various perspectives through which identity or more specifically professional identity can be viewed. There is a short introduction to the concept of identity based on a sociological perspective so that the approach to this research can be established. This is followed by a review of a theoretical framework proposed by Gee (2000), through which identity can be studied and which provided an important theoretical tool for this study. The remainder of the literature review is structured to reflect the research questions firstly examining the influence of discipline on the negotiation of professional identity; then how professional identity is influenced by and drives professional development; and finally the influence of policy decisions and external influences on the negotiation of professional development and hence identity.

2.1 Identity

In an earlier study (O’Connor, 2012) I noted that initial reading in identity brings one to a review of historical and philosophical ideas about the concept. Woodward (2002) traces the established sociological and psychological literature on identity to the late nineteenth century, whilst philosophical and theological traditions stretch back over thousands of years throughout recorded history. She discusses where our ideas about identity come from and selects some of the key moments in the identity story. She notes that although notions and thoughts of identity have a historical basis they are not necessarily linear and points to key debates that have emerged over time identifying the Enlightenment as a period when notions of individual, or self, or identity were explored by philosophers such as Locke and Descartes.
The approach to identity that this study takes is essentially sociological and is informed by writers such as Lawler (2008) who argues that identity is socially produced while Woodward (2002) maintains that identity is always socially located. General approaches to ideas about identity from a sociological perspective analyse two types of identity, social identity and self-identity. Social identity and self-identity are analytically distinct but closely related to each other (Giddens, Dunier, and Appelbaum, 2007). Social identity refers to characteristics that other people attribute to an individual whilst self-identity focuses on those factors that set us apart as distinct individuals. Giddens (2009) identifies three central parts to identities; they are partly individual or personal, this reflects the self-identity above; they are partly collective or social, reflecting social identity above; and finally they are always embodied. Embodiment of identity is a theme that is also considered by Woodward (2002) who explores how our bodies offer certainty, positive aspects of security, and at the same time physical limitations and corporeality. These ideas about identity are important to consider as they set the context in which professional identity can be studied.

2.2 Identity as an analytic tool

Building on the ideas highlighted above, the negotiation of identity entails sets of values; attitudes; taken-for-granted and recurrent practices; and is complex; multi-layered; and dialogic in nature (Holland and Lave, 2001). The work of Gee (2000) in particular acknowledges the complexity of identity and how it can take on a great many meanings in the literature. To use identity as a lens for thinking about professional reflexivity and agency, one must first establish or identify an approach to the study of identity. The theoretical framework proposed by Gee (2000) facilitates the establishment of such an approach and acts as an important set of tools for the study of professional identity in my research.
Gee (2000) recognises the historical development of ideas of identity, from pre-modern society where identity was rooted in positions defined by tradition, to the challenges faced by the individual in modern society where having been “set free” individuals must choose and form their own individual identity as a life project, with identity crucially depending on the individuals dialogical relations with others. A common theme through studies of identity is the problem of choosing and forming one’s own identity, a problem that is associated with modernity. The construction or negotiation of identity is referred to by Wenger (1998) as a ‘constant becoming’ and something that is constantly negotiated during the course of our lives. To Taylor (1991) this ‘constant becoming’ during the course of our lives reflects the dialogical nature of identity, a process that remains with us throughout our lives whether we like it or not. Bauman (2000, 2001) also draws attention to the impact of modernity on identity and outlines the challenge presented by ‘identity in the globalizing world’. Identity is no longer a given, rather it is a task that is faced by everyone, a task that is characterised by insecurity and uncertainty and one that consumes time and effort. These are ideas that resonate with the plight of lecturers at Institutes of Technology who are likely to have to concern themselves with this ‘constant becoming’ and the ongoing dialogical process of the negotiation of professional identity in a fast changing and fluid higher education environment.

People have multiple identities connected to their performances in society, which will change from moment to moment and from context to context, somewhat similar to social identity as discussed above (Woodward, 2002; Lawler, 2008). People however, also have what Gee (2000) calls a core identity that holds uniformly for individuals across contexts, this is similar to the notion of self-identity outlined above. This study, set in the context of
higher education is not a study of “core” identity, nor is it a study of embodiment (corporeality), rather it is the study of identity in the context of higher education and is largely a study of the social aspect of identity in this context, albeit informed by this core identity.

In engaging in a study of identity one must be aware of the diverse approaches to the study of identity and the challenge posed by the difficulties in defining it adequately, (Lawler, 2008). The challenge is to establish a way in which identity can be studied. To illustrate how identity might be studied in a given context Gee (2000) observes that whenever a person acts and interacts in such a given context they are recognized by others as acting and interacting as a certain “kind of person” (p 99). The approach taken in this study is to examine identity as being recognised as a certain “kind of person” in a given context and relate it to lecturers in Institutes of Technology. Gee (2000) maintains that the notion of identity can be used as an analytic tool for studying theory and practice in education and develops through a theoretical framework a specific perspective built around four different but related perspectives, including the discursive perspective and the affinity groups perspective on what it means to be recognized as a certain “kind of person”. These four perspectives are outlined in table 3.1 below:

### TABLE 3.1 Four Ways to View Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Perspective</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Nature-Identity: a state</td>
<td>developed from</td>
<td>forces</td>
<td>In nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Institution-Identity: a position</td>
<td>authorised by</td>
<td>authorities</td>
<td>within institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Discourse-Identity: an individual trait</td>
<td>recognised in</td>
<td>the discourse/dialogue</td>
<td>of/with “rational individuals”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Affinity-Identity: experiences</td>
<td>shared in</td>
<td>the practice</td>
<td>Of “affinity groups”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Gee (2000, p 100)
The four perspectives are not discrete categories that are separate from each other, they are interrelated in complex and important ways. They give us ways to focus our attention on different aspects of how identities are formed and sustained. When looking at a certain ‘kind of person’ in a given context all or some of the four strands may be present, it is which strands are present, which predominate and why they predominate, that help us to study identity.

**Nature Identity:** The source of nature identity is nature and its force of power is nature, it is something we have little or no control over such as gender or ethnicity. It is important to note that nature or N-identities must always gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue and through affinity groups. (pp 101 – 102)

**Institutional Identity:** The source of power in institutional or I-identities is/are institutions or authorities and the source of this power is/are institutions through authorisation, laws, rules, traditions, and principles. Gee maintains that institutions work across space and time to see and ensure certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interaction happen often enough and in similar enough ways to sustain the I-identities they underwrite. (pp 102 - 104)

**Discursive Identity:** The discursive perspective or D-identity is identity that flows through the discourse or dialogue of other people (the ways in which others talk of the subject/person). The source of D-identity is rational individuals and the force of D-identity is recognition. D-identity reflects the problem in modern society of having to choose and form an individual identity as a life project. D-identity can be an ascription or an achievement with people ‘fashioning’ themselves in certain ways. People must negotiate and sustain the identities that they fashion. (pp 104 - 105)
**Affinity Identity:** The fourth perspective is affinity identity or A-identity, the source or subject of which is a set of distinct practices with the power flowing from the affinity group. Individuals share allegiance to, access to, and participate in specific practices or processes. The key to A-identity is participation or sharing, primarily through a common set of practices and secondly through other people or culture. The focus is on distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations rather than institutions or discourse/dialogue directly. (p 105)

People can accept, contest, and negotiate identities in terms of whether they will be seen primarily as N-I-D- or A- identities. Nonetheless, at root, human beings must see each other in certain ways and not others if there are to be identities of any sort. If an attribute is not recognised as defining someone as a particular ‘kind of person’ then it cannot serve as an identity of any sort (p 109).

Thus it is possible to examine academic or professional identities to see what perspectives are present and which predominate in given settings and to see how identities are formed and sustained. The key as identified by Gee (2000) is that human beings, in the context of this study ‘lecturers in Institutes of Technology’ must see themselves as a particular ‘kind of person’ or be seen by others as a particular ‘kind of person’ if they are to be identities of any sort.

For the purposes of this research then, Gee provides a theoretical framework in which professional identities can be discussed and analysed and through the lenses provided in
this framework it is possible to examine which attributes or perspectives predominate and stand out.

2.3 Academic Identity

In the field of professional identity research, academic identity or teacher identity is highlighted as complex, multidimensional, constantly negotiated, and dialogic (Bradbury and Gunter, 2006; Søreide, 2006; James, 2007; Archer, 2008). Hocking et al.’s (2009) study of the negotiation of university teacher identity is guided by Wenger’s (1998) conceptualisation of identity. Here identity is characterised as temporal, on-going, constructed in social contexts, and defined with respect to the interaction of multiple convergent and divergent trajectories. This location of the construction or negotiation of identity in social contexts reflects the views of Lawler (2008) and Woodward (2002) outlined above.

Wenger’s (1998) influence is also apparent in James’ (2007) study of learning trajectories of academic identities in higher education. This study found that the identities and learning trajectories of ‘old timers’ may be shaped by institutional and societal contexts over which they have no control. Moore et al. (2002) found that teachers reconstruct their identities adopting pragmatism in their philosophies and practice in response to profound change in their working environments. This pragmatism is evident in the acceptance of successive cuts in salary and more onerous working terms and conditions by lecturers beginning with the Public Service Agreement (DPER, 2010) commonly referred to as the Croke Park Agreement². The complex interaction of the different perspectives are illustrated in James’s

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² The Croke Park agreement (DPER, 2010) was introduced as part of measures aimed at addressing economic difficulties following the financial and banking crises and the overarching objective of reforming the public service. The agreement added
(2007) study which clearly illustrates the influence of “institution” on identity and also how discourse and affinity perspectives impact on the negotiation of identity.

The research is structured around three research questions and the review of literature reflects these three research questions and is structured to examine the influence of discipline on professional identity, followed by an examination of how engagement in professional development influences professional identity and finally how policy decisions and external influences impact on the negotiation of professional identity. In examining these literatures I will make reference to Gee’s theoretical framework as a way of highlighting the important interrelationships of nature identity, institute identity, discourse identity and affinity identity.

2.3.1 Discipline

The influential book ‘Academic Tribes and Territories’ provides a useful departure point for a study of academic identity. The first edition (Becher, 1989) focussed on elite universities in the U.K. while the more recent edition (Becher and Trowler, 2001) broadens the focus to take into account academic identity beyond the elite universities, fundamental change in higher education, and the role of the academic in higher education. The link between academic identity and vocational/academic discipline is widely recognised (Becher, 1989; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 1997, 2000, 2005; Taylor, 2006; Kreber 2010). This is evident in the metaphor ‘academic tribes and territories’ adopted by Becher and Trowler, with further recognition of this link and the strength of this link highlighted by Henkel (1997).

2 teaching contact hours to existing lecturer and assistant lecturer contact hours from 16 to 18 hours and from 18 to 20 hours respectively.
who refers to the dominance of the academic or knowledge discipline in higher education through concepts of academic identity and professionalism.

‘Academic Tribes and Territories’ outlines the on-going negotiation of academic identity and of professional autonomy and managerial discretion (pp 11 – 12). Becher and Trowler see academics as becoming increasingly ‘managed’ professionals. The academic is seen as a social actor both in enacting culture and constructing culture, and s/he is seen as having agency and empowered to reconstruct or negotiate the cultural environment, both consciously and (more often) unconsciously. The influences of culture are identified, namely patterns of educational ideology; unique, pre-existing cultural configuration; and the profitability attached to particular practices in given contexts. This is significant in the context of Institutes of Technology as the criteria for recognition as a technological university includes criteria that are more generally associated with universities such as a focus on research and research output and criteria around the qualifications of academic staff with particular reference to the numbers holding PhD or equivalent qualifications. Here can be seen the influence of institutional I-Identity and discursive D-identity as Institutes of Technology face into a period of rapid change.

While the Institutes of Technology have traditionally emphasised the teaching aspect of the lecturers role there are also knowledge domains that impact on the identities and cultural characteristics of typical disciplines within the sector, for example science, engineering, business, etc. These knowledge domains impart a social role in shaping the epistemology and the delineation and framing of a discipline. Becher and Trowler (2001) argue that disciplines have recognisable identities and particular cultural attributes. This can be expressed through disciplinary discourse or through a professional language or literature of
a discipline. Henkel (2005) highlights the importance of language in giving understanding and meaning in the world through ideas, cognitive structures and experience expressed in a particular language, whilst Clegg (2008, p 335) notes “disciplinary ways of talking” in her study of academic identities. These all point to the foregrounding of discursive identity associated with an academic discipline where the process of D-Identity works through recognition as a “kind of person” working in a particular vocational/academic discipline. In this context the discourse around what it means to be treated as, or talked about, or interacted with as a particular vocational/academic lecturer in the Institute of Technology sector.

Cultural approaches to the study of higher education are considered by Välimaa (1998), who identifies two main approaches, the disciplinary approach as highlighted by Becher and Trowler and the institutional approach which examines how an institution influences the academic understanding of academic communities. Different reference groups or ‘significant others’ are identified as having a role in the dialogic process of negotiating academic identity. These reference groups are presented as providing a check list for asking questions about academic identity rather than a static description. The reference groups identified are disciplinary based communities, professional communities, institutional level communities and national culture (p 133).

Being a member of a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment, as does being a member of an academic institution. Henkel (2005) states that academic identity is a function of community membership that flows from the interaction between the two communities of discipline and institution. The dynamics of the interaction between discipline communities and institution communities have changed in recent times.
Academics are now quite likely to have a background in the professions, the arts, or commerce and to have completed their doctorate later in life, if at all (Henkel, 2005 p 47). Nixon et al. (2001) also point to the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries with the disciplinary tradition being replaced by a sense of belonging to the institution. Malcolm and Zukas (2009) suggest new ways of thinking about discipline and propose analysing the interaction of academic work with other practices, for example through ‘knowledge transfer’ activities and community service and call for a focus on the “actors themselves” (p 504). These new ways of thinking about academic work should not be hampered by boundary constructions or epistemic differences. Here can be seen the interaction of institutional identity, discursive identity and affinity identity, where identity is negotiated partly through discourse both within and outside of the institute, through changes in institutional direction and management; and finally through the development of different forms of interaction leading to the rising influence of affinity groups. Part 2 of the Hunt report explicitly articulates three core roles of higher education, those of teaching and learning; research; and engagement with wider society (HEA, 2012). The identification of these core roles gives recognition to the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries and highlights new ways of thinking about academic work as identified by Malcolm and Zukas and others above. These changes may alter the predominance or force of the various perspectives and the nature of the interaction between them, leading to new identities or changing identities.

Clegg (2008) argues that identity is understood not as a fixed property, but as part of the lived complexity of a person’s project and their ways of being in those sites which are constituted as being part of the academic. Changes in academic identities are responses to changes to the structure of universities and external environments. She characterises newer
emerging identities or hybrids based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice based loyalties, thus highlighting influences other than discipline in the negotiation of academic identity. The evolution of Institutes of Technology and the practice based, professional, and vocational focus of programmes in the institutes reflect these diverse influences on academic identity. Aspects of academic identity in the Institute of Technology sector will be shaped by a wide range of influences and will be less likely to be shaped by discipline, as for many lecturers, although they will have an academic background in a discipline, they may also have extensive practical or professional experience in addition to their academic experience.  Robson (2006) states that it is more likely that allegiance will be given to the industry or vocation, to the discipline or subject, than to the employing institution.  In the context of the lenses provided by Gee (2000) the emerging hybrids and influence of practice based loyalties should be foregrounded through discourse identity and institutional identity.  Given the practice based, vocational focus of the Institutes of Technology it is likely that I-Identities will be influenced by professional background in addition to academic and discipline influences while the D-Identity will offer an opportunity to analyse how aspects of discourse and dialogue sustain identities in the sector.  Membership of professional groups and societies will be indicative of the influence of A-identity through affiliation with fellow members and groups with distinctive practices and processes.

Nixon (1996) examines changes in Higher Education spanning a period of 30 years highlighting a fragmentation of the academic workplace and changes in the status and autonomy of academics.  These changes have impacted on the role of academics and their professional identity.  The changes outlined by Nixon (1996) include a changing student body, characterised by changes in age, socio-economic background, gender, and ethnicity.
Other changes include changes in curriculum, teaching and assessment with diversification of course content and structure, the focus of the learner, and increased emphasis on differentiating the educational needs of learners, flexible learning, and different teaching methods. There have also been changes in the structures of accountability and professional accreditation (Nixon et al., 2001). Similar changes have also taken place in Ireland in this period and since. Through successive agreements between the Government and the Public Services Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (ICTU) conditions of academic work in Ireland have been intensified in recent times with real salaries of lecturers falling in addition to increasing weekly contact hours. Two agreements are worth noting, the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (DPER, 2010) commonly referred to as the Croke Park Agreement which has been superseded by the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013 – 2016: The Haddington Road Agreement (LRC, 2013) commonly referred to as the Haddington Road Agreement. Both of these agreements have had a significant effect on salaries and conditions of service for lecturers. In effect the direction and thrust of change underpinned by the economic downturn has been the intensification of work in contrast to change in the nature and understanding of academic work. The employment control framework has also had a significant impact on academic conditions. The employment control framework is a government scheme introduced in 2009 to reduce numbers employed in the public service which extends to higher education. The employment control framework operates as a moratorium on recruitment and promotions in the public service with special provisions with regard to the health and education sectors. These recent cuts in government spending and investment have seen numbers employed in higher education fall and opportunities for tenure and permanent employment almost disappear for new entrants. The impact of these changes in government spending and policy on identity cannot be ignored and the wider contextual issues are recognised by Lea and Callaghan
(2008) as having an acute impact on how lecturers feel. What is highlighted here are the changes taking place across higher education including universities and Institutes of Technology. In what ways are these changes being confronted and assimilated by lecturers through N-Identity, from the perspective of expectations about individual engagement and reflections on how these changes are affecting the individual? How these changes are influencing I- identity, through the influence of new rules, regulations, and changes in policy and how these changes are impacting on the discourse in Institutes of Technology on their role and position in higher education will give insight into the negotiation of professional identity of lecturers in Institutes of Technology.

The examination of the negotiation of identity will draw on literature based on the negotiation and construction of professional and academic identity through the values underlying academic practice. Based on studies of university lecturers Nixon (1996) examined the construction of professional identity and identified important insights into the values underlying their practices. The values identified reflect the centrality of learning including the role of the lecturer in learning, collegiality, support for professional development, and equal opportunities for research. Similarly Archer (2008) in a study of younger academics found the construction of academic identity is underpinned by core values of intellectual endeavour, criticality, ethics and professionalism. Professionalism was evoked as the embodying of a principled, ethical and responsible approach to work and work relationships, and a commitment to collegiality and collaboration. Nixon et al. (1997) and Nixon (2001) propose moral bases for the development of professionalism in higher education where professionalism is conveyed and articulated through greater reflexivity by academics in respect of their underlying professional values. Nixon et al. (2001) argue that the changing conditions of higher education have made it extremely difficult to speak of
academic workers as a unified ‘profession’ (p 227). It is proposed by Nixon (2001, 2004) that academics re-define their professionalism in terms of their underlying commitments and purposes and in so doing redefine the notion of academic freedom as freedom for others. This redefinition requires a fundamental redefinition of professionalism in terms of values and practices, continuous reflection on academic practice, and a sense of moral purposefulness in respect of the virtues of truthfulness, respect and authenticity.

Henkel (2005) states that one of the most frequently discussed values in studies of higher education reform is that of academic freedom. Henkel also observes that academic freedom has a variety of meanings both individually and collectively. Academic freedom and autonomy are a source of meaning and self-esteem and in many cases what is most valued by academics. Neave (1988) defines academic autonomy as ‘the right of staff in higher education to determine the nature of their work’ (p 43). Clegg (2008) discusses the notion of principled, personal autonomy and agency while Winter (2009) outlines the long tradition of autonomy and academic freedom identifying them as essential elements of academic and university identities.

In a study of the construction of professional identity at German fachhochschul, or universities of applied science, Vogel (2009) found that professional self-determination and autonomy were considered important values and were instrumental in the career choice of fachhochschul professors. Henkel (2005) found academic freedom and autonomy was, for some, a matter of quality of life and perhaps the main reward of an academic career (p 169). Academic freedom and autonomy has a collective significance with individual freedom and is a function of academic control of the professional arena of teaching and research. These
are necessary conditions for academic work and closely tied to the notion of academic identity.

As a result of changes in higher education however, the occupation of university teacher no longer automatically carries the assumption of disciplinary autonomy and status (Nixon et al., 2001). The erosion or change in this autonomy has been brought about by a changing higher education policy context, leading to a sense of fragmentation of academic labour, manifest in the employment control framework, diminished autonomy and increased levels of administrative duties, both in teaching and in research (Kreber, 2010). Henkel (2005) acknowledges the notion of communities of scholars in higher education, but also states that higher education institutions are a public service and are often explicitly a business. In this context higher education institutions are publicly accountable to the state and they create and respond to multiple markets. The changes to structures and values in higher education brought about by various drivers is most likely to impact on I- identity and D- identity influencing reflection on the relationship between lecturers and the institutes in which they work, but also in the discourse around structures and values in higher education. These changes include the economic environment; the massification of higher education; the funding of higher education; and the more corporate-style governance protocols that have gradually been introduced (Engwall, 2007; Vidovich and Currie, 2011). The academic discipline associated with academic communities or affinity groups is being clearly trammelled by policy discourses of accountability and institutional enactments of these that are fragmenting these epistemic/discipline communities and their work.

The Institutes of Technology receive most of their funding from central government and as the public service in general comes under increased public scrutiny higher education is no
exception, becoming more accountable through oversight and audit mechanisms (Taylor, 2006). Increasing involvement by the state and increased public scrutiny and accountability is linked to managerialism or new managerialism. Deem and Brehony (2005) and Deem (2008) locate the roots of managerialism to cuts in public expenditure during the 1980s, then coming to prominence in the 1990s. Managerialism is characterised by an emphasis on the primacy of management over all other functions and a concentration on doing more with less. Managerialism focuses on targets, the performance of individual employees, and an encouragement of greater competition between and within organisations.

Managerialism has connotations of laws, rules, authorization, and principles, thus managerialism will most likely be articulated through I-Identity whose source of power is institution or authority. This institution or authority is represented by the State and its agencies, including the HEA from which most of the funding for Institutes of Technology flows. The individual institutes are also sources of I- identity, and as agents of the State implement changes in policy and practice. Some of the negative impacts of managerialism identified by Deem et al. (2007) have been declining trust between employees (academics) and managers and a reduction in autonomy and self-direction. Managerialism leads to the squeezing out of traditional academic values of professional autonomy and collective ideals, these values being replaced by values of economic rationality, the minimisation of cost and the primacy of profit (Winter, 2009). Managerialism is driven from both within and outside the higher education institute leading to the erosion of autonomy due to managerial control as institutions respond to competitive markets and government accountability requirements (Jones, 2007; Whitechurch, 2008). Although the impact of managerialism is manifest in I- identities there will always be a discourse around changes in any aspect of individuals work and work practices, and these will emerge through D- identity.
2.3.2 Development

Lecturers’ attitude and engagement in academic or professional development will give an insight to the negotiation of professional identity. In an introductory paper about professional development in higher education, Sayer (1981) recognises the difficulty in defining the term ‘professional development’ as it is a complex social phenomenon that can attract different understandings, for example it could mean development of an entire profession or could be focussed on the development of an individual. A complete picture of professional development includes the notion that people mature and develop in addition to the more obviously intentional development. Professional development could be argued to be a normal fact of life in the academic setting (Sayer, 1981). This observation brings into focus aspects of the N- perspective insofar as an individual’s disposition or intrinsic motivation with regard to professional development. For some individuals professional development will be intrinsically driven by their nature and disposition, while for others professional development will be driven by extrinsic or functional influences.

In the academic setting professional development can take many forms, for example developing knowledge in the discipline through research or further education, developing competences and skills in teaching and learning, gaining practical experience in a profession or occupation, or through the development of research profiles and interests. The scope and range of academic development is illustrated by Åkerlind (2007) who identifies five qualitatively different approaches to growing and developing as a teacher in higher education. These are outlined below.

- building up a better knowledge of one’s content area, in order to become more familiar with *what to teach*;
- building up practical experience as a teacher, in order to become more familiar with *how to teach*;
• building up a repertoire of teaching strategies, in order to become more skilful as a teacher;
• finding out which teaching strategies do and don’t work for the teacher, in order to become more effective as a teacher;
• continually increasing one’s understanding of what works and doesn’t work for students, in order to become more effective in facilitating student learning. Source: (Åkerlind, 2007 p 27)

The question arises as to whether and how lecturers identify with these different approaches to teaching and which ones are highlighted, and which of the four perspectives on identity are foregrounded in this identification. To what extent is development triggered or driven by the institutional factors such as rules around qualifications and training. Maybe development is driven by discourse within discipline or department or as identified earlier by the nature of the discipline itself, which leads to consideration of affinity groups that may influence engagement in development, or as identified above, development that is driven by N-identity, an individual’s nature or disposition.

In discussing developments in teaching in higher education Skelton (2005) traces the evolution of models of professionalism in higher education, through periods from the 1940s to the 2000s, highlighting the need for professional development to provide a context in which higher education teachers can explore the relationships and interdependencies between subject and pedagogic knowledge. He criticizes imposed or enforced professional development and calls for a critical understanding of professional development in teaching in higher education. The extent to which these observations have influenced the discourse and D-identity will inform the research. Skelton (2005) identifies the key notion of ‘professional’ and the distinctive characteristics of professionalism as knowledge, responsibility, and autonomy. This notion of professionalism should be included in notions of professional development in teaching in higher education.
Blackmore (2009) identifies a major increase in the attention paid to formal support of development at individual, group, and organisational levels in UK universities through the 2000s. He identifies the Higher Education Academy (HEA in the UK) and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) dealing with leadership and management, in addition to the Staff and Education Development Association (SEDA). Similar structures aimed at supporting development are underdeveloped in Ireland with the establishment of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NFETL) taking place only in 2012. The NFETL like the Higher Education Academy promotes excellence in teaching and learning in higher education, however its establishment came too late to have any impact on this research.

Perhaps the main thrust with regard to the support of development for lecturers in Institutes of Technology has come from the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF)\(^3\). SIF was established in 2006 in response to the OECD’s (OECD, 2004) review of Irish Higher education. It was designed as a mechanism to realise the objectives of plans aimed at restructuring and modernising higher education. SIF operated through the funding of schemes and initiatives and was initially devised as a multi-annual programme with a budget of €510m to be allocated on the basis of inter-institutional competition (HEA, 2015). It was planned that SIF would extend from 2006 until 2014 covering the period of the “National Development Plan 2007 – 2013: Transforming Ireland: A Better Quality of Life for all” (Government of Ireland, 2007), however due to the effects of the global financial crisis and the acute decline in government spending the fund was severely restricted and eventually ended in 2012 with

\(^3\) SIF addressed enhancement of teaching and learning; the development of postgraduate education and research; widening participation (equity and access); inter institutional collaboration; and the leveraging of existing resources to achieve strategic national priorities through a system of matched funding.
a much reduced allocation of €144m (HEA, 2015a). Many of the initiatives and schemes identified as part of SIF did not receive funding necessary to achieve sustainability and it could be speculated that many initiatives and schemes were lost completely.

Gosling (2009) traces the growth of educational development units in UK higher education from the mid-1960s to the mid-2000s linking the rapid growth in educational development units to government support for such units after the Dearing report of 1997 (NCIHE, 1997). It is acknowledged that academic development is now a definable set of practices with its own distinctive values and professional organisation and one that has led to a greater emphasis on academic staff development in many institutions (Clegg, 2009; Quinn 2012). In Ireland this greater emphasis and recognition of academic development is underscored at policy level in the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) with recommendations on minimum levels of competence in teaching and learning, the provision of opportunities to develop and extend teaching capacity, and the highlighting of the value of teaching skills among academic staff.

The Hunt report (DoES, 2011) is a key component of higher education policy and is discussed below.

Using Gee (2000) as a lens to view the negotiation of identity through engagement in different aspects of development, focus will be on the influence of increasing emphasis from institutes and the wider policy agenda to encourage greater engagement in academic and professional development. Discussion of the discourse with regard to development practices and the public and private perception of this discourse will be examined. In the absence (at the time the research took place) of a coherent framework of institutions in which development is located the affinity perspective will be examined to determine what types of groups and what types of interaction are influencing and being influenced in the
development of lecturers. The Learning and Innovation Network (LIN), an initiative developed as a result of SIF, provides an example of the type of group or network that could serve as a centre for discourse and affinity within higher education in Ireland. The Learning and Innovation Network (LIN) is a network of academic professionals supporting academic professional development, originating in 2006 as a joint initiative including all fourteen Institutes of Technology (McMahon, 2011; LIN, 2008). LIN has no physical location and provides a focal point for the examination of distinctive practices between individuals who are dispersed throughout Irish higher education mostly in the institute of technology sector.

Engagement in professional development and the different forms this takes, for example different types of development around growing and developing as a teacher as identified by Åkerlind (2007) above, will give cues and insight into the negotiation of professional identity.

2.3.3 Policy Decisions and External Influences

The third research question examines the impact of policy decisions and external influences on the negotiation of professional identity. Policy decisions and external influences are influenced by the historical development of higher education in Ireland and the emergence of a binary system through the growth in the Institute of Technology sector since the major modern expansion of higher education in Ireland in 1970 (Duff et al, 2000).

The first issue is how Irish higher education policy is itself influenced by economic and human capital objectives focussed on creating a knowledge intensive society in Ireland, which in turn are influenced by outside forces or drivers.

The global financial crisis and its consequences for Ireland are illustrative of how global issues influence many things and how they can influence Irish higher education. At a macro
level, the policy background and agenda in Irish higher education is influenced by Ireland’s membership of the European Union. Thus higher education policy has been influenced by the European information society paradigm from its development in the 1990s and through the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 (Harkin and Hazelkorn, 2014). The policy agenda in Ireland is focussed on higher education as a driver of economic development and this is illustrated by the significance and influence attached to OECD report Review of Higher Education in Ireland (OECD, 2004).

The review of higher education report (OECD, 2004) was influential in the development of an action plan for promoting investment in research and development “Building Ireland’s Knowledge Economy” (Forfás, 2004) and the “National Development Plan 2007 – 2013: Transforming Ireland: A Better Quality of Life for all” (Government of Ireland, 2007). Vital to the goals of these plans was an educated and highly skilled workforce that would supply the labour force for the knowledge economy and higher education was identified as the means by which this skilled workforce would be generated.

The response to these reports was to set about modernising higher education and restructuring higher education institutes. The main mechanism for this modernisation and institutional restructuring was SIF, which is outlined above. As noted above the economic downturn has reduced the planned investment in SIF by 72% (€510m - €144m) effectively terminating the fund. The reduced investment in higher education has come against a backdrop of an already massified higher education sector (Harkin and Hazelkorn, 2014), and an employment control framework that has had a significant impact on the ability of higher education institutes to replace retiring staff or recruit new staff (HEA, 2011).
It is difficult to visualise the impact and significance of this outcome of the global financial crisis on professional development of lecturers in Institutes of Technology. If one is to take into account the objectives of the SIF programme; the energy and input into the SIF process; the planned outcomes of the programme; and most importantly the impact on the sustainability of initiatives, the impact has been profound and will continue to reverberate into the future. It should also be remembered that the financial crisis has also impacted at an individual level in the form of reduced salaries and the intensification of the role of lecturers in institutes of technology.

The second policy/external issue that provides a backdrop to this research is current government policy with regard to higher education as outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 or Hunt report as it is generally referred to (DoES, 2011). The Hunt report is a comprehensive policy and operational framework for the development of the Irish higher education system. It follows important changes in higher education, discussed briefly in the introductory chapter, which have led to convergence among the Institutes of Technology including the bringing of all publicly funded higher education institutes under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority.

The report makes recommendations on a broad range of issues across higher education including teaching and learning; research; engagement; and the internationalisation of Irish higher education. However it is arguably chapter 8 of the report, in which the framework for the future development and evolution of higher education in Ireland, that is of most relevance to this study. It identifies a broad vision for collaboration and consolidation among and within higher education institutes and delineates boundaries within which this development and evolution will take place.
The report is unequivocal in stating that there will be no new universities under the provisions of the Universities Act 1997\(^4\). The report instead recommends the development of a process to allow Institutes of Technology that have emerged from a process of consolidation to apply for recognition as a technological university, however formal mergers between Institutes of Technology and universities should not be considered. This opportunity is one that has been embraced by some of the institutes and either rejected or deferred for decision by others.

Draft criteria for recognition as a technological university were outlined shortly after the publication of the Hunt report (Marginson, 2011). The draft criteria were then followed by The Higher Education Authority ‘landscape document’ “Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape” which provides more detail on how to achieve the broad objectives of the Hunt report (HEA, 2012). The landscape document confirms and reasserts the binary system and provides guidelines on developing regional clusters of higher education institutes. Arguably more importantly from the point of view of Institutes of Technology the document also outlines a four stage process for designation as a technological university and in an appendix outlines criteria regarding the levels of academic qualifications required by academic staff; requirements for engagement in higher degrees; and requirements with regard to research activity, (Appendix 7). The criteria implicitly acknowledge the evolution of Institutes of Technology and the development of higher degrees and research activity in the institutes and sets targets for the institutes or consortia for achieving technological university status.

\(^4\) Dublin Institute of Technology were unsuccessful in an application to be recognised as a university under section 9 of the Universities Act 1997. This process was initiated in 1996 and ended in 1999. Seven years later in 2006 Waterford Institute of Technology were also unsuccessful in their application under section 9.
It is in this context that three consortia have emerged involving 7 of the 14 Institutes of Technology, a further 3 Institutes of Technology have developed a strategic alliance, while the remaining 4 Institutes of Technology have expressed their intentions to remain as standalone institutes (HEA, 2013a)\textsuperscript{5}. As the Institutes of Technology continue on their respective paths the implications of the Hunt report and the HEA’s landscape document have generated debate and discussion on the role of lecturers in Institutes of Technology with reflection on the journeys taken and the road ahead.

The Hunt report (DoES, 2011) thus has an important role to play in the negotiation of professional identity and is directly relevant to the stories and narratives of the participants in this research, as the report and documents such as the landscape document (HEA, 2012) are suggestive of future changes in the sector and were current at the time the research was carried out.

As mergers in higher education were topical at the time the research took place literature on mergers in higher education will give important insight into experiences and issues that will influence the negotiation of professional identity at this time. Three of the four institutes in which the participants were chosen for this research are involved in one of the

\textsuperscript{5} Three groups of institutes are engaged in the HEA technological university process (HEA, 2013a) 1) Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, and Institute of Technology Tallaght; 2) Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee; 3) Carlow Institute of Technology and Waterford Institute of Technology; the strategic alliance consists of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology and Letterkenny Institute of Technology; while Athlone Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology, and Limerick Institute of Technology have expressed a desire to remain as standalone institutes with close links in their regional clusters, HEA (2013a).
consortia, the Dublin Technological University Alliance (DTUA\(^6\)) which make mergers a definite and live issue for the participants. Restructuring in higher education is not a new phenomenon with mergers noted as far back as the late nineteenth century in the United Kingdom (Harman and Harman, 2003). Harman and Harman (2003) note significant merger activity in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s and identify three waves of merger activity in Australia culminating in the abolition of the binary system and extensive institutional mergers in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Goedegebuure (2012) identifies well-documented cases of higher education systems experiencing large scale merger processes in the late 1990s and early 2000s including those of China; Flanders; Hungary; Norway and South Africa.

Different aspects of mergers among higher education institutes can be examined with Hatton (2002) and Nørgård and Skodvin (2002) examining the amalgamation of geographically dispersed institutions and the decentralized integration and re-distribution of power that resulted. There are parallels here with the DTUA as there are with the earlier amalgamation of higher education institutions in Northern Ireland in 1984 which also saw the amalgamation of four campuses – at Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown, and Magee college in Derry (Pritchard and Roebuck, 2009). Pritchard and Roebuck also discuss the issue of cultural differences focussing on the binary divide with institutes from both sides of the divide amalgamating to become a new university. Hatton (2002) also considers the impact of redesignation following the merger of two higher education institutes based at three

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\(^6\) The Dublin Technological University Alliance (DTUA) refers to a formal alliance of three institutes of technology from the Dublin region, Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, and Institute of Technology Tallaght. The alliance was established in October 2011 and is now known as TU4Dublin. The three institutions have been working together to develop a programme of work which will culminate in the submission of a joint application for designation as a technological university (TU4Dublin, 2015).
The issue of redesignation is pivotal to the merger of the DTUA. While all three institutes in the alliance are Institutes of Technology, DIT has in the past applied unsuccessfully for university status (Garvey, 2009). This along with its history and its size relative to the other partners makes it culturally different in many ways. The challenge of merging different cultures is examined by Harman (2002) who highlights the challenge of developing a new integrated culture of shared values and loyalties, attitudes and conditions of work. The challenge and practicalities of managing people through mergers in higher education is outlined by Cartwright et al. (2007) and by McCloy (2009).

In using Gee as a lens to examine the impact of proposed mergers on identity the I-identity will obviously be influenced by statements from and interaction with the management of the institutes and through discussion and debate in the media. D-identity will be foregrounded in the discussion and discourse among lecturers within their own institutes, the amalgamating institutes, the wider Institute of Technology sector and across higher education in Ireland and perhaps internationally. The influence of cross institutional groups and areas of collaboration will provide indications of the impact of the proposed mergers on A-Identity. N-identity will be foregrounded through discussion on the impact of changes on the individuals’ self-location in higher education and within their institutes.

### 2.4 Summary

This chapter introduces the concept of identity in the context of this research and outlines how the research is a study of the social aspect of identity. The chapter explores a theoretical framework for the study of identity proposed by Gee (2000), which identifies four different but related perspectives that can be used to study identity. This theoretical
framework provides the lenses through which professional identity is viewed in this research.

The structure of the chapter then follows the research questions outlining and discussing literatures with regard to the influence of discipline on professional identity and the fragmentation of academic identity in recent years. The impact of professional development on professional identity is explored as is the impact of policy decisions and external influences.

The next chapter explores a methodology for the study of professional identity of lecturers through the lenses proposed by Gee (2000).
Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study and initially looks at broad issues underlying the research and the motives behind the research before examining some aspects in greater detail.

Newby (2010) asks the question, “why do we do educational research” (p 8) and observes that on one level the answer is quite simple, yet on another it is more complex before outlining three broad reasons for doing education research,

- To explore issues
- To shape policy
- To improve practice

Whilst my motives for doing this research do not mirror the reasons as outlined by Newby they nevertheless suggest a way of reflecting on why I have chosen to research the professional identity of lecturers in Institutes of Technology. The motivation is exploratory in nature from a general sense as there are few studies of a similar nature in the context of Irish Institutes of Technology. It is not my intention to shape policy however the policy context in which the study takes place is influential and dynamic. From the point of view of improving practice the insights gained in this study may suggest ways of improving practice in the Institute of Technology sector of Irish higher education.

In outlining the broad motives behind the research it is worth revisiting the research questions to facilitate a refocus on these motives and the objectives of the research. The following research questions have been identified in attempting to gain such insight and understanding.
(1) What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the negotiation of professional identities?

(2) In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how do these relate to issues of professional identity?

(3) What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional identity construction?

To answer these questions and to address the aims of the research an appropriate research methodology is required. Decisions on the research method will be influenced by the aims and purposes of the research and the specific research questions that are identified (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). In considering various methodologies it is my view that a qualitative methodology using narrative inquiry is perhaps one of the most appropriate methods because it actually engages with the issues that are important in making sense about identity. Narrative inquiry allows individuals to narrate their identities and engage with the issues that are important to them in defining their identities. Narrative inquiry highlights the subjective meaning making nature of identity construction and gives access to those factors that are important to the individuals. The stories and narratives that emerge from the data also facilitate the analysis through the perspectives identified in Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework, due to its focus on the social aspect of identity.

Adopting such a qualitative methodology has implications with regard to the underlying assumptions and orientation of the research. Mertens (2010) argues that an understanding of the underlying philosophical assumptions in research is necessary to plan and conduct research and that a researcher’s philosophical orientation has implications for every decision made in the research process. Furthermore these underlying philosophical assumptions have implications for every decision made in the research process whether the researcher is aware of them or not.
3.1 Narrative

The term narrative; or narrative research; narrative analysis; or narrative inquiry is not readily defined and few writers attempt to do so. Polkinghorne (1988) states that the term “narrative” is equivocal and confines his use of it to the specific meaning of an organisational scheme expressed in story form. Robson (2011) observes that the term ‘narrative’ carries many meanings and is used in a variety of ways by different disciplines. Andrews, Tamboukou and Squire (2008) refer to this diversity of meanings stating that the definition of ‘narrative’ itself is in dispute with no self-evident categories on which to focus as there are with other methods and approaches. Lieblich, Tuval–Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) observe that the terms narrative and narrative research are used frequently in qualitative research, however it is rare to find a definition of these terms. Nevertheless they define narrative research as any study that uses or analyses narrative materials (p 2). Sarantakos (2013) states that narrative inquiry is the study of life stories, which tell about how people understand their lives and their world in general. Narrative inquiry is a form of interpreting conversations or stories with a focus on the embedded meanings and evaluations of the speaker and his/her context.

Earthy and Cronin (2008) and Gilbert (2008) locate narrative inquiry within a social constructivist paradigm allowing us to explore the socially constructed nature of the research process and the role stories play in the construction of identity. This reflects Connelly and Clandinin’s (1990) view that narrative is a way of characterising the phenomenon of human experience. A person is at once engaged in living, telling, retelling and reliving stories. The central task is grasped that people are both living their stories in
an on-going experiential text, and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others (p 4).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that humans are storytelling organisms who individually and socially lead storied lives, while Hervé (2006) notes that there is a narrative character in much of our sense making and understanding. Bold (2012) states that narratives necessarily tell the events of human lives, reflect human interest and support our sense-making process. Narratives have the ability to transform our lives and the contexts in which we live (pp 15 – 16). The approach to the research in this thesis requires insight into the subjective personal reflections (subjective meaning making) of lecturers, how they see their evolving professional identities and how they make sense of their lives in their professional context. Narrative research provides an opportunity to gain such insight through the stories and narratives of the interviewees. In this study the data was generated by means of semi-structured interviews that were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Furthermore the orientation of Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework to the social aspect of identity fits with the storytelling and narratives in the research.

Robson (2011) identifies narrative research as a family of approaches including biographical, autobiographical, life history and oral history approaches which focus on the stories that people use to understand and describe aspects of their lives. Narrative can be collected in different ways, for example field notes, journal records, interviews, storytelling and letter writing, and that it can be the object of the research or a means for the study of another question (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Lieblich, Tuvalu-Mishiach and Zilber 1998). The approach in this study is an autobiographical one with elements of life history, where
interviewees tell stories about their professional lives as lecturers in Institutes of Technology.

Interviewees (8) were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule and asked to recount their experiences/stories as lecturers. The first semi-structured interview schedule is included in Appendix 2. The interview schedule was informed by literatures on professional identity in higher education settings. These interviews were then transcribed and an initial coding and an initial analysis were carried out to identify themes and emerging narratives. The transcripts were then given back to the participants so that they had an opportunity to reflect and restory original accounts. A follow-on interview was then arranged to facilitate the restorying of the interviewees narratives. This second interview was also semi-structured and explored emerging themes and narratives identified in the first interviews. An example of one of the second interview schedules is included in Appendix 3. The final transcripts structured through the interview process adopted in this study gives a storied or narrative quality to the data as it captures the stories of the participants as prompted and guided through the interviews. The second interviews highlighted the negotiated and dialogic process of identity formation of the participants. Clandinin and Connelly (1989, 2000) argue that the retelling of stories allows for growth and change and that the construction of narrative experiences is a reflexive or dialogic relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story.

Narrative allows the research to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness. Narrative research aims for its findings to be well grounded and supportable – it aims for verisimilitude producing results that have the appearance of truth or reality (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Clandinin and Connelly (1991) argue that narrative as a
research method is less a matter of the application of a scholarly technique to understanding phenomena than it is a matter of ‘entering into’ the phenomena and partaking of them.

There are a number of methodological challenges in narrative inquiry (Andrews, Tamboukou and Squire, 2008; Bold 2012). There is no automatic starting or finishing point in narrative inquiry, this highlights the temporal and chronological nature of narrative. Clear accounts of how to analyse data are rare and there are no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation. There is also uncertainty about whether to analyse stories’ particularity or generality; or what epistemological or ontological significance to attach to narratives. The use of interviews, the approach taken in this research, is explored below in the context of narrative research.

3.2 Interviews

In addressing the research questions and gaining access to professional identities, narrative analysis is perhaps one of the most appropriate methods because it actually engages with the issues that are important in making sense about identity. What is required is a device or a means of accessing these narratives. It is important therefore to adopt an approach that is appropriate to the study, Bornat (2008); Butler Kisber (2010); (Rubin and Rubin, 2012) and Seidman (2013) outline a number of different devices or ways of analysing narrative including diaries, notebooks, interactive websites, and videos with varying methods of collecting data. Bornat (2008) categorizes the approaches to narrative into directly interventionist such as interviewing, to more detached approaches to the collection of data. Butler-Kisber (2010) identifies interviews as one of the main ways of eliciting stories or narrative accounts. This is the approach taken in this study. The use of interviews is an appropriate method because it gives access to the narratives of the participants and further,
it gives access into their insights, experiences, biographies and understandings of professional identity formation and development. Rubin and Rubin (2012) argue that when context and richness are important and when researchers argue that people construct their own realities based on their experiences and interpretations a naturalistic research tool is more appropriate (p 3).

Lindlof and Taylor (2011), state that interviews are particularly well suited to understanding the social actor’s experience, knowledge and worldview. Seidman (2013) states that we can learn through the experience of others and argues that interviewing is both emotionally and intellectually satisfying. The approach taken in this study was to use semi-structured interviews with 8 participants. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher flexibility in the order of questions to be asked and typically the researcher will have a number of questions and issues that are to be covered (Gray, 2009). They also allow the researcher probe the views, opinions and insights of the interviewees. This type of approach is consistent with the pursuit of subjective meaning making. Seidman (2013) refers to this as a phenomenological approach where the focus of the interviews is on the experience of the interviewees and the meaning they make of that experience. He also highlights the transitory nature of human experience and refers to the views of Heidegger (1962 in Seidman 2013) and Schutz (1967 in Seidman 2013) with regard to human lives being time bound and human experiences being fleeting. This notion of lives being time bound and human experiences being fleeting is particularly relevant due to the changing nature of higher education in Ireland at the time of the study and the fluidity and uncertainty in the Institute of Technology sector. It is also relevant from a methodological perspective due to the temporal and chronological nature of narrative.
All of the participants (8) were interviewed twice. The initial interviews were transcribed and an initial analysis was carried out with a view to identifying emerging themes and narratives, for example the narrative of autonomy. The transcribed interviews were then sent to the participants and a second interview or follow-on interview was arranged to enable the participants to restory their accounts and to reflect on the original interview.

Bornat (2008) highlights the interrogative nature of interviews through the questioning and soliciting of answers during the interview process. She does so to draw attention to the dialogic qualities of interviews and the significance of the relationship that develops. This dialogic dynamism is evident from the perspectives of both the interviewer and the interviewee. The second interview facilitated growth and change in the narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989, 2000). This highlights the reflexive and dialogic nature of narrative research and offered a way of privileging the ‘voice’ of the participants, enabling them to organise their experiences and providing them with a sense of themselves (Elliot, 2005).

From the interviewees’ perspective the transcript of the first interview stimulates a reflexive and dialogic process in which the interviewee can review his/her story and can alter, develop, or restory elements of the narrative, what is referred to above as ‘narrative editing’ (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998; Elliot 2005). From the perspective of the interviewer the interrogative nature of the interview gives the interviewer the opportunity to encourage the interviewee to develop and reframe the story through interrogative dialogue (Bornat, 2008).

In advocating interviews as a powerful way to gain insight into social issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues, Seidman (2007) also highlights interviewing as a method of enquiry that allows people to make
meaning through language that affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration. This reflects the collaborative nature of this study and the active roles played by both interviewer and interviewee(s). It also brings into focus the role of the interviewer in the interview process. It is argued by some that it is important that the interviewer is both silent and neutral in the interview. I do not hold this view and whilst care was taken not to influence the stories related by the participants and to reduce any bias in the interviews I am in agreement with Thompson (2000) and Bornat (2008) with regard to their observations that whilst the purpose of the interview is to elicit the stories of the interviewees it is neither possible nor desirable for the interviewer to be invisible or non-interfering. In developing these thoughts Bornat (2008) advocates the use of a second interview where the interviewer through prompting encourages the interviewee to develop and reframe his/her story through interrogative dialogue (p 351). This is the approach that was taken in this study as it made it possible to access insights, experiences, biographies and understandings of professional identity formation and development in a collaborative and inclusive way and gave voice to the subjective meaning making of the participants.

3.3 Research Sample

As outlined above this study uses interview accounts as narratives. To realise the objectives of the research it was necessary to identify and engage with participants who were willing to give up their time to be interviewed and to give accounts of their experiences and insights. Silverman (2013) recommends that we think critically about the population we are studying and choose our participants carefully on this basis. Participant selection should have clear rationale and fulfil a specific purpose related to the research questions (Cleary, Horsfall and
In thinking critically about the population and the possible participants the following criteria were considered as influencing the choice or selection of participants:

1. Lecturers in Institutes of Technology
2. Narrowing of institutes from 14 to 4
3. Access to lecturers in the 4 identified institutes
4. Decision to interview 2 lecturers from each of the 4 identified institutes
5. Need for cross disciplinary representation
6. Need for gender distribution

The rationale behind the criteria is obvious for some above, for example lecturers in Institutes of Technology and the need for gender balance are almost self-explanatory in the general context of the study. The issue that had greatest influence on the sample chosen was change in government policy driven by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) which is discussed above. One of the main thrusts of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) is the reconfiguration of Irish higher education and in particular the reduction of the number of Institutes of Technology. As a result of this particular policy shift, Institutes of Technology have reflected on their current status, future possibilities, and opportunities and threats with regard to amalgamation or merger with other Institutes of Technology. Driven by these possibilities and consequences all fourteen Institutes of Technology have reflected on future direction and status. The various decisions, statements of intent, and direction of future development are outlined in footnote 5 above.

The participants making up the sample are drawn from 4 Institutes of Technology in the Dublin region. The senior management teams from these 4 Institutes of Technology met prior to the publication of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) to explore possible amalgamation at a future date. Although the four institutes are geographically close to each other there are distinguishing characteristics and histories attached to all of them.
Since this initial meeting it has emerged that three of the original four have continued to work towards amalgamation and a future application for recognition as a technological university whilst one has decided to continue as a standalone institute for the immediate future. This makes the sample rich as it includes lecturers who are reflecting on what the impact of amalgamation will be and others who are reflecting on being outside this type of process. By taking a sample of lecturers from these institutes the study drills into the possibilities and consequences of the shifts and developments that have flowed and will flow from the Hunt report.

The decision to interview 2 lecturers from each institute gives a manageable sample and allows for the inclusion of different types of lecturers with different experiences, biographies and subject areas which gives a breadth and inclusiveness to the sample. Once the decision to interview two participants from each of the four institutes had been made other decisions fell into place such as the requirement or benefits to be gained from interviewing across disciplines (Henkel, 1997; Becher and Trowler, 2001) and evenly distributing male and female participants. The academic/vocational disciplines from which the participants were drawn are as follows:

- Business
- Computing (2)
- Engineering
- Film-making/Animation
- Graphic Design
- Science/Food Science
- Social Care

The only constraint to choosing participants other than those outlined above were the need to engage participants outside of my school in my own institute, thereby narrowing the options regarding disciplines when engaging participants in my own institution. Prompted by the progression panel prior to the undertaking of this research, issues around insider
research are considered below. The process of selecting sites and/or participants is influenced by the researcher understanding and taking into consideration the unique characteristics of specific research participants and the settings in which they are located (Devers and Frankel, 2000). Access to interviewees was facilitated in the main by contacts in the various institutes, sometimes referred to as gatekeepers. Participants in my own institute are known to me personally and were asked directly to participate.

During the initial phase of data gathering and analysis the participants were given two letter codes as a means of identification. Later in the analysis of the data these two letter codes were substituted with pseudonyms. This ‘naming’ of participants brought the stories alive and contributed to the development of the vignettes and portraits outlined below in chapters 4 and 5. The pseudonyms are outlined below and evidence of the two letter codes is apparent in Appendix 4.

The process of selection of participants is sometimes referred to as purposeful sampling (Freebody, 2003; Gobo, 2004; Silverman, 2013). The sample chosen for this study is purposeful because participants were chosen because they are purposeful analytical examples linked into the issue of a changing policy environment within the context of the negotiation of professional identities of lecturers in Institutes of Technology.

Gobo (2004) distinguishes between a sample and a representative sample. Due to the nature of this research the participants chosen could not be said to embody a representative sample, although they could be said to represent a sample of lecturers from the institutes involved in the research. It is not the intention of the research to obtain a sample that is representative as it would not be practicable or feasible to interview sufficient numbers of
lecturers to obtain what might be considered to be representative. What this research is focused on is to gain insight into the experiences of lecturers and not a ‘representative’ sample of lecturers.

The rationale for the ‘sample’ of participants is influenced by the nature of the research and the assumptions and worldview underlying the research. The concept of generalization associated with quantitative sampling is not under consideration in this research. The focus of the research is based on the idea of social representativeness which goes beyond the limits of statistical representativeness (Gobo, 2004). The following section considers the concepts of trustworthiness and credibility of the research from the perspective of inferences or generalizability of the research.

3.4 Trustworthiness and Credibility

This study sets out to access, examine and analyse the narratives of lecturers with a view to investigating how lecturers negotiate their professional identities. A qualitative approach is adopted in the research using narrative inquiry as the method. Rigour in the reporting of the findings of the research is essential if they are to be trusted and believed (Merriam, 1995). How then, does one determine the rigour or otherwise of this research?

Guba (1981) states that it is proper to select that paradigm whose assumptions are best met by the phenomenon being investigated. Here, as noted above, the research is concerned with subjective meaning making and is socially constructed. The appropriate paradigm in which to study subjective meaning making, sensemaking processes in which humans as social beings engage in, is a qualitative or naturalistic one, (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Lincoln, 2002). It follows that the measures of rigour appropriate to this naturalistic
or qualitative paradigm should be used in determining the rigour of the research. Therefore the constructs around which the rigour of the study is addressed are trustworthiness and credibility rather than traditional measures of rigour focusing on validity and reliability that are more appropriate in the quantitative paradigm.

Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) notes that hard, stable truth appears to be the dominant belief in the physical sciences while Polkinghorne (1988) argues that the general concept of ‘validity’ has been redefined by formal science and has become confused by the narrowing of the concept to refer to tests or measuring instruments (p 175). The notion of reliability in the context of quantitative research is associated with the replicability or stability of research findings (Golofshani, 2003; Elliot 2005).

Golofshani (2003) argues that although reliability is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, it is often used in all kinds of research. The use of the term ‘reliability’ has different meanings in quantitative research and in qualitative research. Whereas in quantitative research reliability is a concept to evaluate quality with a purpose of explaining, research reliability in a qualitative study has the purpose of generating understanding (Golofshani, 2003). Smith (2006) states that qualitative approaches cannot meet the standards that demand the technical procedures normally used in quantitative research. Webster and Mertova (2007) state that quantitative research is typically looking for outcomes and frequently overlooks the impact of experience, while narrative inquiry allows researchers to get an understanding of that experience.

As stated above validity is a requirement in qualitative research just as it is in quantitative research, however the measures or rigour of qualitative research are determined by
Within the paradigm of qualitative research, narrative research does not aim to produce any conclusions of certainty, but aims for its findings to be ‘well grounded’ and ‘supportable’, retaining an emphasis on the linguistic reality of human experience (Webster and Mertova, 2007). This link to the linguistic reality of human experience is highlighted by Polkinghorne (1988) who argues that narrative research operates in an area that is not limited by formal systems and their particular type of rigour. Narrative research cannot claim to correspond exactly with what has actually occurred and as a result the objective is to aim for verisimilitude or results that have the appearance of truth or reality.

What then are the standards and constructs that will determine the rigour of this study? Smith (2006) identifies constructs such as adequacy, fidelity, comprehensiveness, authenticity, which contribute to coherence and plausibility. Fidelity is a construct that is considered by Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) who identifies two aspects to fidelity as a criterion for practising and evaluating narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry may be construed as being in part moral and truthful in perspective, placing on the narrator a duty to adhere to truth or fact. The other side of fidelity requires the narrative researcher to retain an exactness of reproduction. Blumenfeld-Jones argues that without a factual base underwritten by an exactness of reproduction narrative inquiry would run the danger of wild speculation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the importance of trustworthiness in naturalistic or qualitative research posing the question, how can an inquirer persuade his/her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, or worth taking account of (p 290). Trustworthiness can be established through examining the “truth value” of the findings in addition to the applicability, consistency and neutrality of the inquirer.
Another construct that is considered in establishing the validity of narrative research is that of plausibility, how a story or narrative is judged to be credible or rings true (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1995).

One of the goals for the narrative researcher is that the story is one that may be read with meaning by others. The researcher wants others, an audience of other practitioners and researchers, to read narratively the one narrative presented in the research account (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989). Narrative researchers set out their narrative purposes and set out an appropriate context and then counsel readers to play the believing game to ascertain the truth of the story (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989 p 18). The evaluation of the story has a pragmatic dimension in the sense that its value depends on its capacity to provide the reader with insight and understanding. This is key to the trustworthiness and credibility of the research and will determine the usefulness or otherwise of this study.

### 3.5 Ethical Issues

There is an inherent responsibility in research to report findings in a way that matches the data and which upholds the reputation of the researcher and the research community (Gray, 2009). Gray (2009) outlines a spectrum of unethical behaviour including speculation, exaggeration, neglect, fabrication, and plagiarism (pp 542 – 543). The main ethical issues identified are the issues of making interpretations that are inconsistent with the data and making unrealistic claims about the validity and generalizability of the research.

The School of Education at the University of Manchester has published ethical practice policy and guidance for research (School of Education, 2011). The focus of the guidance is on individual rights and fundamental freedoms. There are two main implications of this
focus, firstly any study undertaken should be designed in a way that is cognisant of the rights of participants and secondly as researchers and practitioners, we have a duty to meet both these objectives (p 2). The ethical practice policy and guidance also outlines an ethical protocol which identifies principles of ethical practice for research in the School of Education. These protocols are listed below and then considered in the context of this study and the applicability of these principles to my research.

- Principle 1. Respect for human dignity
- Principle 2. Ensure integrity and quality
- Principle 3. Respect for free and informed consent
- Principle 4. Respect for vulnerable persons
- Principle 5. Respect for privacy and confidentiality
- Principle 6. Participation should be voluntary
- Principle 7. Procedures should avoid harm (School of Education, 2011 pp 3 – 4)

Principle 1. With regard to human dignity considerations with regard to age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, lifestyle and any other differences were minimal. The most obvious difference in any of the interviews carried out as part of the data collection in the research would have been sex/gender in four of the eight interviews as the interviewees were evenly distributed between male and female participants. I am not aware of any sensitive issues that would impact negatively on the human dignity of the participants.

Principle 2. In ensuring research integrity and quality there are, to my knowledge, no misrepresentations of the findings nor plagiarism or failures to acknowledge the work of others. Participants were given transcripts of the first interviews as part of the restorying
process and were empowered to make any changes they saw fit to the transcripts as originally transcribed.

Principle 3. In striving for open and transparent research all participants were approached either directly or through an intermediary to take part in the research. All participants were fully informed of the research and the research process and were given access to participant information sheets (appendix 8) and consent forms (appendix 9). All participants have been informed of their right to withdrawal from the research process prior to publication of the research.

Principle 4. No vulnerable persons were involved in the research or the research process.

Principle 5. Every effort has been taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Participants’ identities have been anonymised and measures have been taken to encrypt any data that has been stored and it is held in a secure manner.

Principle 6. No pressure or coercion has been placed on any of the participants and all participants have been informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage. No incentives have been offered to participants for engaging in the research.

Principle 7. The research was carried out in a risk free environment at the place of work of the participants during normal working hours. There were no threats to the well-being or interests of the participants and apart from the time given by the participants to engage in the research no demands on the participants have been made. At no stage during the research or research process was the researcher subject to harm or threat of harm.
In demonstrating research integrity the ethical practice policy and guidance for research outlines the need to establish the level of risk associated with the research. The level of risk associated with this research was established in consultation with my supervisor and was considered to be of medium risk. This is because it was considered that in rare instances the topic, professional identity of lecturers in Institutes of Technology in Ireland, may result in distress or upset. This was recorded in the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment form. In addition the main ethical issues identified in the School of Education Ethical Approval Application form were identified as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the opportunity to withdraw from the research process at any stage of the research without giving a reason. These issues have been addressed above.

The School of Environment, Education and Development has also published a postgraduate research handbook that outlines and identifies ethical guidelines, procedures and processes (School of Environment, Education and Development, 2013). These guidelines outline student responsibilities with regard to research integrity including following guidance from teaching staff, completing necessary actions in a timely fashion and reporting incidents that conflict with school ethics protocol.

The ethical practice policy and guidance can be supplemented by reading the relevant literature, for example Webster and Mertova (2007) writing on narrative inquiry as a research method identify similar principles to those identified above. As an overarching statement on the approach to ethics considerations and ethics practice Harrison and Rooney (2012) advocate a ‘wisdom informed’ view where social researchers consider the needs of
others carefully to try to find the right thing to do, endeavouring to understand others emotionally, intellectually, or otherwise, in a way that is not manipulative.

My approach to ethics throughout the study has been to endeavour to observe and preserve participants’ dignity, through keeping them informed both formally and informally of what the research is about and to give them voice in any report generated as a result of the study. I have strived to protect the identity and the privacy of the participants and as noted by Harrison and Rooney (2012) I have done so in a way that I believe has not been manipulative.

One final consideration from an ethical perspective is that of the independence of research. One of the minimum requirements of The Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) Research Ethics Framework is independence. The minimum requirements state that the independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit (ESRC, 2012 p 3). It is important therefore to discuss my position as an insider researcher in the context of independence, partiality and any conflict of interest. This is discussed below.

3.6 Reflections on being an insider

As part of the doctorate in education programme at the University of Manchester, students must attend a panel at which they present a paper outlining their research proposal. This panel paper is usually based on previous work completed as part of the EdD programme. At my panel the issue of insider research was raised in the context of my proposed research. Although I had reflected on my position as a lecturer, I had not thought deeply on my positionality relative to the participants in my own institute and later as my research moved
beyond my own institute. The discussion and subsequent recommendation from panel has caused me to think more deeply and reflexively on the insider-outsider issue.

The insider-outsider phenomenon is not a new one and historically has been associated with anthropology and ethnographic research. Mercer (2007) locates the concept of insiderness to the early 20th century studies by anthropologists like Malinowski and Mead, where the contrast between the white researchers and the “native” subjects of their research was marked. These early juxtapositions between the researcher and researched gradually began to change in the second half of the 20th century when sociologists began studying the familiar rather than the strange (Mercer, 2007). Merton (1972) adopts a structural conception of insiders and outsiders where insiders are members of specific groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses, while outsiders are the non-members (p 21). However, it becomes apparent when one begins to focus on social situations and structures that the insider – outsider issue is not a dichotomy. When I began to reflect on the social situations and structures around this study it immediately became apparent that it is not a question of insider – outsider. I am an insider as a fellow public servant and as a lecturer for example, but then as a manager I am an outsider when it comes to what my working day looks like compared to the participants. There are many other instances of similarities and differences between me and the participants.

When one focuses more closely on the dynamic and relationships between the researcher and the participants, the insider – outsider dichotomy becomes much more complex and difficult to define. Merton (1972) acknowledges this stating that in societies that are socially differentiated, individuals have a status set rather than a single status, which has implications for interrelationships, behaviour and individual perspectives.
It becomes apparent that the insider – outsider issue is multifaceted, layered and complex and the boundaries between insider and outside are not clearly delineated. Merriam et al. (2001) and Hellawell (2006) outline a range of variables that influence the insider – outsider issue, including but not confined to gender, social class, age, political affiliation, religion, region, grade, faculty, discipline. Mercer (2007) further illustrates the complex nature of this discussion by noting that some features are innate and unchanging, such as race and gender, while some features are innate but evolving, such as age, whilst still some other features are determined by time and place such as power relationships, personalities and the topic of research. This highlights the complexity of the issue and the difficulty faced in trying to define the position of the researcher as an insider relative to the participant.

Hockey (1993) refers to the position of the researcher relative to the participant as relativity, however a more useful term is that of positionality, a term used by Merriam et al. (2001) and Davies (2005). As outlined above there are a range of variables that will influence positionality which describes the insider relationship between researcher and participants. Hockey (1993) states that insiderness is always partial or limited and that there are different levels of engagement for the insider. This ‘partialness’ is determined by a number of dimensions that add to the complexity of the insider – outsider relationship. The dimensions identified are (i) cognitive; (ii) affective; (iii) social; (iv) temporal (Heinman, 1980, Quoted in Hockey, 1993 p 208).

Both Hellawell (2006) and Mercer (2007) suggest a way of conceptualising the relationship of insider and outsider. Rather than considering insider – outsider as dichotomous we should conceive of them as points on a continuum. In so doing we are more likely to value
both, recognising strengths and weaknesses in all contexts. This was helpful in my research as my relationship with participants changed on the basis of a number of variables including institute, gender and discipline. Sometimes, as observed by Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle (2009) I saw myself as an outsider, whilst at other times I felt like an insider. In my own institute for example I am interacting with fellow employees, however they work in a different school and are from different academic backgrounds to me so there are similarities and differences in the relationships. When interviewing a participant with a business background similar to me but working in a different institute, there are again similarities and differences depending on the variables being considered. In effect, if taking my insiderness relative to participants as a continuum, my positionality on this continuum changed depending on a range of different factors.

The strengths and weaknesses of being an insider are discussed throughout the literature, with the more obvious disadvantages such as bias, over-familiarity and ethical considerations with regard to confidentiality and anonymity, balanced by advantages such as access, shared experiences, confidence in, and credibility of the researcher. What has been important throughout has been an awareness of the advantages and disadvantages and equally how disadvantages can in certain instances be advantages and vice versa (Hockey, 1993). Mercer (2007) likens the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider to a double-edged sword and this is something that was considered as the data collection proceeded.

The literature has been useful and illuminating and aided by this and prompted by the discussion and feedback from the progression panel, as discussed above, I have approached the research with an awareness and consciousness of the multifaceted and layered nature
of my positionality as an insider. What has been important has been the need for constant reflexivity throughout the research as noted by Davies (2005) who highlights that there are times when the two positions of insider and outsider overlap and are frequently in a state of flux. As two of the eight participants were from my own institute this is something of which I was and am conscious of before, during and since the data collection. My proximity in terms of physically working on the same campus in the same institute with shared cultural and historical perspectives was/is balanced by seeking participants from outside my school and discipline area. In other ways, outside my institute, participants with a similar academic background and discipline are balanced by other differences highlighting how positionality shifts along a continuum as identified my Hellawell (2006) and Mercer (2007).

In constantly reflecting on my positionality and my status as an insider researcher I have been guided by Kanuha (2000) who observes that one must not assume that being an insider necessarily means the researcher has intimate knowledge of the particular and situated experiences of all members of the group. I have also been guided by the metaphor adopted by Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle (2009), that we can only ever occupy the ‘space between’ the insider-outsider position because my perspective is shaped by my position as a researcher.

As a researcher I cannot fully occupy an insider or outsider position and my positionality is constantly changing on a continuum between insider and outsider. Finally, as noted by Davies (2005) my position as insider has been one of privilege as it has given me access to participants with shared experiences. I have benefitted from increased credibility due to my background and this has led to a more intimate dynamic in the relationship between me the researcher and the participants.
3.7 Summary

This chapter alludes to the philosophical assumptions underlying this research and locates it in a qualitative methodology. The chapter outlines the use of narrative enquiry in the research establishing a justification and rationale for its use. The use of narrative enquiry and associated methods is fundamental to the research and facilitates access to the subjective meaning making and subjective personal reflections contained in the participants’ stories and narratives.

The chapter affirms the focus of the research on gaining insight and understanding of the experiences of lecturers and dismisses any attempts at establishing representativeness in any findings, emphasising instead the pragmatic dimension of the research whereby it can be read with meaning by others. The constructs of validity and reliability, associated with quantitative research, are subordinate and subsidiary to the constructs of trustworthiness and credibility in establishing and maintaining the rigour of the research.

The chapter outlines the ethical approach and processes observed in the research and concludes with a reflection on being an insider, prompted by the progression panel as part of the Doctor in Education (EdD) programme at the University of Manchester.

This chapter on methodology and the preceding chapter on the literature form the foundations of the research and inform and guide the analysis of the research data which is considered next in Chapter 4 and subsequently the discussion and conclusions in later chapters.
Chapter 4 Analysis

4.1 Analysis: The Approach

The departure point for the analysis of the research data is the themes that were identified through the research questions. The relationship between the research questions and themes is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below. The analysis is supported by the stories and narratives of the participants giving ‘voice’ to the participants as part of the research process (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Chase, 2005), outlined in Chapter 2 above. The research questions/themes provided structure for the analysis of the stories and narratives throughout.

Figure 4.1 Research Questions and Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiation of professional identities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do these relate to issues of professional identity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional</td>
<td>Policy Decisions and External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity construction?</td>
<td>Influences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of analysing the data was influenced by the method. To access the narratives and stories of the participants, each participant was interviewed twice with transcripts of the first interview sent to them in advance of the second interview. This process, as noted earlier, accentuated and privileged the ‘voice’ of the participants allowing them to restory their accounts/narratives. This stimulated the reflexive and dialogic process that is characteristic of narrative research and enabled the participants develop and reframe their stories through interrogative dialogue (Bornat, 2008).

The data gathering and the analysis was therefore influenced by the decision to interview the participants twice and consequently the analysis of data was iterative. The stages of the analysis are outlined below.
(a) Participants’ first interviews were transcribed.

(b) An initial analysis was made of the first interviews, identifying emerging themes and suggesting questions for follow-on (second) interviews. This initial analysis is outlined in Appendix 4.

(c) A second semi structured interview schedule was developed. This was not as structured as the first interview schedule and included customised questions for individual participants designed to clarify and build on the emerging stories of the participants. An example of one of these interview schedules is included in Appendix 3.

(d) First interview transcripts were sent to participants in advance of second interviews.

(e) Transcription of second interviews.

(f) First and second interview transcripts combined.

(g) Detailed analysis by research question/theme. The detailed analysis by theme is outlined in Appendix 5.

(h) Detailed analyses by participant. The output of these analyses are vignettes which are included in Appendix 6. The vignettes in turn were used as bases for the individual theorised narrative portraits outlined in Chapter 5 below.

The cross cutting approach to the analysis of the data, by theme and by individual is illustrated in figure 4.2 below. For the purposes of the remaining chapters of this thesis the participants have been given first name pseudonyms.

**Figure 4.2 Analysis**
The analysis of the narratives and stories is extensive and consequently the detailed analyses by theme and by participant are outlined in the appendices. Summary analyses of the three themes linked to the research questions are outlined below, with the detailed analysis of the themes included in Appendix 5 below. Following the thematic analysis of the data the cross cutting stories and narratives were analysed to create individual vignettes of the participants. These vignettes are documented in Appendix 6 below. These vignettes form an important part of the analysis as it is through the vignettes that individual pictures of the participants begin to emerge. These vignettes are used to inform the generation of the individual theorised portraits or mini cases in Chapter 5 below.

4.2 Theme 1. Discipline – Summary Analysis

In analysing responses to research question one it is apparent that there are links to discipline but very often the strength of these links is tempered with strong links to practice based experience with equal or possibly greater emphasis being placed on industry experience and knowledge as opposed to educational experience in the alma mater. This relationship with discipline and the relationship with industry appears to be influenced by the vocational and applied nature of the disciplines or subject areas of the lecturers.

This vocational or applied focus is illustrated by Aiden [animation/film-making] “all that matters... is what you’ve done; what’s on your reel; what projects you’ve been working with; who you have been working with” and Cathy [social care] “...it’s very much about teaching the practitioner, the emerging practitioner to be aware of personal and professional boundaries and how does that empowering and equality work out, or play out in the field.”. It is also evident from the stories that there is diversity in both the quantity and length of
industry experience and the time that has elapsed since the lecturer was actively engaged in the industry. There is a consciousness among lecturers with relatively short industry experience and/or whose active engagement in industry is not recent. This is reflected on by Dermot [engineering] “...very little industry experience really, went lecturing probably in retrospect maybe a little bit too early, you know I think another few years in industry would have been useful over the years in terms of depth of experience to call upon”. Nevertheless lecturers take pragmatic steps to address this perceived gap, as related by Beth [business] “...build a, be it a wealth of, be it examples or experience, or you talk to people, you know you spend a lot of time talking to people... ...and there was a lot of work involved in building up a knowledge of what’s actually happening in industry and you just know to do that and to talk to people. Just through contacts...”

Membership of professional bodies does not appear to be a significant factor in creating a sense of belonging to a discipline or in the creation of a disciplinary or professional discourse. While some of the participants are members of professional bodies, Andrew [computing]; Aiden [animation/film-maker]; Cathy [social care]; Colm [science/food science]; and Dermot [engineering]; their involvement is, in many cases, peripheral and limited by what many of them identify as time. Colm [science/food science] values membership of a professional body and articulates how important this association is, however he is pragmatic in demarcating his level of commitment and involvement “It’s moderately important. I’d probably like it to be a little bit more important but the trouble is when things are organised during the day, it’s usually the day or the morning you have four hours teaching... ...it is difficult to get to stuff during the day...” Dermot [engineering] is also pragmatic, even mercenary when it comes to membership of a professional body. One of the only reasons, if not the only reason, he is a member of a professional body is if he should
need or decide to change career. He is in fact quite critical of the professional body and does not take any of its values, nor does he identify strongly with the professional body.

Neither Beth [business]; Breda [graphic design]; nor Deirdre [computing] are members of professional bodies although they use informal channels and online professional groups such as LinkedIn to keep themselves up to date with developments in their respective disciplines. Nevertheless the link to industry is perceived as being important, especially in linking students to the discipline “…it’s [links with professionals from the industry] very important because it keeps me in touch with what’s going on in the business world and it provides me with opportunities to get those people in here to talk to the students… ...I’ve got a good few people in over the years, I just think it’s great for the students to hear what happens.” Beth [business]

There is a strong emphasis on the teaching aspect of their role with few, if any, of the participants involved in significant research relative to their teaching. This orientation around teaching is illustrated by the formal engagement in teaching and learning development with six of the eight participants having engaged in formal education/training in teaching and learning. The depth of engagement ranges from the completion of an EdD focussing on a specific issue followed by further action research, to engagement in single modules funded by SIF and other programmes in various higher education institutes.

The engagement in formal teaching and learning is indicative of strong identification with the teaching aspect of the role. “it really seemed to me there was a problem in teaching and learning in that we were getting students in who according to the leaving cert points weren’t
...as high, and they were failing, and were failing in particular, in software development.”

Andrew [computing]. It is also indicative of reflection on individual roles and an awareness of the changing nature of the role as the lecturer moves from practitioner to educator. This reflection and identification is articulated quite clearly by Aiden [animator/film-maker]

“That we all come in as discipline practitioners and only through teaching and learning do you get a perspective that... “wait a sec!” there really is another job here, another role as an educator. And I feel some of what I’ve learned in teaching and learning is applicable across disciplines.”

The focus on teaching and learning has had a reaffirming and fulfilling effect as evidenced by Breda [graphic design] “I think it’s all, all those things have made... obviously helped me... particularly the course I’ve just done in terms of... I suppose as a confidence builder in terms of well I’m actually doing a lot of those things anyway, I just didn’t realise they fitted under those teaching terms.”

The emerging narrative around research question one is that the professional identity of lecturers is characterised by a strong teaching orientation shaped and informed by practical, applied subject areas, with strong links to industry and practice, rather than discipline, with a distinct vocational focus. Students are at the core of this identity and there is an increasing awareness of, and commitment to, developing teaching and learning skills to underpin and inform this aspect of professional identity. “she’s a product manager etc. etc... ...I think we gave them practical skills... ...the one thing I like about the Institutes of Technology, you wouldn’t have got if you were in [university]...” Beth [business].
In analysing theme 1 discipline, a number of sub themes emerge strongly from the data. These sub themes are either foregrounded or privileged in the stories of the participants and it is apparent that it is around these important sub themes that much of the location and negotiation of professional identity takes place. For the purposes of this study these sub themes are referred to as constructs. The first construct is related directly to theme 1 with the remaining constructs also having strong links to discipline also. The constructs linked to theme 1 are listed and then outlined below.

- Discipline
- Professional Practice (Practice)
- Teaching
- Research

4.2.1 Construct 1. Discipline

One of the key factors in influencing professional identity that emerges from the data and stories is what can be called discipline, or subject, or knowledge domain. Identification with discipline is well established and is consistent with literatures on academic identity. What also emerges in addition to this identification with discipline and knowledge domain is evidence of the breaking down of these strong links which reflects more recent literature drawing attention to the fragmentation of academic identity.

This fragmentation in academic identity was evident in some of the stories and similar to Clegg’s (2008) observations of the emergence of hybrid identities based on practice based loyalties. These hybrid identities reflect the various backgrounds of the participants, for example Andrew states “I see myself as some sort of hybrid person” and Colm talks of the scientist/teacher/researcher aspect of his professional identity. The diversity of these professional identities which are shaped and framed by knowledge domain and practice based experience suggest that it is difficult to identify lecturers in Institutes of Technology.
as a single homogenous group. What also emerges in the narratives and stories is that there is a strong link to practice based experience that is linked back to knowledge domain and discipline. The strength of this link to practice based experience suggests a second construct, that of practice.

4.2.2 Construct 2. Professional Practice (Practice)

The importance of practice based or professional experience emerges in all of the participants’ stories and narrative. Even for those whose practice based experience is limited, there is discussion of the importance of the link to industry and individual strategies are adopted either to bypass the deficit or to enhance the student experience through linking directly to industry. The strongest link to practice is evident in Aiden’s story who draws on his practice based experience to inform his teaching. Despite his wholehearted embracing of his lecturing role he continues to identify as a film-maker. Other participants have strong links to practice also, with Colm’s observation that the skills he brings to the role as a former practitioner are equally as valuable as colleagues who have progressed through the academic route, a particularly prescient observation in the current environment with talks of technological universities and the importance of research in the future. Cathy’s vicarious link to service users in social care settings presents another link to practice, this time through Cathy’s involvement in practice based programmes where she prepares and supervises students on placement in these social care settings.

This link from discipline to practice based experience reflects the orientation of the Institutes of Technology to practical, vocationally focussed programmes. This orientation is rooted in the historical development of the Regional Technical Colleges and suggests that this orientation is something that is highly valued by lecturers. This orientation is strong and
unequivocal in the majority of participants and, as stated above, is evident even in the participants who do not have extensive practice based experience.

4.2.3 Construct 3. Teaching
Closely linked to the orientation of the Institutes of Technology to practical, vocationally focussed programmes is the focus on teaching that emerges through the stories of the participants. This strong hook into teaching is evident even for those who identify strongly with their professional or practice base. Hazelkorn and Moynihan (2010) maintain that teaching is a defining characteristic of the institutes.

The commitment to teaching and improving teaching through reflection on teaching methodologies and pedagogy and a strong commitment to students is the theme that comes closest to a unifying theme and is threaded through all of the stories. Within this strong commitment to teaching are different perspectives and approaches highlighting the diversity in the ways in which the participants privilege their teaching. This builds on research carried out by Åkerlind (2007) suggesting different qualitative approaches to growing and developing as teachers in higher education, particularly evident in the stories of the participants who reflect differing approaches. The different qualitative approaches adopted suggest that the participants combine different aspects of their identities to focus on student learning and the student.

4.2.4 Construct 4. Research
Even though research is not identified by the 8 participants of this study as being a significant part of their current roles, it is nevertheless identified by the participants as an area they all anticipate will become increasingly important in the future as higher education in Ireland continues to evolve. It is also identified through the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and the
landscape document (HEA, 2012) as becoming increasingly important for Institutes of Technology that engage in the process of applying for recognition as technological universities. It could be argued that research should not be included as a construct around which professional identity is negotiated. However, given the merger talks between 3 of the 4 institutes from which the participants have been drawn, their stated intention to apply for technological university status and the suggested changes in the structure of higher education in Ireland, research is and will continue to be a construct around which professional identity is negotiated even if there is little or no engagement or ambition to engage in research on an individual basis. It may even be that some lecturers may negotiate their professional identity in opposition to research. This is evident in Beth’s preference for teaching as opposed to research.

4.3 Theme 2. Professional Development – Summary Analysis

Professional development is influenced by a number of factors. The more important factors identified by the participants are the nature of discipline, the range and level of experience in industry, and the emerging level of interest in developing skills in teaching and learning.

Both Andrew [computing] and Deirdre [computing] highlight on-going and extensive engagement in keeping up-to-date with developments in their discipline/subject area “...computing has changed so radically. Moving into this area, so for example, Apple devices and iPads and all that kind of stuff, and iPhones just to keep up to date say with development software for those platforms is a lot of work. You need, you know, you need an Apple PC, you need X code and it’s in a language called objective C and you’ve got to master that and you know learning a programming language is akin to learning, you know, a real world language, maybe not as complex, but you need to, do it and to get the time to do it.” [Andrew] “…obviously I would do a lot of subject based training. I use an online
training tool called lynda.com so I do a lot of stuff like that for my own learning, subjects to keep up-to-date.” [Deirdre] In contrast Aiden [animator/film-maker] has relatively little formal education or training and has relied on developing skills on an ad hoc basis “because I come from industry and I was a practitioner as we all were, most of the lecturers here in animation, or in many of the disciplines, we’re very, you know we’re practitioners in our particular discipline, none of us are taught to teach, none of us are lecturers.” It should be noted that Aiden has addressed his lack of formal academic qualification by completing a degree at a UK university and is currently attempting to complete two masters’ degrees, one in his discipline and a second one in teaching and learning.

Of the eight participants only one, Andrew [computing], has completed a doctorate [EdD]. One participant Cathy, [social care] is currently on a break from a PhD programme. Beth [business] is not interested in completing a PhD “I couldn’t see myself devoting a huge amount of time to doing a PhD. I much prefer doing something maybe smaller... another little case study....”. Dermot [engineer] sees a PhD as the logical next step in his career, however he believes it is too late in his career for him to be making such a commitment. Breda [graphic design] would consider a PhD, however the route to doctoral studies is unclear in her subject area. Colm [science/food science] sees his future development in teaching and learning and Deirdre [computing] perceives her development from the point of view of developing research and supervision skills however does not indicate whether this direction will lead to pursuing a PhD.

Despite the lack of progression towards higher qualifications there is considerable engagement in professional development. Aiden [animator/film-maker] as noted above is engaged in two masters’ programmes. Breda [graphic designer] is engaged in a certificate
in teaching and learning while Colm [science/food science] is involved in on-going interaction with the teaching and learning function at his institute “I would have 1 to 2 sessions a year with the learning technology people sitting here. Getting them to bring me up to speed because if I can’t use this stuff, no matter what, I know I’m gonna be a dinosaur for next September’s first years. So, the more of that I do and I suppose the more confident I’m becoming...” and is looking forward to developing aspects of his subject area. “We get a lot of encouragement from management... in my own area the... management are probably going to cough up the money in the next year or two to send me off to become an accredited... off to do the accredited auditor course...”

What is emerging from the stories however is a lack of coherence and structure for professional development within the institutes and a lack of consistency in the allocation of resource to the development of lecturers. The resource in question is time and fees for programmes undertaken by lecturers. Andrew [computing] highlights the inconsistencies within the Institute of Technology sector and the disparity with the university sector “I went with a colleague from [another IOT] and a girl from [a university] who were lecturers there. My colleague in [other IOT] got all his fees paid. Right. The girl in [university] got all her fees paid, plus expenses to go. I got one quarter of my fees paid and I had to pay the other three quarters myself. So while I understand why that was. And I’m... we didn’t have a budget and what budget had to be evenly distributed among the staff so it only came to a quarter of my fees. It is a bit, I was a bit irked by the fact that other people get their full fees paid. He also got a reduction in hours, as did she. I got no reduction in hours, so I didn’t feel there was much support in that.” This lack of coherence and structure is evident across all the institutes with the possible exception of one of the institutes that has a dedicated and well-resourced teaching and learning function. However even here there is uncertainty and a
lack of clarity with regard to what lecturers can expect in terms of fees paid, whether it is up-front or on completion of programmes, and in terms of time off to support lecturers when undertaking further study “We used to get time off, I think that isn’t as available anymore. We used to get even some partial funding so there would be quite a lot of supports in that regard.” Cathy [social care]

A further issue highlighted in the stories is the failure of many lecturers to avail of opportunities to develop through further study or research. This is identified by Aiden [animator/film-maker] “Now the thing about it is, very few of the lecturers avail of it, you know, there are lecturers, I don’t know what percentage, but again it’s a huge problem that, and it’s a huge problem across the sector I realise that a lot of lecturers are just concentrating on doing the job, they do their teaching and they do their assessments and they do that very well and the rest of it.” Andrew [computing] also identifies lecturers as having a role to play in identifying and defining their professional development needs “… I suppose professional development in many ways has to be driven by the needs of the professionals and maybe the professionals are not articulating those needs to the teaching and learning people in a formalised way… It has to be driven by the staff saying “I need training in this particular technology or this particular software.””

The lack of coherence and structure for professional development is an issue that is not associated with an individual or group and appears to be one that is difficult to define. This can be seen in Andrew’s reflections which as noted above reveal frustration at the lack of support he received both in terms of financial support and time when he completed his doctorate in education. Andrew later discusses this lack of coherence and ad hoc nature of professional development and acknowledges management’s positive contribution “There’s
coherence and incoherence... I think management have been very open to it and have tried
to put in place these structures... So, I think it is in some ways ad hoc, but quite well meaning.
And I think it’s ad hoc in terms of funding as well in that funding models appear to be
different in different colleges and different circumstances. However, I do think that the
management in general are very supportive of people engaging in development and I think
that goes a long way.”

There is also inconsistency in the implementation of the performance management
development system (PMDS) across the institutes with some lecturers actively engaging in
PMDS while others are apparently not engaging in the process. PMDS was introduced as
part of a partnership process between the Institutes of Technology and the Teachers Union
of Ireland (TUI). It was suspended by TUI in the aftermath of the Croke Park Agreement
(DPER, 2010) but was subsequently reinstated. Nevertheless PMDS is very positive for those
who are actively engaged in the process giving direction and support to Colm [science/food
science] “I was just discussing this with my management in my PMDS last week, I am very
keen to stick with the direction I have chosen. I mean, I took a while to settle on it, it was
something that came on gradually rather than having a eureka moment but I’ve made a
reasonable degree of progress.” Deirdre [computing] considers PMDS a valuable tool in
giving direction and structure to her career. “I think coming from industry, I was used to a
full PMDS structure and I think going back to the whole career path, that’s what you need in
order to structure your career, I mean you need reviews at the end of the year.”

This lack or absence of structure and cohesion is perhaps evident from responses to one of
the interview questions with regard to responsibility for professional development “To what
extent do you think you are the driver of your own development?” Most of the participants
were definite in stating that they themselves were mostly responsible for their development. Only one participant, Deirdre [computing] reflected on the shared responsibility or collaborative nature of professional development with her Head of Department “I would say I am very much the driver of my own development, to a certain degree. I tend to, as my department head said to me, look at it Deirdre as a white canvas and you decide what area you want to work in, and we will try to fit that in…”

The internalisation of professional development is possibly reflective of the autonomy of individual lecturers which emerged early in their stories. It could also be indicative or symptomatic of another issue that is identified relating to the lack of a structured career path and framework within which lecturers can develop. Andrew [computing] highlights the lack of opportunity for advancement “I would have just as good a chance as anybody else. But what I mean is that there is no career path… there are no positions opening up for me to apply to… There’s one senior lecturer, one head of department, the head of department’s there for life, great guy, but there’s never going to be a place. Unless you move institute and that means uprooting your family, and moving around, whatever!” Dermot also highlights this deficit and in so doing also identifies the inherently intrinsic nature of professional development in Institutes of Technology where the lack of motivating factors can have the effect of inhibiting professional development “I suppose the trouble is that maybe within the system, there’s only a couple of things you can do, in a sense. Once you’ve gone through those, which you will probably do relatively early in your career, if you’re going to be in the career for 30 or 40 years, once that happens there really isn’t an advancement route. Now there would be an advancement route, obviously with a new college like but, when I would’ve been in the years I was in there would have been one or two senior lecturer positions within… and once they were filled, they were filled for 25 years or
30 years, and they only would’ve obviously freed up once those people retired. So therefore, maybe there’s a point where there are so many things that might motivate you to do something else, unless it’s for your own personal choice like to go away and do another degree, or go away and do something else. But once… it’s a quite structured system and even doesn’t have much say in that. There’s the salary scale and once you’ve had all your increments and so on, so and there are certain roles and it is unlikely that there will be a lot of movement within those roles because of the structure.”

The emerging discourse around research question 2 is that lecturers engage in professional development in a number of ways and their engagement is driven by a number of factors including discipline or subject area. There is a lack of coherence and structure around professional development in Institutes of Technology that is impacted by a number of factors including inconsistency in resourcing and managing professional development. The NFETL was established in 2012 concurrent with the interviews and data collection, however the NFETL does not figure in any of the participants’ stories. The inconsistent implementation of PMDS contributes to the lack of coherence and structure despite being a positive source of direction and support for those who engage in the process. Professional development can be left to the individual with few if any interventions by management. A further constraint on professional development is the lack of opportunity for advancement and the effective absence of a structured career path.

The consequence of these factors leads to a reliance on intrinsic motivation to drive professional development that is dependent on the professionalism and energy of individuals. This is consistent with an active and autonomous body of lecturers, however it
is also susceptible to disengagement and a lack of direction and coherence at individual, departmental, school and institute levels across operational and strategic dimensions.

As noted above in the analysis of theme 1, sub themes or constructs have emerged in the analysis of the overall themes identified in this research. The second theme, theme 2 professional development has a directly related construct that of professional development (Development). This is discussed below.

4.3.1 Construct 5. Professional Development (Development)

Professional development is a construct that plays an important role in the dialogic process of negotiating professional identity and flows directly from theme 2, Professional Development. There are a number of aspects of professional development that are relevant for lecturers including the development of knowledge domain skills; or teaching skills; or developing new dimensions such as research skills. The ways in which the participants invested in their own development so as to improve their discipline and subject skills and their teaching is notable as there was a diversity in approach which further illustrates the dialogic nature of the negotiation of professional identity.

The research analysis suggests that there is a fundamental interest in professional development among lecturers and that it is a normal and ongoing project, thus adding to existing literatures on professional development. In addition this research highlights the intrinsic and highly individualised ways in which lecturers engage in professional development and that if support and funding through initiatives such as SIF is provided, they will engage and participate. It also suggests that lecturers value their autonomy when seeking to develop aspects of their professional identities.
4.4 Theme 3. Policy Decisions and External Influences – Summary

Analysis

A number of aspects of external influences on identity construction were explored in the stories. Change is foregrounded by many of the lecturers as having impacted on them. For the most part change is discussed from the perspective of the participants’ day to day roles. Many of the participants highlight increased hours as a result of the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) agreement as having a significant impact on their work. This is discussed by Andrew [computing], who uses strong language to articulate his frustration and sense of injustice “now it’s got harder in the last year or two... I personally find the increase in workload with the extra couple of hours just, a tipping point... now, I’m just so burnt out, so busy all the time. No time to, to prepare, or to... well I could give you lots of little examples. But I suppose it’s like. Just to do the background reading or to, to deal with student queries, it’s just so busy, there’s no time, it’s rushing from one class to another without really the time to prepare and to focus... I think the job is being poisoned a bit by it... I can see the reason for it, I understand that, but I think it’s......... I don’t think it’s, it’s a good approach, I think there might have been better ways to deal with that, I think some academics don’t do a lot of work, it might have been a good idea to look at their productivity and look at them as a group rather than blanketly roll out the thing across everybody.” Colm [science/food science] is also unhappy with the increased hours and while not as strident as Andrew, still feels strongly about this change “We’ve had a very, we have had a favourable culture, over here up to I would say, it’s finally hit on the head now, I’d say the workload with the pretty much, with the last year, with the extra 2 hours has made me realise there was a very good reason we were teaching 16 hours or equivalent now we’re at 18 it is simply too tight for me to try to manage. 18 hours or equivalent is very serious work commitment, and there are bits that I am not able to do as I would like to do.”
The increasing numbers and declining ability levels of students coming in are also highlighted by the participants as being a significant change. Beth [business] links the falling ability of students to falling levels of engagement “there’s a huge difference between, you know, students coming in on 220 points and students coming in on 300 points. That’s the first thing, and we’d see a huge difference with students on level 8, versus level 6, one time the difference wasn’t so great... we’re really noticing it now.” “whereas we have more students now that honestly, you know, would find it difficult to give you good examples, so you end up, you end up imparting more and more examples, a lot more comes back... and sometimes I feel as well that students aren’t, some students aren’t, you know, as proactive.”

In reflecting and restorying her account Deirdre [computing] links weaker students and higher numbers of students to more demanding work “I’ve said no, but I actually would like to change that, I think, yes it has changed to some extent, it’s got a lot more demanding, there’s higher student numbers, in many cases weaker students, because we’re taking in students with lower points than we were, more clinics, there’s more programming clinics, we need to look at ways to reduce retention (sic), keep students going, so there’s a lot more handholding I think, which is good.”

In locating the source or drivers of these changes the immediate academic managers are not perceived as being the source of these changes. It is other outside influences that are associated with these changes. Andrew [computing] perceives an impact on his professionalism “But, it seems to me over the last 2 years there has become a disconnect between the, ...goals the higher management want, and the staff, the academic staff there’s a real them and us... what would you call it culture, not culture, but feeling has developed. Non-stop staff are complaining about management all the time. Since they don’t believe
management understand their job and it seems the professional role of lecturer has been belittled, or is not considered important, or that they’re not seen as professionals who can manage their own time to deliver service to customers, but rather as people that have to be micro managed, and that you know if we don’t micro manage them they won’t do any work rather than seeing them as professionals who will deliver a professional service.” Cathy [social care] also sees change being driven by forces outside her department “I think that at a higher level outside our department at [redacted] that that is something that is coming down the line. I think that in our school there is a lot of autonomy and trust imparted, and rightly so... It hasn’t changed that much currently, but I think it possibly can and will in the future.”

When participants were asked to discuss their understanding of the terms ‘managerialism’ and ‘performativity’, apart from Cathy [social care] none of the participants were familiar with the terms. What appears to be happening is that the participants feel that there have been many changes to their roles and have discussed this in many ways, however there is no central thematic discourse on what is driving these changes and where these changes are coming from. So while the participants can articulate their concerns, there is no common language to describe the changing environment in Institutes of Technology and in the wider higher education system. Deirdre [computing] sums up these changes quite succinctly “we are looking at reduced pay, more hours, greater numbers of students and less resources.” There is an acknowledgement that many of the changes are being driven by the dire economic circumstances facing Ireland since the financial crisis, however as Dermot [engineering] points out, these changes have been happening for a long time “there’s a lot more things that you’re linked into like through programmatic reviews and even course board meetings twice a semester and so on. I mean in the past there mightn’t have been, all that would’ve been probably very informal, possibly quite infrequent, whereas now it is
structured so, yes you are managed in the sense that these are things obviously part of the job and you’re engaging with like you know, so that would probably be slightly more managed than it would have been in the past.”

Many, but not all, of the participants see themselves as being distinct and bounded for example Cathy [social care] “Yes, I think we are, I think that maybe we’re more recognised in some sectors of society than others,” Aiden [animator/film-maker] also sees himself as being distinct and bounded but makes the link with his subject area also “in both counts I do, as a film-maker I know I’m in a highly differentiated position there, and then as a lecturer in this sector, I, you know, I do value the autonomy we have, and the kind of lecturing we do in our faculty, you know it’s all… you know, this is what I’m saying, on a sectoral level even, I think, I’ve great confidence, that we’re, you know we do things in ways that other people don’t do, and we’re very lucky in that sense, you know.”

Most of the participants make the obvious connection to the public service and highlight the poor perception of public servants and the negative portrayal of the public service in the media. Colm [science/food science] is resentful of this portrayal by the media “as a public servant, yes. We’re getting a lot of stick in the media and I resent that. We didn’t cause the problem, we are not responsible for having caused the problem. We have made no contribution to the problem, and we are paying a hell of a price for it.” Aiden [animator/film-maker] shares this negative view of the media “I think there are a lot of people, a lot of people in our society are very, not only non-responsive, but they’re very anti the public sector, at the moment. I think to be honest, you know, there’s a point, I think a lot of what they are saying is despicable, you know to be honest personally, I think a lot, an awful lot, of it is driven by, the absolute complacency, idiotic complacency of the media.”
Despite the negative publicity and public sentiment towards the public service in general the standing of educators is something that is seen as positive despite this negativity. This positive image of education is identified by Dermot [engineering] “I think people still have an inherent respect for teachers and teaching and education, whether they, you know, they may have issues with the system, or how the system works, or, you know, what happened to their Johnny when they were in college or something like that. People still value education, certainly in Ireland anyway, a lot of statistics you see coming back, and papers and stuff, seem to see that we value it so therefore, you’re, you know, you’re seen, it’s an important job, it’s not seen as a trivial job or a luxury job that the country doesn’t necessarily need.” Deirdre [computing] also discusses this positive public perception of educators “there is a lot more interest in the whole area of third level education and I think people have more of a respect for lecturers.”

Most of the participants are broadly in favour of policy changes as suggested by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and the “Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape” document (HEA, 2012). Beth [business] is sceptical of these possible changes however “…would there be notions then of university status, sure we weren’t set up for that. I think universities should be universities and maybe be better universities. And I think we should be Institutes of Technology, and be better Institutes of Technology and... we were set up for a reason... we were set up to bridge a gap, a huge gap there for people that didn’t either want to go to university or weren’t suited to going into university, and we’ve been doing that really well…” Nevertheless most of the participants are positive about the possible implications with some including Cathy [social care] and Colm [science/food science] taking pragmatic stances “well I think you have to look at the overall socio-economic picture. We’re a small island, there’s...
a lot of institutes now, of technology, just in Dublin, if we just look at Dublin, there are a lot servicing a small population demographic, so where is the need... And then you look at the economics what’s the cost-benefit analysis to the country, and surely it makes sense then that economically we amalgamate and I don’t like to say downsize, but streamline to the need required rather than mushrooming everywhere and no specific strategy there to what need you are meeting that that has been overestimated... it’s very... well I would think this amalgamation will put some strategy on it.” Cathy [social care] “I think it’s a good idea, because I think for far too long we’ve had, we’ve been, education has, third level education has been far too fragmented. You have effectively 5, is it? 5 universities... I think that’s crazy, I think we should have, that is far too many players, all doing something quite similar and I mean, I think in this day of instant almost instant communication that it makes no sense for a small country with scarce resources to be spreading itself that thinly.” Colm [science/foodscience]

There is positivity even when anticipating changing roles in the future as highlighted by Deirdre [computing] “So from a student perspective yes, and from a personal perspective, it does, hopefully it will lead to more interesting things rather than just teaching, teaching, teaching... There will be a lot more collaboration, I would hope a lot more collaboration with the other players. Yes, my role would probably change, to a certain degree it will still be a teaching college, I mean we’re very much a teaching college. I can’t see it changing that much, however I do know they want a higher proportion of people with PhDs and research, but I’m not too sure how that would pan out, given the fact that we’ve massive teaching hours.”
There is also caution in considering the implications on the structure and function of the institutes and their role in the context of higher education in general. This is identified by Andrew [computing]: “If we move to a university, and I suppose this is coloured by my own couple of years there. And I know a technological university is slightly different from the traditional model, but my own experience of the people in university is that they didn’t really care about the teaching and learning or in fact the industry approach, their idea of their career was in how much they published and their research output and how good that was. Which is fine but I think there’s a place, especially in an economic downturn for a skills based approach, not just training but skills based education... I can see rationalisation advantages, cost advantages, I can see advantages of bringing a bigger pool of people together, and having a critical mass, I can see all that. But I wonder about the role over time, do we need another?”

In discussing possible changes it was difficult to get the participants to discuss the broad issue of change in higher education with many of the participants discussing change in a personal or micro context. Breda for example is positive about possible structural change but is also conscious of her own future within any new structure: “Probably I wouldn’t feel remotely... I know threatened isn’t the word. I’d sort of see it as an exciting opportunity really, in terms of an alliance with a much bigger university. Opportunistically it possibly would be very good, as long as I don’t lose my job... I’d be very interested in working as part of a bigger organisation because I just think it could present a lot of good opportunities for the course.”

There is a broad sense of perspective and hierarchy in participants’ discussion of the relationship between universities and Institutes of Technology. This is highlighted by Cathy
“I think that very often the universities are like the upper class and we’re like the middle class. It’s not a bad thing, we’re servicing the sectors, we’re engaged with industry, be it engineering, be it science, be it the school of economics, social care, we’re engaging at that level.” This hierarchy is also identified by Aiden [animator/film-maker] “I think, we definitely see the universities as being, there are no hierarchies but we definitely see them as being hierarchically above us, there’s no doubt about it. And they certainly think... would see themselves as being hierarchically above us... I don’t think we have massive comprehension of how the university lecturers are working or what their conditions are but I think one of the massive differentiations for us is that we’re quite conscious that universities do huge amounts more research than we’re doing, and a huge amount more of publications than we’re doing.”

The contribution of the Institute of Technology sector is nevertheless one that is valued highly by the participants, this is summed up well by Colm [science/food science] “we’re a slightly different breed. We do a different, slightly different job... But my experience you see before I was here was in industry and I... if the organisation is losing anything, it’s an appreciation of that. Because I can read the literature as well as, or almost as well as my colleagues who have PhDs or who are doing PhD research. But those who do..., I don’t think there’s anybody who has a PhD and industry experience and I think we’re in danger of losing that, a little bit, and it’s interesting that those who do most teaching on the masters’ courses are the people... not the ones most qualified on paper but the ones who’ve industry experience. Because we can relate to their environment, their problems.”

Another way in which Institutes of Technology are seen as being distinctive by the participants is with regard to their economic and social relevance. Beth [business] identifies
Dermot relates this economic and social relevance to the historical development of the Institutes of Technology from their regional technical colleges (RTC) roots, “I think the social relevance may always there, within the history of the RTCs were kind of set up to bring people into education, who wouldn’t have necessarily come from that background and I think like where is situated now, that’s still a big huge social function that the college exists for, you know, and then from an economic point of view we’ve had... people who didn’t do a fourth year degree because, you know, they are just getting offers from industry, so to go and work, so the relevancy is definitely still there. You know we are producing the people that people want and they’re crying out for, so from an economic development point of view in the country like we’re even, and a social point of view we’re still ticking very very important boxes, like we’re not, we’re very much focussed. I think that most of the students that come through here are... would be very employable and immediately an asset to the workforce. So yes, I think that we’re good at that, we mightn’t always be good at some other things but I think those things... it’s probably very relevant.”

The impacts of policy decisions and external influences that are being foregrounded by participants are changes in pay, in hours worked, in increasing student numbers and
declining levels of ability which are symptomatic of the massification of higher education. There appears to be an absence of discourse around managerialism and performativity that is impeding discussion and debate about the nature of higher education in Institutes of Technology and in the wider society and global environment.

There is positivity about change in government policy with regard to the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) accompanied by concerns around the loss of the traditional focus and orientation of Institutes of Technology and a fairly clear sense of where Institutes of Technology stand in the overall higher education system especially relative to the university sector. While much of the discussion of policy and external influences was discussed at a micro level there is a clear sense of confidence in the benefits and contribution that Institutes of Technology make to society and a clear sense of positivity and progress with a willingness to embrace change.

In analysing the third theme, Policy Decisions and External Influences, it is apparent that there are a number of issues that have an overarching impact on how the participants story their professional identity. Whilst these external influences impact on the participants they do not take shape as sub themes or constructs as discussed above. The temporal nature of some of the external influences are a possible reason for this. One sub theme however, that of the importance of the institute within the community or region in which it is located, emerges as a construct. The emerging construct is identified as Community Orientated Values and is outlined below.

4.3.1 Construct 6. Community Orientated Values (Community)

The importance of the institute to the region or area in which it is located has emerged as a facet of identity that was highly valued by the participants and is linked to the historical
development of the Institutes of Technology as regional technical colleges. The colleges were set up originally in 1970 as regional technical colleges and have been historically associated with their region and immediate hinterland. More recent years saw the establishment of colleges in urban areas with a remit of widening participation.

During the data collection phase of the research this regional or local importance of the institutes was not explored directly in the interviews with participants, mainly due to the fact that the participants were drawn from 4 institutes located in Dublin\(^7\). The Greater Dublin region is served by 4 of the 13 institutes of technology and 4 of the 7 universities and it was assumed at the outset of the research that the regional issue would not be identified as being important as the Greater Dublin area is well served by higher education institutes. Nevertheless, emerging from the stories and narratives was an awareness and commitment to serving underrepresented regions and groups. The importance of institutes to the areas in which they are located and their role in reaching underrepresented groups was clearly privileged by some of the participants. The participants identify important aspects of the institutes that make them viable and necessary in addressing specific needs. Several of the participants, most notably Andrew, Aiden, Beth and Deirdre are clear in their focus on the role of the institutes to specific areas. Beth in particular has a very strong link to this ‘regional’ or ‘community’ role and sees future prospect of mergers and technological universities as a threat to this community focus.

Despite not exploring the regional importance of Institutes of Technology directly it has emerged strongly in the research pointing to its privileging by the participants and

\(^7\) The Greater Dublin area accounted for almost 40% (39.3%) of Ireland’s total population of 4,588,252 in the latest census (2011) (CSO, 2015)
consequently it has been included as a construct around which professional identity is negotiated.

Community Orientated Values brings the number of constructs identified to 6. In identifying 6 constructs it is important to identify what has possibly been left out and to justify this exclusion. There are two constructs that could possibly be added to those identified above, those of identification as public servants and autonomy. Identification as public servants does not justify inclusion as it has been foregrounded mainly as a response to austerity measures following the financial and banking crises and is arguably, as noted above, a temporal issue associated with these issues rather than an ongoing and integral part of professional identity. Autonomy on the other hand is an overarching construct and appears across many of the constructs identified above. The issue or construct of autonomy is considered in Chapter 6 Conclusions below.

4.5 Summary
This chapter analyses the stories and narratives that have been produced from the data collection phase. The approach to the analysis has been a cross cutting one, illustrated in figure 4.2 above. The themes generated by the research questions have been analysed, with a summary thematic analysis outlined in the chapter supported by a detailed thematic analysis outlined in Appendix 5. In addition to the detailed thematic analyses, the data is used to analyse the cross cutting stories and narratives of the participants so that vignettes of the participants can be created. These cross cutting vignettes are outlined in Appendix 6 and form the bases on which the theorised narrative portraits, outlined in Chapter 5 below, are constructed.
This chapter also identifies 6 sub themes or constructs around which professional identity is located and negotiated and which have been foregrounded and privileged by the participants. These 6 constructs are used later in Chapter 6 to inform the construction of a proposed analytical framework for the location and negotiation of professional identity.

The next chapter builds on the analysis chapter initially linking the literature to the data, firstly establishing and locating the context of the study of identity from a sociological perspective. This is followed by a discussion of the research themes and how they are linked to the literature, before viewing the stories and narratives through the lenses outlined in Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework. It is through these lenses that mini cases or theorised narrative portraits of the participants are developed.
Chapter 5 Discussion

The discussion flows from the analysis outlined in the Chapter 4 above and in the appendices (Appendix 4 – 6). The first part of the discussion is in the form of an introduction which places the concept of identity in context, outlining how the study views identity from a sociological perspective, noting the diverse ways in which the participants make sense of themselves and linking this to the literature. This part of the discussion also outlines how Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework provides a lens or lenses around which professional identity in higher education can be viewed, thereby offering a structure in which professional identity can be studied.

The chapter is then subdivided into two main sections, the first of which explores the themes and literatures on discipline; professional development; and the policy and external environment in the Institute of Technology sector. This is followed by a section that focuses on understanding the narratives, initially by exploring how Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework allows us to access ideas about professional identity by examining them through the four lenses of identity proposed by Gee (2000), before generating theorised narrative portraits or mini cases of the participants. This cross cutting discussion is illustrated in figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 Vertical/Horizontal Discussion

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<tr>
<th>Themes And Literatures</th>
<th>Narrative - Portraits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 1 - Discipline</td>
<td>Aidan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 2 - Professional Development</td>
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<td>Theme 3 - Policy/External Environment</td>
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The chapter concludes with a discussion of a synthesised understanding of professional identity in the context of lecturers in Institutes of Technology.

5.1 Introduction: Identity in context - Identity from a Sociological Perspective

Both Woodward (2002) and Lawler (2008) discuss identity from a sociological perspective and the general notions and constructs around this sociological perspective are evident throughout the stories of the participants. The diverse ways in which the participants make sense of themselves emerges from the analysis and is illustrated, for example, by the juxtaposition of participants’ constructs evident in Beth’s views of changed working conditions as being relatively benign in comparison to friends who are working in the private sector, when compared to Andrew’s frustration at the message that accompanies these unwelcome impositions.

Beth’s tolerant reaction reflects Moore et al’s (2002) study of teachers, indicating a pragmatic approach to the reconstruction of identity in the face of profound change in the working environment and James’ (2007) findings that academic identity is influenced by institutional and societal contexts over which the individual academic has no control. Andrew, on the other hand, takes a different view to Beth, seeing in the intensification of work, an attack on the professionalism of lecturers. Andrew’s interpretation of the intensification of work is that of a ‘message’ that is being sent, “belittling” and “micro managing” lecturers.

Self-identity is also evident in participants’ sense of themselves. This is emphatically articulated by Aiden’s identification of self as a film-maker and Colm’s contemplative
constructs of self as scientist first, followed by teacher, followed by researcher. Furthermore there are countless representations and constructs of identity contained within the storying and restorying of the participants. The complex, multi-layered, dialogic nature of identity, noted by Bradbury and Gunter (2006); Søreide (2006); James (2007); Archer (2008); and Holland and Lave (2001) is evident throughout the stories and is evident in the diversity of the stories as they are told, with wide ranging layers of difference on dimensions such as academic and professional background. The study purposely chose lecturers from a relatively wide range of academic backgrounds so as to access a broad range of stories. This broad range of academic backgrounds is further differentiated by diverse professional backgrounds and experience, with complex, multi-layered dimensions regarding length of professional experience and allegiance to the ‘profession’. This diversity can be illustrated by contrasting Dermot’s relatively limited time in industry and his reluctant allegiance to his professional body to Aiden’s relationship with his profession, realised in a less formal way but one that is vibrant and strong. As the longest serving among the participants, Dermot’s reflections on the changes in the role over his career so far illustrate the temporal nature of professional identity.

The dialogic nature of professional identity is evident in Deirdre’s reflections on how her role might change in a newly structured higher education sector offering an opportunity to renegotiate her engagement as a teacher and researcher. Colm’s reflections on Scientist/Teacher/Researcher offer excellent insights into the ‘constant becoming’ identified by Taylor (1991) and Wenger (1998). Colm’s reflections on his role are constantly changing, influencing and being influenced by the changing needs of his students and the ways in which they learn, all the while underpinned by the support he so strongly values from the teaching and learning function at his institute.
The challenges presented by ‘identity’ in modern life are recognised by Taylor (1991), Wenger (1998) and by Bauman (2000, 2001). The challenges of ‘constant becoming’; insecurity; and uncertainty; are almost palpable in the stories of the participants when they discuss the changing higher education landscape and how these changes may disrupt their roles, ways of working, their notions of what academic work is, and how they negotiate their professional identity. These challenges are also evident in the reaction to the intensification of their work through Government agreements such as the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) and how they react to the message that has been signalled by these changes.

The next section of the discussion examines specific issues of identity located in the general discourse and literatures and how they link to these stories, before looking at the stories and narratives through Gee’s (2000) lenses.

5.2 Themes and Literatures

5.2.1 The link to Academic Discipline

The first research question explores the link between academic and/or professional background on professional identity. The works of Becher, (1989) and Becher and Trowler (2001) establish a strong link between academic identity and discipline and this link is also highlighted in the works of Henkel (1997, 2000, 2005); Taylor (2006) and Kreber (2010). The link to discipline is evident in the stories of the participants with recognisable identities and cultural attributes (Becher, 1989; Becher and Trowler, 2001) observable in, for example Colm’s discussion around his multiple identities, yet identifying closest with “scientist”. Henkel’s (2005) discussion of how language gives meaning and understanding to ideas, cognitive structures, and experience can be seen in the reflections of Andrew on the importance of learning new coding languages and keeping up to date in his discipline, this is
also present in Deirdre’s engagement in developing and maintaining her knowledge and skills in computing. The similarities between Andrew and Deirdre’s stories (both computing lecturers) are indicative of Clegg’s (2008) discussion on disciplinary ways of talking.

Despite these observable links to discipline, the connection to discipline is not as deep-seated and strong when compared to the strong links noted by Becher (1989) and later by Becher and Trowler (2001) in the more traditional disciplines in universities, reflecting among other things the participants relatively underdeveloped engagement in research and their often stated preference for the teaching aspect of their roles. The traditional link to discipline is strengthened and sustained through research communities; the dissemination of literature and research; and the professional and social networking that takes place at conferences, colloquia etc. (Becher, 1989; 1996; Henkel, 1997, 2000, 2005; Taylor, 2006; Kreber, 2010). It should not be surprising then that among the participants of the study that these links are underdeveloped. Another possible reason for the relatively tenuous link to discipline is suggested by Clegg (2008) who observes that changes in the structure of higher education and to external environments have resulted in newer, emerging identities or hybrids based on different epistemological assumptions. These emerging identities are influenced by and derived from professional and practice based loyalties.

It is apparent in the stories of the participants that these professional and practice based loyalties are important and particularly so for some of the participants. Aiden’s identification as a film-maker; Breda’s commitment to leveraging a creative discipline for commercial purposes and preparing her students to deal with clients and suppliers in the real world, illustrate how these different epistemological assumptions are changing the ways in which academics negotiate their professional identity and give meaning to and make
sense of their worlds. Practice based skills are central to their professional identity and this is very well illustrated in Colm’s reflection on the range of skillsets he brings to his role, enabling him to provide students with the knowledge, skills and competences they need. Key to Colm’s abilities is his practice based knowledge underpinned by his academic background. Cathy’s vicarious commitment to empowering people by equipping her students with professional skills, self-awareness and empathy are indicative of a vocational calling and reflects Robson’s (2006) observation of allegiance to vocation as a powerful means of identification.

What could be construed here is that knowledge domains continue to have a social role in informing and shaping epistemology through the delineation and framing of a discipline, however there are other factors that suggest the emergence of hybrid identities based on professional and practice based loyalties, as identified by Clegg, (2008). Välimaa (1998) identifies two perspectives on the study of higher education, a disciplinary approach as outlined by Becher and Trowler (2001) amongst others and secondly an institutional based approach acknowledging the influence of the institution and reference groups as having a role in the dialogic process of negotiating academic identity. These groups or communities (Välimaa, 1998; Henkel, 2005) influence academic identity and this is evident in how Cathy negotiates her academic identity in the context of her commitment to the socially marginalised; in how Deirdre identifies with the initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of ‘young women in technology’ for example; and in how Colm uses his practice based skills in his role.

The connection to the practice base is very strong in most of the participants and even where the practice base is not as strong such as for Beth and Dermot, their awareness of
the importance of this link is acknowledged and they both adopt strategies to address this
deficit, Dermot through working within a team of lecturers and drawing on the skills of those
with more extensive practice based experience, while Beth uses networking skills to
leverage her links to industry to gain greater insights herself, and to bring practice based
experience into the classroom through guest lecturers. This helps to develop and sustain a
practice based experience for their students.

Another way in which disciplinary boundaries appear to be breaking down is evident in
Andrew and Beth’s commitment to the community or region their institute serves and how,
by its very presence it gives opportunity to students who in their opinion would otherwise
not access higher education. This identification with community through the institute is very
much a feature of the stories of Dermot, Deirdre and Aiden also. It is in Aiden’s observation
of and affinity with the regional and local role of Institutes of Technology that the wider
influence of identification with institutes in the process of negotiating professional identity
is most evident. Despite working in an institute in a mostly middle class area with relatively
high participation rates in higher education, Aiden states directly in the vernacular “Often
it’s an entry point to third level, you know, for the local community, you’ve got a lot of kids
coming in there and nobody in their family has ever gone to third level, you know. We get
that much less here, because we’re in fucking wealthy South Dublin, like we’re in fuckin’
Foxrock or whatever, you know.”

This identification with institute and community service reflects Malcolm and Zukas’ (2009)
thoughts that academic identity should not be hampered by boundary constructions or
epistemic differences, rather through knowledge transfer activities and community service
and call for a focus on the “actors themselves” (p 504). Aiden’s story is redolent of a
constantly negotiated, highly personalised exploration of his emerging academic identity, one in which there are few formal epistemological checkpoints or disciplinary boundaries and where he is very much the author of his own academic identity.

While Aiden’s story is one that is unconventional in the context of negotiated academic identities all of the participants have aspects of emerging hybrid academic identities (Clegg, 2008). Clegg (2008) links these changes in academic identities to changes in the structure of universities and external environments. The changes in an Irish context reflect a move from a small elite system of higher education in the 1960s to a massified system today, where provision is shared across the binary divide by the universities and Institutes of Technology. Nixon (1996) documents the facets of change within this growth in the student body, characterised by changes in age; socio-economic background; gender; ethnicity; curriculum; teaching and assessment; diversification of course content and structure; and the focus of the learner. The participants’ stories support this observation with for example Beth, Deirdre and Dermot discussing the changes in the student body over time especially with regard to ability levels. Andrew’s decision to undertake a doctorate in education to explore ways of teaching computing students is noteworthy in this context also. Andrew’s decision to start this investigation followed a sequence of events leading to computing students with lower levels of ability accessing the computing programmes at his institute.

In summary, emerging from general discourse and literatures on identification with discipline, the participants have a more tenuous connection to discipline, counterbalanced by an increased identification with practice based experience and with institution. Institution in this context would include both the participant’s own institute and the sector as a whole. There is evidence of the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries (Nixon et al,
2001), the development of hybrid academic identities (Clegg, 2008), and the identification with institute and reference groups (Välimaa, 1998; Henkel, 2005; Malcolm and Zukas, 2009) throughout the stories of the participants.

The manner in which the participants negotiate their professional identity relative to their discipline reflects the changing orientation to professional and practice background; to institution; and the historical orientation of Institutes of Technology and their evolution over time.

5.2.2 The influence of Professional Development

The second research question explores engagement in professional development and how individual and institutional factors influence the negotiation of professional identity. The stories of the participants reflect the observation of Sayer (1981), that it is difficult to define the term ‘professional development’ in the context of the study as it is a term that has multiple meanings. Although identifiable themes did emerge in the stories of the participants each participant had a story to tell with regard to their own professional development. Sayer (1981) states that it could be argued that professional development is a normal fact of life in the academic setting and this would appear to be mostly true from the stories of the participants. What is most striking however, are the range of responses and the range of activities that the participants engage in as part of their professional development. Andrew, for example, has engaged in professional development from the outset, initially concentrating on building and augmenting his skills in computer programming, then completing an EdD, followed by a diploma in teaching and learning in higher education to address teaching and learning issues. All the while Andrew continues to update his discipline skills so as to give students up-to-date skills “I want to stay up-to-date and I want to feel…. I suppose I want to feel that I’m doing a good job. I’m going in
and I’m giving the kids, the latest, what they need. I wouldn’t feel good about myself, you know, going in and, you know, just regurgitating crap.”

Andrew’s story reflects an individual for whom professional development is a normal fact of life and one in which professional development is a constant. In contrast Beth has not engaged formally in professional development in the past number of years and although she has engaged collaboratively in developing case studies and other aspects of her role, she does not conceptualise or engage in the level or range of professional development that Andrew does.

Across the other participants there is a range of engagement with no two stories being the same. What is a common thread across all of the participants is the lack of structure around professional development at an institutional and at a sectoral level. None of the participants appear to be clear as to what the requirements for professional development are, nor more importantly what are the supports for professional development at a local or national level should they wish to develop any aspect of their skills.

All of the participants have engaged in some form of development of teaching and learning and their approaches and motivations are reflective of Åkerlind’s (2007) qualitative approaches to growing and developing as teachers in higher education. Breda and Aiden for example, engage in teaching and learning to build up practical experience so as to become more familiar with how to teach. Colm wants to increase his understanding of what works and doesn’t work so as to become more effective in facilitating student learning, while Deirdre and Dermot build their repertoires of teaching strategies to become more skilful as teachers (p 27).
The structures and frameworks around which educational development can be fostered and
grown are relatively underdeveloped in Irish higher education at both a local and a national
level. Due to reduced funding for higher education following the financial and banking
crises, structures such as NFETL and frameworks for education development are only now
emerging at a national level. The background to this is discussed in more detail below. This
is in contrast to the growth and expansion of educational development in UK higher
education for example, as noted by Skelton (2005); Gosling (2009); and Clegg (2009) which
can be traced to the 1960s with more rapid expansion of higher education development
units following the Dearing Report in 1997 (NCIHE, 1997).

This lack of structure is also evident at a local level illustrated by the fact that only two of
the four institutes from which the participants are drawn have dedicated teaching and
learning functions. Without robust and well-resourced structures, professional
development becomes difficult, even problematic and this weakness is most evident in the
intrinsic nature of the engagement of the participants in developing teaching and learning
skills. Clegg (2009) argues that academic development has become more definable with
distinctive values and professional organisation and one that is contributing to strategic
educational change. The lack of structure suggests that achieving this strategic change,
based on the development of distinctive values and professional organisation remains a
challenge that has yet to be addressed fully in Irish higher education.

Other notable insights from the participants are Andrew’s relatively negative assessment of
the teaching and learning function in his institute, which he finds lightweight and superficial
“They’re nice things, the people that teach it are nice people and they’re full of nice views of the world….. but I think the intellectual basis of things they’re pushing out is wrong.”

In contrast to Andrew’s view is that of Colm whose view of the teaching and learning function in his institute is overwhelmingly positive. “….a world class organisation in my view, and they have been very effective in slowly, steadily, increasing the awareness of scientists like myself of education. Probably areas I wasn’t even interested in 20 years ago.”

The viewpoints of Andrew and Colm above reflect Quinn’s (2012) discussion of discourses in academic development and the need to create at an institutional and macro level, ideational contexts in which constraining discourses are identified, critiqued and countered; and the foregrounding of discourses and practices which are likely to have an enabling conditioning effect.

While the participants are for the most part intrinsically motivated, wanting to improve aspects of their teaching, discipline skills or research capability, it is only Andrew and Aiden who look beyond their role and their institute in reflecting on their professional development in the context of wider knowledge creation (Andrew’s investigation of teaching novice learners computer programming), or professional development from an Institute of Technology sector perspective (Aiden’s reflections on the generalizability of teaching and learning skills and their application across institutes and across disciplines). The participants believe that they have agency in defining and developing their roles and in creating the ‘academic development project’ (Clegg, 2008, 2009). What appears to be missing from the stories of the participants is a common discourse around academic
development. Consequently the focus on developing aspects of individual skills, whilst agentic, is inward looking and introspective.

At a local level (the individual institute), whilst it is evident that there are supports available to those who wish to engage in professional development, there are no formal structures in which development is taking place either on a voluntary basis or through institutional requirements. Furthermore there is inconsistency and ambiguity as to how and for how long professional development activity will be supported and sustained at a local level. This is best illustrated by Andrew who is critical and at times resentful at the resources (financial and time) invested by his institute in his professional development, yet acknowledges that lecturers in general, don’t engage enough with the selection of the professional development they need. This viewpoint is supported by Aiden who is critical of the failure of fellow lecturers at his institute to engage in professional development which he believes is indicative of complacency on their part and on the part of the institute. Nixon et al (2001) and Skelton (2005) call for a conceptualisation of professionalism in higher education as starting with issues of principle and value in one’s own teaching and learning practices but locate this ‘moral purposefulness’ (Nixon et al, 2001 p 234) in the wider context of higher education and a new notion of professionalism in higher education. This would refocus Irish higher education on traditional understandings of professionalism of knowledge, responsibility and autonomy (Skelton, 2005 p. 138).

There was an attempt to introduce a system of performance management and personal development as part of an earlier Government agreement, the Sustaining Progress, Social Partnership Agreement 2003 -2005 (Department of the Taoiseach, 2003). This system was called PMDS and was developed as part of a partnership process arising from this
agreement. The system however, was never fully implemented and following initial rejection of the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) by the union representing lecturers in 2010, limited industrial action included non-engagement in PMDS (TUI, 2010). Since the eventual acceptance of the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) and the end of limited industrial action PMDS has not been fully implemented. It is evident from the stories of the participants that PMDS or a version of PMDS is being engaged in by some but not by the majority of the participants. Furthermore it is not clear from those who are engaged in discussions with their managers whether this is part of formal PMDS or part of local arrangements. It would appear that the advantages and benefits of a performance management system or academic development system for individual lecturers, academic units and institutes have not been fully explored or realised.

At a sectoral level the Institute of Technology sector and the wider higher education sector has seen the development of initiatives that have attempted to provide a focus for professional development for academics across higher education in Ireland. Much of the development was stimulated by the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) which is discussed above. The curtailment of SIF due to financial pressures following the financial crises has been significant however, with less than a third of the original planned budget of €510m being committed to the modernisation initiatives and processes. It is difficult to visualise the impact and significance of this outcome on professional development of lecturers in Institutes of Technology. If one is to take into account the objectives of SIF; the energy and input into the SIF process; the planned outcomes of the programme; and perhaps most importantly the effect on the sustainability of initiatives, the impact has been profound and will continue to reverberate into the future. However in the context of this study the
question that arises is what structures exist to support professional development and how do lecturers engage with these structures?

It is evident from the stories of all of the participants that they have engaged and continue to engage in initiatives stimulated by SIF, whether they are aware of the connection to SIF or not. Both Dermot and Deirdre engaged in initiatives around problem based learning and learning styles respectively, while Breda has engaged in work on teaching methods and assessment. Cathy and Colm have been involved in research projects funded by SIF, with Colm publishing a number of papers linked to learning support following successful collaboration with learning and technology colleagues and media colleagues at his institute. Andrew and Breda have also engaged in programmes and modules funded by SIF and Aiden’s plans to complete a masters’ qualification in teaching and learning is connected to SIF.

It is also evident from the stories that the SIF initiatives have had an impact on the professional development of the participants, most noticeably in the area of teaching and learning. Andrew is highly critical of some of the initiatives, stating that they lacked rigour and intellectual credibility, however it is evident from his story that he has benefitted from and engaged with these initiatives. Aiden on the other hand, is highly complementary of SIF initiatives and has been inspired by the Learning and Innovation Network (LIN) academic professional development (APD) modules, which would appear to have contributed to his conceptualisation of his role as a teacher/educator and enabled him to make sense of and helped him to define this role, effectively assisting him in negotiating his professional identity.
There were a number initiatives stimulated by SIF that involved collaboration across higher education for example the Learning and Innovation Network (LIN); the National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL); and the Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA). LIN is an initiative spanning the 14 Institutes of Technology; NAIRTL is an inter-institutional initiative with members from both sides of the binary divide with higher education institutes from across Ireland while the DRHEA is a Dublin based initiative which includes all the higher education institutes across the Dublin region. All of these initiatives were successful, but were unable to fully realise their potential because of the funding issue. They have all had an impact on professional development, however none have had the same kind of impact that bodies such as the Staff and Education Development Association (SEDA) and the Higher Education Academy have had in the UK. Consequently there is no central framework or structure around professional development similar to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF\(^8\)), (HEAcademy, 2015). Furthermore the discourse on professional development in higher education appears to be limited and somewhat underdeveloped. This is evident from the stories of the participants.

The emergence of the NFETL is set to address these shortcomings and has in its first years of operation built on legacy work of initiatives such as LIN, NAIRTL and the DRHEA. The Forum has begun to address issues identified above such as the lack of a framework and structure for professional development in higher education and the development and extension of discourse on academic development (NFETL, 2015). The Forum, established in 2012, has recently published a report on building a digital roadmap to teaching and learning

\(^8\) The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) is a comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines. It is a recognised framework for benchmarking success in higher education teaching and learning support and is applicable at the personal/professional development level and at institute level (HEAcademy, 2015).
in higher education (NFETL, 2015) and has at time of writing (April 2015) embarked on a consultation on proposals for the establishment and management of a professional development framework for those who teach in Irish higher education (NFETL, 2015). Start-up funding for the establishment of the Forum was provided by the HEA through the SIF budget (reduced from €4m to €750k in 2012) as part of a strategic investment and to support the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (HEA, 2015).

In summary, when the link between the stories and more general discourse and literatures is examined, a picture of professional development as an individualistic project that is facilitated by the institution, but lacking in structure and direction at a local and national level emerges. It is apparent that the general discourse around academic development (Skelton, 2005; Gosling, 2009; Clegg, 2009) is current, insofar as the participants are conversant with recent developments and discourse. It is also evident however, that the support and structures around academic development present in other countries such as the UK are underdeveloped and nascent in the context of Institutes of Technology in Ireland. This lack of structure and coherence is apparent at a local level also.

Engagement in teaching and learning activities is common, with all of the participants engaging in teaching and learning development in some way and in various contexts (Åkerlind, 2007). It is also evident that lecturers exercise a considerable amount of autonomy in professional development and whilst there are restrictions in the form of access to resources supporting academic development, there is evidence of agency (Clegg, 2008; 2009).
5.2.3 The Impact of Policy Decisions and External Influences

The third research question examines how external factors and policy issues contribute to the negotiation of professional identity. It also attempts to elicit reflections and insights into whether the participants see themselves as part of a distinctive profession, their collective sense as ‘lecturers in Institutes of Technology’ and their perception of how others see them.

Nixon et al (2001) state that it is difficult to speak of academic workers as a ‘unified profession’ due to the changes that have taken place and this is an area that was explored with the participants. The responses of the participants to the question on whether they saw themselves as belonging to a distinct sector of society would be consistent with this view. With one or two exceptions the participants tend not to discuss their role in the context of fellow academics. This gives a somewhat inward looking and introspective expression of professionalism and identity rather than an outward focussed insight as a member of a group or community, such as a community of practice. Belongingness to a distinct group or ‘profession’ does not emerge in their stories apart from a significant number of the participants reflecting and discussing the issue in the context of the public service. This in turn could be influenced by the social and economic context of the financial crisis with many of the participants criticising the negative portrayal of public servants in the media and the intensification of work brought about by public sector agreements. The reaction of the participants to issues arising from the financial crisis is discussed below in the second part of the discussion.

Nixon et al (1997); Nixon (2001, 2004); Nixon et al (2001); Skelton (2005); and Archer (2008) discuss ways in which professionalism can be achieved or defined in a changing academic environment with emphases on core values; ethics; intellectual endeavour; practice; and
reflexive approaches to academic work. There is evidence of these principles throughout the stories both in the insights and reflections on roles, for example Cathy’s views on her role as being one of privilege with consequent responsibilities “I think that we have a significant responsibility and contribution to make to society.” This reflexivity and emphasis on core values is also evident in Aiden’s and Breda’s commitment to providing structure and direction to their students and in Beth’s and Andrew’s valuing of the social role of their institute. It is evident that the moral bases identified by Nixon et al (1997) and Nixon (2001) are recognised and observed by the participants in their practices and understandings of academic work, giving substance and meaning to their professionalism.

One of the issues that is threaded through all the stories is that of autonomy. There are no direct questions or direct attempts to stimulate discussion on ‘autonomy’ yet it emerges in all the stories in different ways. Participants articulate this principle differently, but it is clear in the stories that it is a principle that is highly valued (Neave, 1988; Henkel, 2005; Vogel, 2009; Winter, 2009). Clegg (2008) writes of principled, personal autonomy and agency and it is evident in the stories that the participants feel that they have agency and that they are empowered in their roles. There is no definite sense among the participants of the gradual erosion of academic freedom and autonomy although many allude to this erosion with Dermot and Andrew being most concerned. Andrew’s frustration and confusion is summed up in his contradictory statement that “I think the role needs to be defined more clearly of what is expected of academic staff”. Here Andrew questions his understanding of the role due to increasing outside influences manifest in the increasing encroachment into his role and the intensification of the role.
This tension reflects what many see as the erosion of autonomy (Nixon et al, 2001; Henkel, 2005; Kreber, 2010) and the encroachment of quality assurance and corporate governance approaches in higher education (Taylor, 2006; Engwall, 2007; Vidovich and Currie, 2011). Dermot, who is the participant with the longest service, reflects on many changes that have resulted in significant increases in administrative work and increasing engagement in professional accreditation, quality assurance regimes and measures over the years (Nixon, 2001, Morley, 2003; Hoecht, 2006). The rigours of quality assurance however, are not necessarily perceived as being negative with both Aiden and Breda placing value on the structure and consistency that accompany processes such as validation and programmatic review.

What appears to be absent in the stories of the participants is a common discourse on these changes and discussion around how these changes and encroachments are impacting on professional identity and understandings of academic work. Deem and Brehony (2005); Deem et al (2007); Deem (2008); among others, locate and discuss ‘managerialism’ and its effects and impact on higher education, however the participants are not familiar with this term. The stories of the participants are interspersed with reflections and discussion of issues associated with managerialism, yet there is no unifying term or theme, or a thematic discussion about factors that are influencing higher education and their roles in higher education.

Issues such as managerial control, the corporatisation of higher education, and the introduction of government accountability requirements (Jones, 2007; Whitechurch, 2008) feature in all the participants’ stories however these reflections are anecdotal and limited due to the lack of thematic discussion or discourse. This is another example of
fragmentation in the academic workplace (Nixon, 1996) and is indicative of a lack of a shared understanding and indicative of an inward-looking, introspective view of the academic role.

In discussing the influence of policy decisions on professional identity it is clear from the stories of the participants that they are familiar with and aware of the possible implications of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011). There are varying levels of interest with all the participants aware of the prospect of a planned merger of three of the institutes (of the four from which the participants are drawn). This should not be surprising as amalgamations are one of the main policy developments proposed by the Hunt report (Harkin and Hazelkorn, 2014). All of the participants have opinions on the proposed merger of three of the institutes with a range of opinions from relatively negative to very positive. Beth is the least enthused by a possible merger and sees in this proposed merger the possibility that the mission and thrust of her institute would be lost following a refocus post-merger towards the centre and away from the regional mission of her institute. In contrast Deirdre is very positive and sees in the planned merger, the opportunity to achieve designation as a technological university, which would lead to excellent opportunities for her students. Having been through a similar re-designation earlier as a student herself, she attested to the advantages of having a university tag to her qualification, particularly when seeking work abroad.

Overall the participants are mainly positive with some, including Dermot and Colm, noting the relatively small size of Ireland and the apparent irrationality of having four Institutes of Technology in the Dublin area. Effectively the argument is that it is logical and makes sense to amalgamate Institutes of Technology that are in close proximity to each other. Opportunity is another positive prospect, with Andrew and Deirdre seeing opportunities to grow and develop aspects of their roles, particularly the research aspect of the role.
The participants were familiar with the criteria for recognition as technological universities as outlined in the landscape document (HEA, 2012), however, while most were aware of these criteria, some were not. It was when discussion moved beyond the Hunt report that participants were not as familiar with wider policy issues and the drivers of policy in higher education. Similarly in a more general context, while all the participants were familiar with the economic downturn and were experiencing various consequences in terms of financial drawbacks and the intensification of work, there was no discussion of higher education policy in a wider context.

The lack of discourse around the wider policy context is evidenced by, for example, the absence of discussion by any of the participants of the 2004 OECD review of higher education in Ireland report and its influence on policy direction (OECD, 2004). None of the participants locate developments in research policy and its impact on the development of a research agenda and a wider agenda of reconfiguration in higher education in Ireland. There was no discussion or insight into the significance of the Institutes of Technology Act (2006) and its role in preparing the ground for the convergence and consolidation of the sector alluded to in the Hunt report (DoES, 2011).

Aiden was the only participant who alluded in any way to the influence of European policy in driving Irish higher education policy, however there was no discussion of how Irish policies were influenced by European policy or the linkages between Irish industrial policy and Irish higher education policy through national plans and funds such as SIF (Forfás, 2004; Government of Ireland 2007; Harkin and Hazelkorn, 2014; HEA, 2015). What emerges from discussion on the influence of policy decisions on the negotiation of professional identity, is
that the participants tend to be aware of policy decisions that are directly relevant to them and less aware of the wider policy issues.

Links in the stories to literatures on mergers in higher education focussed on geographical and cultural factors. The extent of the discussion on geographical factors such as the implications of a multi-campus structure was limited, with most of the discussion focussed on the possibility of the outlying institutes having a reduced range and depth of programmes (Hatton, 2002; Norgård and Skodvin, 2002; and Pritchard and Roebuck, 2009).

The issue of the impact of different institutional cultures was discussed by the participants and this was an area that some considered may cause tension, however apart from Aiden who is very wary of merging with a bigger institute, the proposed merger is seen as an opportunity especially as it offers an opportunity to apply for re-designation as a technological university, something that is considered as being generally positive (Harman, 2002).

The over-riding view of the reconfiguration of higher education suggested by the Hunt report is a pragmatic one, influenced by reflections on the existing fragmentation in the sector and seeing opportunities to continue to develop and grow in the proposed future higher education landscape.

In summary, emerging from the stories and narratives around the influence of policy and external factors is a strong sense of autonomy (Neave, 1988; Henkel, 2005; Vogel, 2009; Winter, 2009), however it would also appear that there is a weak sense of community and shared identity, revealing a profession that is disjointed to some extent. This is evidenced
somewhat by the absence from the narratives and stories of a discourse around managerialism and performativity (Deem and Brehony, 2005; Deem et al, 2007; Deem, 2008). The participants raise concerns around issues that are associated with managerialism such as the growth of an audit culture, however none of the participants refers to these changes as managerialism. There is also evidence of a consciousness of an erosion in autonomy, however there is a failure to define this erosion or delineate its parameters (Henkel, 2005; Kreber, 2010).

The discourse on policy developments in higher education in Ireland is informed to a level, however discourse does not go much further than the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and the immediate ramifications of the Landscape document (HEA, 2012) which have immediate significance for the participants.

5.3 Using Gee’s Identity Framework

This part of the discussion explores how the theoretical identity framework, proposed by Gee (2000), allows us to access ideas about professional identity and their relationship to identities more generally. Initially this section draws on the four identity perspectives or lenses provided by Gee. The 4 lenses are used to develop insights into how the four perspectives (N- I- D- A-) are foregrounded by the participants when negotiating their professional identity. Gee’s framework is outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2 above. The data generated by the interviews with participants have been viewed through the four identity perspectives, or lenses identified in Gee’s identity framework. The exemplified components emerging from this investigation are then re-integrated to develop individual portraits. This will give insight into the biographies of the participants, illustrating
the diversity among them and the different ways in which professional identities are negotiated. This process is illustrated in figure 5.2 Portraits through the Lenses below.

![Figure 5.2 Portraits through the Lenses](image)

The portraits present a holistic picture of each of the individual participants, counteracting the fragmentation that may occur if the focus was centred on the thematic discussion.

This part of the discussion begins with a look through the four lenses.

### 5.3.1 N-Identity

**TABLE 5.1 Nature Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Perspective</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N-</td>
<td>Nature-Identity: a state</td>
<td>developed from forces</td>
<td>In nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Gee (2000, p 100)

Gee (2000) discusses the N-Identity perspective as being determined by a “state” which is influenced by nature, a power over which the individual has no control or input. In exploring the stories of the participants through the lens provided by Gee (2000) it is perhaps most challenging to perceive how N-Identities are projected by the lecturers and indeed how they project N-Identities onto their roles and through their roles. There is little in their individual
embodiment that could be seen to distinguish or identify them as lecturers, or academics, or teachers, (Woodward, 2002; Giddens, 2009). Equally there is nothing that is overtly gendered about their professional identities and all are relatively homogenous from an ethnic perspective. It is therefore difficult to discern discrete elements of N-Identities from the storied accounts.

In exploring the stories for elements of N-Identity it is important to pay attention to the complex and important ways in which the four perspectives interrelate in theory and practice (Gee, 2000). It is when these interactive and dynamic processes are taken into consideration that aspects of N-Identity emerge in the stories of most of the participants.

This is evident in the story of Breda, whose artistic talents were identified by her teacher at secondary school, ultimately leading to a career and life trajectory in which she dialogically negotiates her identity as a graphic artist and teacher (Holland and Lave, 2001). It could be argued that this is an identity that is “recognized” (Gee, 2000) as meaningful and indicative of the type of person she is. Gee (2000) describes how N-Identities must always gain their force through the work of institutions; discourse and dialogue; and affinity groups (p 102). Breda’s N-Identity is expressed through institutions such as the Institute of Technology she works in, the Institute of Technology sector and in other formal aspects of her role. It also gains force through the discourse of students, peers, other colleagues, and by family and friends and wider circles of acquaintances and colleagues. Although not a member of formal affinity groups Breda keeps in touch with former colleagues and regularly gets them to present to her students. Thus affinity groups are active in reinforcing and sustaining her N-Identity as a graphic artist. This interaction between the social and personal reflects the

Other participants with strong evidence of N-Identities are Aiden whose identity as a filmmaker is deeply rooted in his artistic flair which was initially fostered by his father through discourse and socialisation, and later through institutions, including his Institute of Technology and film-making organisations and bodies; discourse among fellow film-makers and academics; and affinity groups such as the informal gatherings at the Galway Film Fleadh; and later his interaction with fellow academics through groups such as LIN. Again the dynamic interaction of institutions, discourse, and affinity groups give force to Aiden’s N-Identity and how he is “recognized” as a particular type of person.

Cathy and Colm also present insights that reveal aspects of N-Identity, Colm’s connection with agriculture and science is illustrated with vigour at the beginning of his story “The chemistry, the technology, we went out we bought steel, we rented pumps and motors, we assembled all, half it didn’t work so we had to take it apart, figure out why it wasn’t working, re-do it, run it, clean it, engineering, enzymes, it was amazing stuff.” Later his enthusiasm and energy is funnelled into discovering and realising better ways to teach “But, I’m now trying to add that to what I know and keep up with and what’s going on in the areas that I work in so that I can do my job better, so I can train students more effectively and that means understanding how they learn, so I’ve got where I have been.”

Cathy’s N-Identity is much more personal, evident in her commitment to social justice and realised through her dedication to her family and empathetic approach to her role in social care and education.
Looking directly through an N-Identity lens can be difficult as we have to rely on the cues volunteered in the stories to access N-Identities and this does not always happen. It is in the interaction of the N-Identity lens with other lenses from the framework that insights into N-Identity are possible. These insights are more readily available in some of the participants, illustrating the diversity among them and the different ways in which they story their professional identities. Nevertheless the insights outlined above are strong and provide rich bases for the portraits of the participants discussed below.

5.3.2 I-Identity

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<tr>
<th>Identity Perspective</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution-Identity: a position</td>
<td>authorised by authorities</td>
<td>within institutions</td>
<td></td>
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Source: Adapted from Gee (2000, p 100)

The process through which the institutional perspective on identity or the I-Identity is recognised is authorisation. I-Identity is recognised through laws, rules, traditions or principles which allow the authorities define or author a position or role and by extension influence the negotiation of identity (Gee p 103). I-Identity is thus linked to the formal structures, rules and tenets of the organisation.

In examining the stories of the participants the I-Identity is heavily influenced by both contractual and historical factors. The historical link to practical, vocationally orientated teaching has been a defining characteristic of the sector (Hazelkorn and Moynihan, 2010).

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9 The contractual structure of lecturers in Institutes of Technology is determined through negotiation between the department of education and skills and the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI). The present contracts have existed since 1999 and the majority of lecturers will be employed under either the lecturer (L) contract or the assistant lecturer (AL) contract.
Other aspects of I-Identity are linked to the cultures and structures of the individual Institutes of Technology and flow from discipline and practice backgrounds.

The I-Identity of the participants is very much focussed on their role as teachers with the majority of the participants emphasising the teaching aspect of their roles and how this defines them as lecturers. This is evident from Andrew who chose to work in an Institute of Technology where the focus was on teaching, rather than in a more research focussed university where he began his career in academia “...obviously the job as university lecturer was research focussed and it was really, no real interest in the teaching and learning side of things, yeah, frankly. So when I came here the department here and the head of department at the time was very focussed on the teaching and learning and on the industry so it was a good fit with me.” Beth also talks of the emphasis on teaching “I suppose our job.... our job is teaching, I do think my job is primarily teaching, teaching at maybe a higher level... and I’m happy to say, that’s my main responsibility.”

Both Colm and Aiden have I-Identity focussed on their discipline. Colm states “I’m a scientist first and an educator second, or a teacher second...” while Aiden states “I would still have film-maker on my passport, not lecturer. Now I’m slightly torn now, you know what I mean?” It is notable that Aiden qualifies his statement by alluding to his increasing orientation to and identification with teaching. Colm later states that “I’d be more into the teaching and what would you call it, academic community service than I would the research end.” This again illustrates how the participants are locating themselves with regard to I-Identities.

Dermot who has more than 25 years’ experience reflects on changes in what is expected in the role “the biggest change in the job for me, from 1985, is now we’re doing a couple of
different jobs. There would have been very little or no administration work in the earlier years… [now] half the day could be gone which is essentially administrative duties, so, if you put that with a little bit of extra hours that you’re teaching whatever, increasingly it’s hard to find time and energy to do something.”

The influence of the authorities on the authoring and negotiation of I-Identity is illustrated by the impact of the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010). The additional teaching hours are seen as an unwelcome imposition by most of the participants. Andrew expresses frustration with this development and makes a direct link to professional identity “it seems the professional role of lecturer has been belittled, or is not considered important, or that they’re not seen as professionals who can manage their own time to deliver service to customers, but rather as people that have to be micro managed.” Colm is also exasperated as it impacts on his ability to perform his duties to the same extent as before “it’s finally hit on the head now, I’d say the workload with the pretty much, with the last year, with the extra 2 hours… it is simply too tight for me to try to manage. 18 hours or equivalent is very serious work commitment, and there are bits that I am not able to do as I would like to do.”

This is not the view of all the participants and Beth is more stoical, placing value on the stability she has as a public sector employee “you have to work a lot harder for less money, but in comparison to everybody… I don’t have sympathy for myself, …but most of my college friends would work in the private sector… and they work, really hard.” Nevertheless, the various reactions to the effects of the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010), illustrate the strength of I-Identity on the professional identity of the participants.
Identity was apparent in the way in which engagement with professional development was storied by the participants. The picture that emerges is one of a fragmented and unstructured system of professional development, a system that is unclear and ill defined. There were a range of responses with some very positive descriptions from a number of the participants. Colm talks of the teaching and learning function in his Institute as being world class and it is evident from his story that he engages formally with his line manager and he reflects on and drives his own professional development. Colm’s sense of empowerment around his development is clear in his story. Aiden is also very positive about professional development and also engages with management in discussing his development. He sees access to professional development as a “huge, huge opportunity.” Aiden is less positive about structures around professional development and alludes to the lack of engagement of other lecturers. Aiden opines that professional development is available for those who engage, however for those who don’t there is nothing that will encourage or impel them to do so. He sees this as a problem across the sector.

Others are not as positive with some such as Andrew being deeply critical of the lack of structure and organisation. Andrew’s story reveals annoyance at perceived internal and external inequalities, criticising management at his institute for being unwilling to discriminate positively with regard to the allocation of funding for professional development, opting instead to distribute funds equally regardless of the relevance to institute needs. Externally Andrew draws attention to the inequalities in the Institute of Technology sector and in the context of the higher education sector as a whole. Many of the participants identify time as being a significant barrier to professional development and this reflects the contract of 18 and 20 hours contact per week for lecturers and assistant lecturers respectively. Whilst some of this adverse reaction is rooted in the additional two
(Croke Park Agreement) hours, it is evident that organisational and institute structures are lacking. It would appear that only one of the eight participants is engaging in regular PMDS discussions with a line manager. From an I-Identity perspective there is an absence of structure and definition that should allow lecturers author their professional development and trajectory in collaboration with the ‘institute’.

Closely linked to professional development is the discussion around the career structure with many of the participants identifying the inherent lack of opportunity to progress within the system and a lack of career structure as being problematic. This lack of flexibility and structure is seen by participants as a disincentive to professional development. Dermot observes that senior lecturer positions could be filled for 25 or 30 years without an opportunity of advancement. This lack of structure appears to have an impact on motivation and professional development.

Other aspects of I-Identity flow through membership of professional organisations. Despite the fact that most of the participants have, or had, strong links to practice most of them either are not members of a professional organisation or are not actively involved. Cathy is the exception to this, being involved in the past at a high level in a professional organisation and continuing to engage through conferences. It is noteworthy that two of the participants, Dermot and Aiden, although members of professional organisations, were critical of these organisations. Dermot is particularly critical of the narrow focus of his professional organisation and the perceived biases as between graduates of universities and graduates of Institutes of Technology including his own institute.
I-Identity which is linked to institutions and authority is strong and features throughout the stories of all of the participants. The link to individual institutes is also strong, providing a foundation and backdrop to professional identity and sustaining it across time.

5.3.3 D-Identity

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<th>Identity Perspective</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>Discourse-Identity: an individual trait</td>
<td>recognised in the discourse/dialogue</td>
<td>of/with “rational individuals”</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Adapted from Gee (2000, p 100)

The third perspective identified by Gee (2000) is D-Identity which he describes as a discursive identity given effect by the discourse and dialogue of others. The ways in which D-Identity is manifest in the stories of the participants is how the participants related others’ perception of lecturers and how they project themselves onto students and others in education, higher education and the Institute of Technology sector. Dermot’s issues with a professional body that places more value on graduates of the universities than on graduates from Institutes of Technology reflect on him and the wider Institute of Technology sector. Andrew’s storied account of his experience lecturing in a university and the contrasting practices, orientations and access to resources also indicate D-Identity. There is also discussion of approaches to teaching, Deirdre talks of hand-holding “There’s a lot of... teacher-student time... sometimes I wonder do we do too much hand holding?” This illustrates some of the discourse around professional identity and ways in which lecturers do their jobs. Although not generally referred to directly, the stories reflect a picture of the Institute of Technology lecturer as one who tends to work with students with lower levels of academic ability, but carries out his/her role in such a way as to minimise these perceived
differences so that graduates are just as capable and qualified as their university counterparts.

Many of the stories discuss the vital role that Institutes of Technology play in their regions, contributing to wider participation and opportunities for those in society who otherwise would not be able to access higher education. This is captured by Beth who talks of the importance of her institute to the area in which it is situated “I don’t think they would have done it if it wasn’t on their doorstep. If this college wasn’t here or if this college changes after the merger, I think it will be a big loss to the local area…” Deirdre highlights initiatives at her institute to increase the participation of young women in technology through an institute sponsored project with local post primary schools. Aiden also discusses the wider regional remit of the Institutes of Technology, despite the fact that his institute is located in a relatively affluent area of Dublin, where participation rates in higher education are traditionally high.

Respondents were asked to discuss their understanding of ‘New Managerialism’ and ‘Performativity’ and although some made an effort to discuss their understanding of the terms, none of the respondents were familiar with the terms and were not familiar with the terms as they relate to higher education. This points to a lack of wider discourse around their roles and identities as lecturers in Institutes of technology.

Another question asked to elicit discussion of D-Identity was whether participants see themselves as belonging to a distinctive and bounded sector of society. In responding to this question there is very little discussion of professional identity as lecturers, what is distinctive about the role, or what aspects of the role are similar or different to other
academics in higher education and beyond. The focus of the discussion is, instead shifted to a more general discussion on the role and standing of public servants. Participants were disappointed and aggrieved at the poor public image of the public sector that has been created in the media, particularly in the context of recent financial and economic difficulties. Despite this poor treatment by the media it is widely felt that as educators they are still held in high esteem.

In the second interview an attempt was made to prompt discussion around the intersection between I-Identities and D-Identities by asking participants have they noticed differences in how management at their institutes talked about their roles. Most of the respondents have not noticed any differences with Colm the only one who has, but nevertheless did not expand on how, merely alluding to the fact that changes are afoot and management are “…thinking on a scale that might frighten us.”

The evidence from the respondents’ accounts of their identities as lecturers tells another story. All of the respondents spoke of PhDs and further academic development, including one who has completed an EdD at a UK university. While some, including Colm and Beth are not interested in pursuing doctoral studies others are, including Cathy who has suspended her PhD however has plans to re-engage and Breda who is interested despite there being few examples of doctoral studies in her particular discipline. This reflects the trajectory towards university or technological university status and the tendency for higher education institutes such as Institutes of Technology to become more like universities (Gellert, 1993). The engagement of many of the respondents in formal teaching and learning initiatives is also indicative of changes in thinking and discourse in the higher education system in Ireland in recent years.
This tendency to focus away from a generalised Discourse on the identity of lecturers is also seen within the individual stories. For example, Aiden refers to his own differentiated persona in the context of his professional work and experience and the types of programmes he is involved in. This discussion identifies differentiating aspects in the context of his own professional identity, but his story is not broad enough to detect elements of D-Identity that can be generalised in the context of lecturers in Institutes of Technology. Andrew, who has previous experience lecturing in a university, is perhaps the only one of the participants who discusses a generalised Discourse. Based on insights gained from this experience, Andrew talks of attitudes expressed by some colleagues from the university sector, that university lecturers are somehow ‘better’ than those in Institutes of Technology.

It would appear that there is little or no Discourse around the professional identity of lecturers within the sector. Somehow through the complex interaction of the four perspectives, participants have enough to sustain their own individual professional identity. Professional identity is thus heavily influenced by a personalised viewpoint that is shaped by the interaction of the perspectives in specific ways.

Along with I-Identity, D-Identity is one of the four perspectives that is foregrounded by the participants. For all but a few, notably Aiden and Andrew the discourse is very specific and relates closely to the individual participants and their immediate colleagues but does not extend beyond this narrow focus.

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10 Discourse (capital D) is taken here, in the sense described by Gee (2000), to mean a combination of behaviours and discourse that can get one recognised as a “certain type of person”.
5.3.4 A-Identity

**TABLE 5.4 Affinity Identity**

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<th>Identity Perspective</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>shared in</td>
<td>the practice</td>
<td>Of “affinity groups”</td>
</tr>
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Source: Adapted from Gee (2000, p 100)

The affinity perspective is characterised by a set of distinctive practices. Affinity and distinct practices among the participants is almost overwhelmingly centred on teaching and the shared commitment to teaching. What is also evident from the stories is the awareness of the social role that the institutes play. This social role is highlighted by Andrew “…I also see it in a social sense, in that by empowering people and giving them skills to get jobs in this region we’re helping people so there’s a kind of social role…”

The allegiance and affinity with discipline is not as strong as in the university sector (Becher and Trowler, 2001), however one of the emerging characteristics is that of professional practice. There is a strong and definite link to practice across all of the participants, even those with limited experience in practice. Beth talks of ways to bring practice into the classroom through her links to colleagues working in industry and Dermot talks of striking a balance between subject areas within programmes so that students can benefit from the practice based experience of other lecturers in his department.

For those with strong links to practice the links are deep rooted and highly valued. Cathy’s connection to service users (social care) through her students is particularly strong “I love my job and I love the fact that I have the ability to influence young people going out into the sector, and mature students going out into the sector, to adhere to standards and ethics of
best practice. And I think the people that they’re serving deserve none less, nothing less than the best standards.” Breda identifies her practice based experience as being vital in preparing her students for “real world” challenges when they graduate, “having the experience, I know what students are going to face in reality when they get a job. I would see it as part of my job, teaching and theory is to prepare them for the experience of dealing with clients and suppliers in the real world, so if I didn’t have that experience I think I would be ill prepared, to prepare them.” Perhaps the most prescient statement made by any of the participants is made by Colm “But my experience you see before I was here, I was in industry and I... if the organisation is losing anything, it’s an appreciation of that. ...I don’t think there’s anybody who has a PhD and industry experience and I think we’re in danger of losing that... Because we can relate to their environment, their problems.” In this statement Colm highlights the tension implicit in the trajectory towards technological university status and the traditional strength of practice based, vocationally oriented education.

When looking through an A-Identity lens in recent times, it could be reasonably expected that social media and the connectivity it affords would be making inroads in the networking and connections of lecturers. While it is apparent that most of the participants are using ICT including email and virtual learning environments such as Moodle and WebCT, the use of social media as a networking medium is not apparent from the stories of the participants. Andrew is the only participant who discusses the use of social media as a way of connecting with past and present students and with fellow computing associates. Andrew’s networking is with fellow computing professionals rather than fellow lecturers, again highlighting the importance of practice among the participants.
When looking through an A-Identity lens it appears that lecturers are inward focussed with much of their A-Identity sustained through networks within their institutes and through professional links with practice. Some of the participants see possible future mergers as offering an opportunity to widen the scope of interaction and networking. Deirdre talks of opportunities opening up for collaboration “There will be a lot more collaboration, I would hope a lot more collaboration with the other players.” Andrew is concerned about the loss of regional focus but also sees opportunities and benefits to be realised through new people, new thinking and new ideas.

5.4 Theorised Narrative Portraits using Gee’s identity framework

As stated above the four perspectives in theory and practice interrelate in complex and important ways rather than being discrete or separate categories. The power of the tools suggested by Gee (2000) is that they provide us with ways to focus attention on aspects of how identities are formed and sustained (p 101). This research presents an opportunity to use these tools to examine the stories of the participants in their professional context at a time of profound change and see how these perspectives are intertwined and which perspectives predominate and why they are foregrounded (p 101). The lenses are used to develop portraits of the participants below.
5.4.1 Aiden

Aiden’s N-Identity is apparent in his storied account of his artistic flair which was evident from an early age and which found expression though an early home environment in which art and artistic endeavour were fostered and nurtured. Aiden’s N-Identity pervades his story to a greater extent than any of the other participants and it informs his professional identity as a lecturer and as a film-maker. Aiden is in the first instance an artist/film-maker and his identity is firmly attached to film-making both privately and professionally “I still see myself as an animator as a film-maker, that’s my fundamental identity.”

Despite his strong identity as a practitioner Aiden has embraced the role of lecturer and his I-Identity as lecturer gives rich insights into his professional identity as a result. Aiden was a reluctant lecturer whose initial engagement arose from his highly specialised skills in animation and film-making that were in demand at his institute.

Aiden, an early drop out from college, had no higher education qualifications prior to engaging in his role at his Institute of Technology. Since commencing working at the institute he has completed a bachelors’ degree at a UK university and is currently engaged in two masters’ programmes. This reveals I-Identity around the requirements of lecturers and the need as a lecturer to have formal qualifications. This is despite his experience and highly specialised expertise as a practitioner. He values his experience and practice very highly and this is evidenced in his attempts to have his past work accredited as part of a masters’ qualification.
As a lecturer, Aiden is very much focused on the teaching aspect of the role, which is underpinned by his practical experience and capabilities. He is slightly scathing in his opinion of those who publish research in his area, without a firm practical track record. Aiden has become very absorbed in the teaching and learning aspect of his role and sees a definite need for skills in teaching and learning. This I-Identity finds expression in Aiden’s engagement in formal teaching and learning qualifications and the development of professional identity as a teacher with transferrable skills in teaching and learning.

Aiden believes that in his institute, professional development is supported and is a crucial opportunity for those willing to engage in it. Aiden thinks that the opportunities are not availed of as much as they should be and is critical of fellow lecturers who do not engage in these opportunities. He thinks that his fellow lecturers are short-sighted and are leaving themselves vulnerable in a changing environment.

Aiden is conscious and supportive of the wider mission of Institutes of Technology, particularly their regional focus. He welcomes the changes proposed in the Hunt report (Does, 2011) and sees them as an opportunity to be embraced. He is supportive of the stance of his own institute in remaining outside of a merger of Dublin based Institutes of Technology as he sees a threat to the specialised and differentiated nature of the programmes he is involved in and other programmes in the institute. He is in favour of the direction his institute has taken in exploring a possible link to a university in the Dublin region.
He acknowledges the need for research in higher education but believes that the practice based nature of his discipline/subject is more important than the publication of research in this area.

Aiden’s D-Identity is strongly influenced by his experience in film-making and animation. He is emphatic in his view that in film-making, practical experience is possibly the only important factor “In our industry qualifications count for nothing, absolutely nothing. In animation, all that matters in animation is what you’ve done, what’s on your reel…” This firmly held view is present throughout his story, however he has also begun to develop another dimension to his identity around teaching and learning “I would still have filmmaker on my passport, not lecturer. Now I’m slightly torn now, you know what I mean?”

Aiden has embraced his role as a teacher and educator and has become captivated by what it means to be a good teacher to the extent that he feels that he is capable of transferring skills and knowledge in teaching and learning in a cross disciplinary context.

Aiden’s D-Identity is also apparent in his discussion of the position of the public sector and what he sees as the unfair and complacent portrayal of the public sector in the media. Aiden is conscious of the social role played by Institutes of Technology and although he is a practitioner, he is wary of the influence of industry on education, seeing in his new found role a need to develop students beyond the discrete demands of industry for trained workers.

Aiden’s D-Identity includes a wider insight into higher education and changes to the environment. He sees changes in the future for his role in education and addresses the issue of academic work as meaning more than teaching.
Aiden’s affinity identity is grouped firstly around his film-making identity which was responsible for his engagement in lecturing in the first place. He is a member of industry associations and is well connected in industry professionally. Through his engagement with teaching and learning Aiden has begun to develop affinities with interest groups in teaching and learning both internally in his institute and externally through groups such as LIN. He is very positive about the role of LIN stating “an incredible organisation to facilitate and to scaffold my personal development and the personal development of lecturers across the sector.” This new found affinity reflects Aiden’s adoption of his new role.

5.4.2 Andrew

Andrew’s storied account relates his experience over almost 20 years in his Institute of Technology. In focussing attention through an N-Identity lens it is possible to see in Andrew’s story evidence of N-Identities as he discusses ways in which he approaches problem solving with his family, he also reveals an individualistic approach in his decision to pursue a qualification (EdD) in education to address a problem he perceived with retention of students over a period of time and in his continued commitment to keeping up to date with his subject so that they graduate with up-to-date employable skills “I’m going in and I’m giving the kids, the latest, what they need. I wouldn’t feel good about myself, you know, going in and, you know, just regurgitating crap.” This gives a clue as to how Andrew’s identity has been formed and how it is sustained. Andrew had no interest in computing prior to attending an open evening at the college he studied at. Since this initial encounter
however, he has become immersed in computing and his engagement in software development and computing is threaded throughout his story.

Much of Andrew’s story is conveyed through I-Identity and D-Identity and these are the lenses that predominate in Andrew’s and most of the participants’ stories. I-Identity comes into focus in Andrew’s commitment to teaching and to the teaching and learning aspect of his professional identity. He is analytical and critical in his identification and tackling of problems in teaching and learning and considers this as the main focus of his job. He is also reflective and proactive in developing as a professional, focussing initially on developing his computing skills early in his career before later focussing on teaching and learning, without losing sight of changes and developments in the professional domain.

Andrew’s I-Identity is linked closely to the structure and orientation of Institutes of Technology to practical, vocationally oriented education with a firm emphasis on teaching. It is clear in his story that he “loves” his job however his story is diffused with frustration and exasperation at changes introduced through the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010). He is both enabled and encumbered through the rigid interpretation and adoption of the contract which demarcates how academic work is defined in Institutes of Technology.

His I-Identity is heavily influenced by his practice based experience as a software developer which in turn deeply informs his orientation to learners and graduates with whom he maintains a relationship. Through I-Identity he highlights weaknesses in the structure of professional development and an almost non-existent career structure.
Through an I-Identity lens the volatile and changing landscape is highlighted and Andrew reflects that there is a “need to define the role more clearly.” This is in reference to talk about research and engagement reflecting Holland and Lave’s (2001) observation that identity is complex, multi-layered and dialogic in nature “...what is expected of staff, academic staff? What should you be delivering? It’s clear enough, you know, everybody knows you have to do your 18 hours. And you have to teach your courses and you have to be there, fine, you know. It’s the other stuff, what is it exactly we should be delivering here...?”

It is also through an I-Identity lens that he anticipates the direction that change signalled by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) will take. One direction that change may take is the move towards a more university type model with increasing emphasis on research, an orientation he has moved away from in the past but one that he feels capable of embracing. A second direction of change is the impact on the role of his institution and the social role it plays in its region.

Andrew’s D-Identity includes his storied trajectory into teaching where he discusses the differences and intersections between Institutes of Technology and universities. This discussion is informed by his past experience lecturing in an Irish university, which provides rich insights into the discourse between the two. One such insight is his discussion of elitism in Irish higher education when he relates a story in which his institute becomes the subject of humorous mocking, by means of puns on its location, by one group of university lecturers who in turn are mocked by another group from a more prestigious university, who reference its historic development as a religious seminary. What emerges is a picture of a hierarchical structure in higher education sustained through the interaction of I and D Identities.
D-Identity provides a window into how Andrew sees himself as a professional. He sees himself as having a “hybrid identity”, comprising elements of teacher, academic, researcher and software developer. Andrew sustains his D-Identity through driving his own professional development, keeping up-to-date with changes in his discipline and also addressing the need for understanding issues and concepts in teaching and learning.

Andrew’s A-Identity is not as pronounced as either his I or D identities. It is apparent that Andrew considers himself to be part of a team in his institute however his story is focussed more on his personal insights rather than groups with which he is linked. Andrew sees in future change, specifically though merging into a larger organisation, opportunities to contribute to and benefit from a wider team with new and different insights in computing. Andrew uses social media in a professional way to interact with computing professionals, teachers and with students and graduates, however apart from the obvious commonalities, the shared practices and distinctive experiences of these affinity groups are not elucidated. One area in which Andrew is vocal is his disgruntlement at what he sees as the unfair depiction of the public sector in the media and a perceived attack on his values and contribution as a public servant.

5.4.3 Beth

It is difficult to elicit elements of Beth’s N-Identity as I-Identity and D-Identity predominate in her story. Beth’s professional identity is framed through these two perspectives. Beth’s orientation is to the teaching aspect of her role and is influenced by her background in
teaching in a further education institute before commencing at her present institute. Beth’s I-Identity is sustained through her teaching and she is conscious of perceived shortcomings through her limited practice based experience. As with other participants Beth’s I-Identity is influenced by increasing demands on her time although unlike many of the other participants Beth sees this imposition in a pragmatic way and does not feel as resentful as others with regard to the changes. Beth identifies with the public sector but compares this to the private sector which she perceives as being a more challenging environment.

Beth is not actively engaged in professional development, but attaches importance to developing capacity in her own areas through the development of case studies and use of personal connections to augment her limited practice based experience. Beth’s I-Identity does not find expression through professional development because for her it is not apparent what the structures or requirements around professional development are. She is not disposed towards research or pursuing a PhD qualification and is relatively content in the context of her role in the institute.

Beth becomes more animated through a D-Identity lens and her enthusiasm and connection to teaching becomes apparent though her stories of students, particularly graduates who have achieved through adversity. She reveals a strong empathy with learners and is invigorated with their endeavours and success stories. “She was very local, she was quite young, she had two kids, she got her first class degree, she was a super super super student, ...I met her there just after Christmas, she was studying, she’s out in ☀️, she’s doing her Masters’, she’s flying it out there.” It is through D-Identity that she compares her own background as a student in an Irish university with the student experience and focus of the Institutes of Technology.
In reflecting on the implications of change in the sector the intersection of I and D Identities come into focus. Beth’s D-Identity, rooted in the social role of her institute in its immediate location, is challenged by a different future where research will become more important in a newly merged entity and the orientation will change to focus more on research, bypassing the needs of the learners from this area.

There is less evidence of A-Identity in Beth’s story, however she uses her connections and networks to compensate for her lack of practice based experience, seeking insights and using friends to connect with learners, giving them valuable insights into their studies.

Beth does not see herself as belonging to a distinctive and bounded sector of society, but does value the security of her job. She also sees differences in the way a more connected society can influence teaching and learning and has embraced new ways of teaching. Although she is apprehensive about the direction of change as it threatens her idea of what her institute should be doing, it is evident that she is confident in her abilities and future and this confidence is foregrounded in I-Identity.

5.4.4 Breda
Aspects of Breda’s N-Identity are alluded to through the story of her experiences at school where her artistic talents were fostered by her art teacher. Breda’s N- Identity is very strong despite the subtle way in which it is storied. It is apparent from her story that she was a very talented artist whose N- Identity is foregrounded initially by her teacher in secondary
school who encouraged her to develop her talents to pursue a career using her artistic talents. This aspect of Breda’s story is an almost textbook example of how Gee (2000) describes how N-Identities must always gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups, that is, the very forces that constitute the other perspectives on identity (p 102). Here Breda’s N- Identity is gaining force through I- Identity and D- Identity through her school and art teacher.

Breda’s professional identity finds expression through I-Identity and her links to her professional practice experience as a graphic designer. In the context of her own institute Breda’s I-Identity also comes through in her comparison of her present institute with the college she attended to get her degree. I-Identity is articulated through the commitment to structure and rigour in what Breda calls a “creative discipline for commercial purposes”. This also illustrates Breda's relationship with her students and the link back to professional practice. Breda’s professionalism is concerned with providing a structured programme of learning in a creative subject in such a way that will prepare her students for their working lives. This is reflective of the practical, vocational orientation of the sector.

Breda’s I-Identity also focuses on her engagement with professional development and a desire to make more meaning of her teaching from a professional perspective. Her engagement in a teaching and learning programme has been supported, however she thinks that it was something she had to go looking for.

Breda is generally positive and open to future change and does not appear threatened by the different directions that change may take. She sees a rationale for change in the sector
and reveals a focus on her own discipline and more specifically on the programme she is teaching on.

Breda’s D-Identity focuses on her professional experience and her continued connection with industry. Emerging D-Identity is also evident in her engagement in formally developing teaching and learning skills and interactions with other individuals on this topic. In discussing her future development she discusses the lack of information around pursuing a PhD.

D-Identity perspective is also evident in her thoughts about the future mergers, not feeling threatened in any way, rather seeing change as an opportunity.

Breda still maintains strong connections with fellow professionals, however A-Identity is not directly addressed in much of her story. Breda discusses how she continues to link with fellow professionals and how she brings them into her institute to give guest lectures and offer insight into professional life for students.

5.4.5 Cathy
Cathy’s N-Identity surfaces when she discusses parenthood, and in turn reflects on her own childhood. Through this lens it is possible to see Cathy’s orientation to social justice and her commitment to service users in the area of social care. Cathy talks of the importance of empathy in the development and preparation of students and this concern is interspersed throughout her story.
Cathy’s I-Identity stresses her life’s experience as a practitioner and manager in a social care context. She was drawn to her present role through experience “in the field”. Although she is research active and at the time of interviews was on a break from a PhD, Cathy’s focus is on practice based education for the less privileged in society.

Cathy is comfortable in her role and her I-Identity is shaped by practice. She is challenged by the additional hours arising from the Croke Park agreement (DPER, 2010) but does not dwell on the consequences. Her I-Identity is also evident in her engagement in professional development in her institute. She feels supported by the professional development structures in her institute but concerned at the reduction in resource allocation to this area.

It is evident from her story that she does not feel threatened by possible changes that may arise from mergers and she doesn’t see them as having a significant impact on her role. The main impact she anticipates is positive change in the area of social care, which from her perspective would be welcome, by bringing much needed structure to the area. This again shows how Cathy’s I-Identity is heavily influenced by practice.

D-Identity is focused on Cathy’s engagement with social care education and her engagement in professional development and research into her field. She considers that her institute and other institutes in the sector have an important and valuable role to play in higher education. Like other participants she perceives a negative attitude in certain sectors of society towards the public sector but qualifies it in the context of her role as being one that is valued by society.
Cathy’s natural affinity with vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups in society is diffused throughout her story and her shared experiences and distinct practices are realised through her research work and working with fellow practitioners and educators. It is in her reflections on working with students and vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals that Cathy’s A-Identity is foregrounded. Her collaborations and research in the social care area also illustrate her A-Identity.

5.4.6 Colm

Colm’s N-Identity is referenced in his childhood connection to farming and his interest in agriculture. This has followed through to his academic background, his subsequent career in practice and his current role as a lecturer in what he identifies as ‘science management’. Colm’s link to his early interests and his energy and connection to science is threaded throughout his story.

Colm’s I-Identity is strongly influenced by his experience working as a scientist when he graduated from college. His current role was immediately preceded by a term as a technician at the institute he now lectures in and his route into lecturing has been gradual. I-Identity in his role is influenced by the teaching aspect and he identifies more with teaching than research “I’m a scientist first and an educator second, or a teacher second…” “… but definitely I’m a teacher first and a researcher second”. Colm’s identification with science through I-Identity is very strong and is highly valued. He has strong applied research experience in the field something he regards as important to his role as a lecturer. He discusses the different orientations to teaching and research within his school in his institute
and whilst acknowledging the dedication and commitment of those focussed on research he is nevertheless comfortable and confident in his own focus on teaching.

To emphasise this focus Colm has engaged in professional development in teaching. He praises the teaching and learning function in his institute and engages with them regularly. This is also a strong source of I-Identity for Colm. He is reflective and progressive in his engagement with teaching and learning for the benefit of students and engages positively with the teaching and learning unit to achieve new insights and to develop his ability to facilitate student learning.

Colm reflects on possible changes in higher education in the context of his own institute referring to “turf wars” internal to the institute. He sees recent change in these internal tensions and sees the changes signalled by the Hunt report as further easing these internal tensions. Being focussed on internal changes, he does not reflect on the wider implications for a merger with other institutes.

Colm’s D-Identity is rooted in his academic background and practice based experience and he is reflective and insightful in storying his development from his early days. As noted above, he identifies with his science background referring to his interest in reading up-to-date material and placing a high value on his “training” at university which enables him to relate to new material. He also identifies closely to his teaching role and is conscious of the practice based experience he brings to his role as a lecturer. This is something he values highly and is insightful in his distinction between what he as a practitioner brings to the institute as against what lecturers with PhDs but no practical experience can bring.
Colm’s D-Identity is also evident in his approach to professional development and he is enthusiastic in his approach to the development of his teaching and learning skills. This is something he has made a conscious decision to engage in and in ways it is an alternative route from becoming more engaged with research. In some ways this can be seen as a choice by Colm, perhaps a ‘combination’ or ‘bid’ as discussed by Gee (2000). This is not the limit of his engagement and he discusses the desire to take a formal course to develop skills specific to his role.

Colm’s natural enthusiasm and positive outlook is challenged by the additional hours introduced by the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) and it is here that the impact on Colm’s professional identity is most evident. The discussion of the impact of the additional 2 hours is the only time that Colm appears despondent and upset. This imposition challenges his ability to carry out his role as effectively as in the past and he is frustrated and disheartened by it.

Closely related to this is Colm’s views on the portrayal of public servants in the media, something which he finds to be unfair and reflects on those who are less fortunate who have lost their jobs.

Colm’s D-Identity with regard to possible changes is focussed on a wider view of higher education and he sees it as a logical step to try to consolidate higher education institutes in a country as small as Ireland. He is slightly introspective in this discussion as it is focussed on his own institute and larger universities whilst not considering in great detail the impact on the smaller institutes in Dublin and beyond.
Colm’s A-Identity is apparent in his obvious affinity with his fellow lecturers and his connection with his students. Increasingly this connection to students is online. Colm’s interaction with the teaching and learning function at his institute is also a manifestation of Colm’s professional identity as he sees this as a direction in which he would like to develop. Like some of the other participants Colm is engaged in a peripheral way with a professional organisation and states that he was more actively involved in the past.

5.4.7 Deirdre

Deirdre is another of the participants who does not give any real insight to N-Identity. Deirdre’s N-Identity is foregrounded mainly through her discussion of working closely with the community through initiatives such as the ‘Young Women in Technology’ which she highly values.

Deirdre’s I-Identity is however insightful as her experience in a higher education institute that crossed the binary divide gives her an understanding of the process and possible outcomes. Deirdre’s I-Identity is shaped by her experience lecturing in her institute but also as a student in two other institutes and an Irish university. Deirdre’s I-Identity is also heavily influenced by her practice based experience.

Deirdre’s I-Identity is influenced by her experience as a student and a lecturer and sees the role in Institutes of Technology as focussed on teaching. She stresses the smaller class size and characterises interaction as “hand-holding”. She also detects an increase in ‘hand-holding’ in more recent years. Another aspect that she identifies is the increasing numbers
of students and increased hours, something that has had a significant impact on her and has led to her reducing her hours and working part-time at the institute.

Deirdre has a broad experience in computing and values her industry experience which informs her teaching and other aspects of her role. Her industry experience guides her approach to professional development and she keeps up-to-date using an online learning resource. Deirdre values the autonomy of her engagement in professional development and draws comparison with her experiences of professional development when she worked in industry. Deirdre feels that the system of review and performance management (PMDS) was enabling and motivating, although she acknowledges the difficulty of implementing such systems in the Institute of Technology sector.

In addition to keeping up-to-date Deirdre is also involved in teaching and learning initiatives in her institute and has an involvement in the learning styles programme. Deirdre is critical of training and development in the sector referencing her own experience in industry where training was a key element of any of the jobs she was involved in.

Deirdre welcomes the proposed changes signalled by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and looks upon these changes as an opportunity. She feels her own experience in research is limited and would like to become more involved in this aspect of the role.

When looking through a D-Identity lens Deirdre identifies with the teaching aspect of the role. She places a lot of importance on her own development as a lecturer and values the autonomy that she has in her role.
As stated above Deirdre is challenged by additional demands in her job but is still motivated and enthused by her involvement with students. She feels that there is a distinction between university lecturers and Institute of Technology lecturers which is centred on differences in engagement in research. Nevertheless she sees proposed mergers and technological university status as an opportunity to broaden her role and embrace research. She welcomes the opportunities suggested by changes in higher education.

Deirdre is also positive about the social and regional role played by her Institute of Technology and praises the civic engagement of her institute, identifying links to schools through the ‘Young Women in Technology’ initiative as being a very positive project.

Deirdre is very positive about a change in status of the Institute of Technology recalling the change in status of her own higher education institute when it was awarded university status and the positive impact it had for her when she went abroad.

Deirdre’s A- Identity is focussed on immediate colleagues at her institute, however she is enthusiastic about widening her affiliations in the context of a merger leading to a technological university which would for her mean more opportunities to collaborate and co-operate with fellow lecturers. Although she uses social media it is not a tool she uses extensively in her professional life.
5.4.8 Dermot

Dermot has the longest experience in the system of all the participants and it is through his longevity that cues to his N- Identity can be found with his reflections looking back on what he perceives as a more simple time. N- Identity is also evident in how he values the practical, vocational orientation of his alma mater and the institutes he has worked in.

Dermot’s I-Identity is shaped by his connection to the college he completed his degree at, identifying strongly with its approach to practice based engineering when he was a student there in the 1980s. This approach informs and reflects his own approach to his role as a lecturer in his Institute of Technology. Dermot has worked in three Institutes of Technology including his present one giving him a wider perspective and insights that other participants don’t have.

Dermot is focussed on the teaching aspect of the role, although he has some experience in research. His experience in research was some time ago and he does not invest in this aspect of the role to a great extent. Dermot’s approach is concentrated on practical based teaching in engineering where there is an emphasis on hands-on practical work in laboratories and small group work. Dermot has industry experience, however he believes this is limited and he sees this as a weakness, recognising greater levels of industry experience in some of his colleagues as being an important facet of their capabilities.
Due to the length of his experience Dermot is able to make comparisons over time and sees changes through the years in the role and emphasis of aspects of the role over that time period. He sees a significant increase in the administrative requirements and feels that there has been a re-orientation within the sector towards massification, bringing with it changes in the needs of students as more students access higher education. He thinks that the job has become more stressful as a result, with increasing demands on time and energy arising from the introduction of things like five year academic reviews and semesterisation.

Dermot has a problematic relationship with his professional body. He is conflicted as he contests the body's failure to recognise graduates from his institute, something he finds to be unfair and discriminatory and he also feels they are narrowly focussed on one specialism in what he otherwise considers to be a broad profession.

Dermot has engaged with professional development and has been involved in some SIF projects. He is not actively involved at the moment and sees barriers to development from the point of view of adequate funding and time to engage in programmes or initiatives. With regard to possible changes Dermot does not anticipate much change in I-Identity, seeing the impetus towards mergers in Institutes of Technology as being a pragmatic approach to the proliferation of higher education institutes in Ireland, something he considers unsustainable in such a small country. The greatest threat is to the level of provision in his institute and whether it would become a feeder college to a larger institute.

Dermot's D-Identity is focussed on his teaching role and the role he plays in his area. He is conscious of his limited practice based experience and focuses on areas he feels he is good
at, for example project work, leaving colleagues who have more recent and more extensive practice based experience to concentrate on other areas. His orientation towards development also finds expression through D-Identity and he expresses interest in pursuing further qualifications but feels that at this stage in his life that the benefits to be gained are not worth the effort.

His disaffection with his professional body has a D-Identity aspect to it from the perspective of the discourse about graduates from the Institute of Technology sector being somehow different from their counterparts in the university sector, something that Dermot sees as not being either fair or based on clear rationale.

Dermot’s D-Identity with regard to professional development reflects the changing needs and profile of students with more emphasis on the provision of information electronically and different ways of studying. Despite negative publicity and changes introduced by the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010) he thinks that his standing in wider society has not changed in recent times and that the role still engenders respect from people in everyday life.

Dermot is convinced of the positive role of Institutes of Technology in the context of social relevance and feels that there is a significant demand for students from engineering that will sustain the need for Institutes of Technology. He feels that changes signalled by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) have implications for the sector however he does not feel personally threatened or challenged by these changes. He believes the opportunity to remain in his role will continue regardless of changes happening around him.
With regard to A-Identity Dermot is connected within his institute and feels that increasingly there is more collaboration among lecturers in the sector. He is nevertheless quite introspective and focussed very much on the confines of his role in his institute.

5.5 A Synthesised Understanding of Professional Identity
Having discussed the analysis of this study through two different analytical approaches, themes, constructs and literatures; and theorised narrative portraits; it is important to synthesise some of this thinking so as to develop some emerging generative themes about how professional identity formation is operating in Institutes of Technology.

Changes in the traditional university and in wider higher education are evident and reflected in this study. Themes of orientation to professional and practice based experience are reflected in narrative portraits of the participants whose academic background is underpinned by this professional and practice based experience.

The orientation to teaching, a key component of the identities of all the participants, is strongly linked to the historical development of Institutes of Technology. This theme is linked to the narrative portraits, foregrounded through I-identity of the participants who state their attachment to and identification with teaching.

There is tension now as the Institutes of Technology, driven by policy, a theme, move to take an evolutionary step, (to become technological universities perhaps). This tension is manifest in the narrative portraits as the participants seek to redefine themselves, or not, and renegotiate their professional identities relative to discourse on what this means to their identity as teachers. The uncertainty is manifest and articulated in different ways by
the participants, however every one of them anticipate an uncertain future and have begun
to reassess their professional identities in preparation for this change. It is in the reflections
on this nexus of narrative and theme, that the complex, multi-layered and dialogic nature
of identity is most apparent.

How can the participants write and rewrite their stories; construct their narrative into the
future; negotiate their professional identities in an uncertain environment? As the Institute
of Technology sector evolves and the storied lives of the participants unfold it is through
personal reflection and professional development that some of the answers to these
questions lie.

The theme of professional development intersects with the narratives/stories of the
participants and gives insight into ways in which professional identities; past, present and
future, are identified and located. It is notable that all of the respondents have engaged in
some form of development in teaching and learning and this engagement is foregrounded
through I-identity and to a lesser extent D-identity. It is also evident that at the intersection
of the thematic and the narrative that A-Identity is not strong, however there are signs that
it is beginning to be foregrounded as lecturers begin to engage across higher education.
This is most evident in Aiden’s observation on engagement with LIN and the transferability
of teaching and learning skills.

Sayer’s (1981) observation that professional development is a normal fact of life in academia
is interlaced through the narrative and themes. The link between theme and narrative
oscillates between the perceived needs of the organisation and the motivation of the
participants to engage in their own future development, what could be described as the
writing or authoring of their own story. The engagement although foregrounded in I-identity tends to be inward looking, reflecting the individual narratives and suggests a personalised view of their professional identity. This is indicative of autonomy and agency (Neave, 1988; Clegg, 2008; Winter, 2009) but also reveals weaknesses in the structure and framework of professional development at a local and sectoral level and is symptomatic of an underdevelopment of professional development structures in higher education in general in Ireland. Whilst the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NEFTL) has been set up to address some of these weaknesses, this development is considerably behind other countries such as the UK where the Higher Education Academy, SEDA and the UKPSF are well established.

This systemic weakness, underlined when theme and narrative are synthesised, is also evident at a local level where provision can meet individual and discrete needs, however not always adequately. At this local level, the shortcomings are foregrounded through D-identity and the discourse of the participants. Andrew describes situations where local provision is, in his opinion, sub-optimal and lacking in focus and both Aiden and Andrew draw attention to the failure of many lecturers to engage in professional development, highlighting a complacency and inertia around personal and professional development. The discourse also highlights a career in which opportunities for progression can be few and far between within a contractual structure that is agreed across the sector. The absence of opportunities for advancement once lecturers reach lecturer grade contributes to the lack of structure in professional development. Effectively, for the majority of lecturers, career progression disappears once this point has been reached.
D-identity is also foregrounded in the discourse around anticipated change in higher education. It is in the discourse on professional development that a segue to the link between themes and narratives around policy issues and the external environment can be found. Most of the participants anticipate a refocus in the orientation of Institutes of Technology as they continue to evolve and as the policy background signals change. There are definite links between themes and narratives as the participants contemplate the ramifications of higher education policy.

The discourse and narrative appears to be informed by the theme of policy change around the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and the subsequent Landscape document (HEA, 2012). It is evident from the discourse that identity is being re-evaluated and that the participants who are more engaged in professional development and who are active in updating skills, whether in their own disciplines or in teaching and learning, are more positive in their outlook. This again reinforces the notion of autonomy and agency (Neave, 1988; Clegg, 2008; Winter; 2009) and reflects the positivity that finds expression in their engagement in professional development. It is clear from the intersection of theme and narrative that policy issues are impacting on how the participants negotiate their professional identity and are influencing how the participants see themselves in the future.

At the nexus of theme and narrative on policy and external influences, the focus of discourse is on immediate concerns around change signalled by government policy as articulated in the Hunt report (DoES, 2011). This discourse however does not move beyond this particular focus into discussion and debate on wider policy issues. Part of the discourse that emerges at this intersection is an anticipation that research will have a greater influence and importance in any new technological university and all of the participants relate their views
on what that might mean for them personally or more broadly in the Institute of Technology sector. There are a range of responses to this anticipated change with some participants welcoming the opportunities to engage in more research whilst others affirm their wish to concentrate on teaching.

Although the discourse does not develop beyond immediate concerns a secondary issue emerges at the nexus of narrative and theme around the role of Institutes of Technology post reconfiguration. Through D-identity participants express concerns over the impact on the role of the Institute of Technology sector in making higher education accessible to under-represented groups. This concern is more prevalent in the smaller institutes who are located close to under-represented populations. A concern that is foregrounded is whether the institute will continue to serve the local community in the same way and to the same extent as it has in the past as part of a larger, possibly centralised higher education institute. It also highlights the importance of institution, more widely defined in this context, in the negotiation of professional identity.

The third notable intersection or link between narrative and theme with regard to policy and external issues is concentrated on identity as defined through public service and discourse around conflict between public service workers and the media. The participants are dissatisfied with the portrayal of public servants in the media and the sacrifices they, as public servants, have made with regard to productivity and reduced incomes. This link is highly contextualised and temporal. It is heavily influenced by the calamitous economic circumstances in Ireland as a result of the collapse of the banking sector in 2008. The period since 2011 has seen severe wage cuts for public servants, a pension levy on public pensions (the public service Pension-Related Deduction PRD), in addition to substantial spending cuts
in higher education, for example €100m or 6% in 2013\footnote{Spending on Higher Education 2012 €1,630,690,000; 2013 €1,537,306,000 (DoES, 2012a, Does, 2012b)}, at a time of increased demand and provision (DoES, 2012a, 2012b; European Social Network, 2013). It should also be noted that this concern is orientated around D-identity and is more widely defined than lecturer.

It is also worth noting again, this time in the context of the intersection of theme and narrative, that there is an absence of specific discourse around managerialism and performativity. There appears to be limited engagement beyond the individual institute level in discussion and discourse on policy and future direction. This lack of discourse is noted in a very recent article by Clancy (2015), who highlights the lack of engagement in discourse on the policy-making environment in general in Irish higher education.

Emerging from this synthesis of themes and literatures; and narrative portraits is a notion around the possibility of developing an analytical tool that could be used to both locate professional identity and highlight ways in which professional identity is negotiated. The elements of this analytical tool are discussed in Chapter 6 below.
Chapter 6 Conclusions

This chapter is structured as follows. There is an outline of an emerging analytical framework for the analysis of professional identity of lecturers. This is followed by conclusions linked to the three themes of discipline; professional development; and policy decisions and external influences. These themes reflect the three research questions which in turn were identified in a previous paper completed as part of the EdD programme (O’Connor, 2012). The chapter ends with conclusions around the overarching theme of autonomy in an academic context.

The objective of this research was to gain insight into the negotiation of professional identity of lecturers in institutes of technology. The research findings and conclusions are based on data from 8 participants from 4 Institutes of Technology in the Dublin area. It follows that the conclusions that can be drawn from the research are shaped by this relatively small sample both in terms of numbers of participants and in the institutes from which they were drawn. Nevertheless, the participants, coming from diverse backgrounds, offer insights across a broad spectrum and give effect to understandings and deep insights into the negotiation of professional identity. The conclusions drawn are not broadly generalizable, however it is not the intention of the research to develop generalised views or assumptions. What the research suggests is diversity in the negotiation of professional identity, but linked to definite themes/constructs, some of which are unsurprising, possibly self-evident such as the link to discipline, and some that are emerging such as the link to, or in opposition to, research.

The research explored three themes linked to the research questions which in turn were identified in a previous paper completed as part of the EdD programme (O’Connor, 2012).
The constructs identified in the data analysis chapter above, flow directly and indirectly from these themes. The conclusions flowing from the research are discussed below and are structured to reflect the three overall themes of Discipline; Professional Development; and Policy Decisions and External Environment. Perhaps the most important product of the research is an emergent analytical framework, that has materialised through the analysis and discussion in this thesis and forms the initial part of the conclusions.

6.1 Analytical Framework

By synthesizing the themes and constructs of professional identity identified above, and the theorised narratives documented around Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework it is possible to develop an analytical framework for thinking about how individual lecturers’ professional identity might emerge and develop. This is illustrated in figure 6.1 below by a Professional Identity Profile (PIP) of Andrew, that relates to his particular focus on the constructs of professional identity, that have been identified through the different lenses of Gee’s (2000) framework.

![Figure 6.1: Andrew’s PIP through the Lenses](image)

There are a number of stages involved in generating the picture. The first stage was to identify the constructs that relate to the research themes/questions that were identified
through the research as being important in the negotiation of professional identity. These
constructs and the rationale for their inclusion are outlined in Chapter 4 Analysis above. The
second stage was to allocate a score on a scale from 0 – 10 for each of the constructs
associated with professional identity as they are viewed through Gee’s (2000) four identity
lenses. This facilitates the construction of a table or matrix of scores for each of the
components through each of the lenses. From this matrix it is possible to use a charting tool
to construct a two dimensional image or picture of an individual’s professional identity
profile or PIP (see figure 6.1 above). The image in figure 6.1 was generated using the ‘radar
pie chart’ tool in Microsoft Excel.

It must be noted that the scale (0 – 10) used was based on a pragmatic decision that
facilitated the generation of the ‘Professional Identity Profiles (PIP)’. The four perspectives
of Gee (2000), Nature; Institute; Discourse; and Affinity are used as lenses to view the 6
constructs of professional identity, Discipline; Professional Practice; Teaching;
Development; Community Orientated Values; and Research facilitating the generation of
two dimensional snapshots. The values allocated for the four perspectives are indicative
only, based on the stories of the 8 participants. As discussed earlier Gee’s (2000) four
perspectives were articulated differently by the participants with some participants
conveying identity through aspects of the 4 lenses in different ways with emphases on
certain types of identity perspective, for example Institute identity.

The greater difficulty in generating a two dimensional picture of professional identity profile
is in the allocation of scores across the 4 perspectives of Gee (2000), Nature; Institute;
Discourse and Affinity. The identification of perspectives flows from Gee’s (2000)
theoretical framework, however the level and intensity with which identity is expressed
through the various perspectives was not explored directly during the data collection stage. This is because the development of an analytical framework was not anticipated at the outset of the research and is only now emerging. Therefore a scale of 0 - 10 represents a practical range against which intensity can be measured relatively across the participants.

As discussed above, different participants enunciated aspects of their professional identities in different ways and through different perspectives. In future studies it would be important that the research instrument is structured in ways that access these perspectives more specifically and focuses on ways to elicit the privileged components or constructs through the different lenses. This would enable more accurate scoring of intensities through the lenses. This in turn has implications for the method as it would suggest a more structured set of interviews with consequent limitations to the narrative storytelling of participants.

The use of narrative or stories in this research gave voice to the participants and is key to the research. It could be possible to use the second set of interviews (as in this research) to introduce a more structured approach while retaining the open ended story telling through the first set of interviews. Nevertheless, this would be a challenge in future research.

While the validity of the constructs chosen above could be contested, it is argued that the six constructs chosen reflect the important facets of professional identity that have emerged in this research. The validity of the scores are open to more scrutiny, however they are reflective of the ways in which different constructs are privileged in different ways by individuals. It could also be argued that there is a verisimilitude and credibility in the allocation of scores to the constructs through the lenses.

Figure 6.2 below illustrates the PIP profiles of all of the participants highlighting the diversity of profiles, the different ways in which individual lecturers make sense of their professional
identity, and the different ways in which they locate themselves in academia and relative to colleagues they work alongside.

**Figure 6.2 Professional Identity Profiles (PIP)**

In addition to having applicability at the individual level the analytical framework could be used from an organisational development perspective. The analytical framework highlights
the dialogic nature of the negotiation of professional identity and suggests to managers and those involved in academic development that there are different ways in which lecturers express their professional identity and that approaches to professional development are highly individualistic and differentiated. It confirms the viewpoint taken in this research that a one size fits all approach to developing lecturers professionally will work for some but not for all.

The analytic framework suggested in this research is descriptive and is not sophisticated enough to be a diagnostic tool. It is important that the limitations of the analytical framework are recognised, however the limitations also illustrate areas in which a descriptive tool could be developed and in which increasing levels of sophistication based on more targeted and focused research and data could be introduced. It is argued that there is a certain generative quality about the proposed analytical framework as it identifies general constructs around which professional identity can be negotiated and lenses through which these constructs can be viewed.

More sophisticated and comprehensive studies of identity through each of the four lenses could be developed to produce a more accurate or generative model of professional identity, however the power of the tool as outlined above is its descriptive character.

### 6.1.1 Potential of the Analytic Framework

This research proposes a framework that has potential for examining and analysing the negotiation of the professional identity profile (PIP) of lecturers that has applicability from an individual perspective and from an organisational development perspective. In the first instance the analytical framework helps the lecturer to locate him/herself within their role. This would facilitate reflection and contemplation and therefore be useful as a reflective
tool in identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas for potential development both professionally and personally.

In effect the analytical framework highlights the ways in which individual lecturers negotiate professional identity by analysing the syntheses of constructs and perspectives. The analytical framework could also be used across time in identifying current position/profile and desired future position/profile, at the same time suggesting areas for development and improvement. From an organisational development perspective the analytical framework could also be used collaboratively by individual lecturers with their academic managers or with the academic development function to identify the future direction of development, and the types of supports and resources, required to support this development. A further organisational use could be the identification of ideal PIP profiles that could be used in change management or to highlight the direction of change in different environments. The current environment of uncertainty and change is one in which the analytical framework would have value and possible benefits.

What the analytical framework highlights for individual lecturers, academic development professionals, higher education management, and policy makers is that professional development is complex and nuanced. Different individuals position themselves differently with respect to the constructs around which they negotiate their professional identity and also approach the negotiation of their professional identity from different perspectives. A one dimensional approach to professional development may work for some individuals, but is unlikely to address all needs or requirements and a more dynamic and multi-dimensional approach is more likely to be effective in the long run.
6.1.2 Analytical Framework - Summary
In summary the proposed analytical framework provides a coherent and structured method of making sense of individuals’ data and narratives and has potential to be further developed and refined to make it applicable in different settings. The analytical framework is a contribution to knowledge as it provides a device which synthesizes the analysis of constructs through the lenses proposed in Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework. Whilst requiring more in-depth research and development it has potential as a useful tool for the location and analysis of the negotiation of professional identity. It also has potential for application in other situations and environments.

6.2 Discipline (theme 1)
In reading the stories and discussing the data it is possible to reach some conclusions that are suggestive of common ways of thinking and commonalities around the privileging of various aspects of the participants’ professional identity. One of the key factors in influencing professional identity that emerges from the data is what could be identified as discipline, or subject, or knowledge domain. This is well established and is consistent with literatures that link academic identity to discipline, however in addition to this identification with discipline and knowledge domain what also emerges in the data and stories of the participants is evidence of the breaking down of these strong links which reflects more recent literature that draws attention to this fragmentation. The research highlights a significant importance in the link between knowledge domain and practice based experience.

This fragmentation in professional identities was evident in the stories reflecting more recent literature on academic identity. The importance of hybrid identity (Clegg, 2008)
based on practice based loyalties is articulated directly by Andrew and Colm in this research. The diversity of professional identities which are shaped and framed by the link between knowledge domain and practice based experience suggest that it is difficult to identify lecturers in Institutes of Technology as a single homogenous group. However, more importantly, the research highlights the strength of this link and how its importance is acknowledged and valued even by those who do not have substantial experience or practice based knowledge.

The link to knowledge domain and practice based experience reflects the orientation of the Institutes of Technology to practical, vocationally focussed programmes. This orientation is rooted in the historical development of the Regional Technical Colleges which were established as a response to the needs of a country emerging from a period of isolationism and beginning a process of modernisation and industrialisation in the 1960s. The research suggests that this orientation should be studied and understood in greater depth and also suggests that Institutes of Technology who wish to pursue technological university status as outlined in the landscape document (HEA, 2012) should pause and reflect on the importance of this link to the professional identity of lecturers and the intrinsic qualities and characteristics of the institutes. The refocus of effort, energy and value systems towards research in the pursuit of technological university status may undermine a cornerstone of professional identity and the intrinsic qualities and characteristics of the institutes. This is articulated by Colm “Because I can read the literature as well as, or almost as well as my colleagues who have PhDs or who are doing PhD research. But those who do, I don’t think there’s anybody who has a PhD and industry experience and I think we’re in danger of losing that... not the ones most qualified on paper but the ones who’ve industry experience. Because we can relate to their environment, their problems.”
Closely linked to this orientation is the focus on teaching that emerges through the stories of the participants. This strong hook into teaching is evident even for those who identify strongly with their professional or practice base. The commitment to teaching and improving teaching through reflection on teaching methodologies and pedagogy, and the strong commitment to students is the theme that comes closest to a unifying theme and is threaded through all of the stories. Within this strong commitment to teaching are different perspectives and approaches highlighting the diversity in the ways in which the participants privilege their teaching. This builds on research carried out by Åkerlind (2007) outlining different qualitative approaches to growing and developing as teachers in higher education, suggesting that academics combine different aspects of their identities to focus on student learning and the student.

The focus on students is common throughout the data and is highly valued by all of the participants whose commitment to students manifests itself in different ways. The focus on student is articulated differently in the narratives, illustrating perhaps the diversity of the participants but emphasising the continued importance of teaching to the lecturers in the Institute of Technology sector. What this research suggests is that there is an aspect of and commitment to teaching that is valuable and unique and it is something that is important to professional identities and sense making for lecturers. It also suggests that as institutes move closer to technological university status a tension may arise between the orientation of the emerging technological university with a greater focus on research and the traditional orientation of the institutes. The level of engagement in teaching and learning initiatives is significant and should be noted. The predisposition of the participants to engage in the development of teaching and learning skills is something that should be encouraged and
supported and furthermore the diverse approaches to this development should also be acknowledged. This will allow any future technological university or institute to reaffirm its commitment to teaching and continue to emphasise what is perceived to be a strength in the sector.

Linked to this focus on teaching is another component that is rooted in the historical development of the former Regional Technical Colleges, the importance of the Institute to the region in which it is located. This facet of identity was highly valued by the participants and one that could be investigated in greater detail. The institutes in which this research took place were all located in Dublin\textsuperscript{12}. Given this Dublin location it would not have been surprising if the regional focus was not highlighted. However, it would appear that even in areas that are well served by higher education institutes, the lecturers identify important aspects of the institutes that make them viable and necessary in addressing specific needs.

There may be tension in the anticipated centralisation of institutes as they move towards technological university status. Should the institutes merge, does this mean that they will lessen or even cease their focus on communities who have been underrepresented in the past and who have benefitted from their ‘local’ Institute of Technology? This inference is limited insofar as the importance of the institutes to the regions in which they were situated was not an issue that was directly explored. However it has emerged in the research pointing to its privileging and importance to the stories and suggests that future studies of this nature should explore this area more directly. The strength of this identification is

\textsuperscript{12} The Greater Dublin area accounted for almost 40\% (39.3\%) of Ireland’s total population of 4,588,252 in the latest census (2011) (CSO, 2015).
reflected in the inclusion of Community Orientated Values (Community) as a construct in
the proposed analytical framework outlined above. The strength of this identification is
something that should be taken into account by institutes who merge into bigger entities,
so that the community focus of the institutes are not lost in merger processes.

6.3 Professional Development (theme 2)
Professional development plays an important role in the dialogic process of negotiating
professional identity. There are a number of aspects of professional development that are
relevant for lecturers including the development of knowledge domain skills; or teaching
skills; or developing new dimensions such as research skills. The literature states that
professional development is a normal fact of life in the academic setting (Sayer, 1981),
however it also alludes to the multifaceted and complex nature of this development and
how the lecturers continue to strive for autonomy in choosing the direction of their
development.

The research suggests that there is a fundamental interest in professional development
among lecturers and that it is a normal and ongoing project, thus adding to existing
literatures on professional development. In addition this research highlights the intrinsic
and highly individualised ways in which lecturers engage in professional development and
that if support and funding through initiatives such as SIF is provided, they will engage and
participate. It also suggests that lecturers value their autonomy when seeking to develop
aspects of their professional identities.

With regard to the emerging structures in professional development, the relatively late
arrival of the NFETL is to be welcomed as is the embryonic development of a professional
framework which will bring structure and direction to professional development not just for lecturers in Institutes of Technology but across higher education in Ireland in general.

As these structures around professional development evolve and changes suggested by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) begin to have effect, the direction of change and evolution of professional identity should be considered. Evans (2008) distinguishes between professionality and professionalism in the context of education professionals suggesting an approach to developing an understanding of professional development that could give insight to evolution and changes in the Institute of Technology sector. Evans (2008) outlines how professional culture is an attitudinal response towards professionalism. This research highlights how professionalism in the Institute of Technology sector is influenced by the professional culture of the lecturers through their intrinsic and individualistic engagement in professional development. Evans (2008) further distinguishes between functional development and attitudinal development whereby functional development is driven by the organisation while attitudinal development is more intrinsically orientated. This distinction has significant implications at the individual level as lecturers seek to understand and locate their professional identity and reflect on their individual development projects. At an organisational institute level and wider policy level the distinction highlights the need to consider where future functional development and change is anticipated and how this will or can be planned through change management processes.

Evans’ (2008) insights are important at an individual, local and sector level in addition to the wider policy level as emerging from the research is a picture of underdeveloped structures around professional development at local and sector levels and probably at a national level also. The late establishment of the NFETL and the concurrent inertia surrounding the
implementation of PMDS, present opportunities to provide structure and a framework for professional development. It is evident from the research that structures at a local level are not always coherent and enabling. The development of a professional framework for higher education in Ireland (ongoing in spring/summer 2015) provides an opportunity at a national level to develop a framework that allows for the diversity of approach and the consequent diversity of needs with regard to professional development. It would also appear that the implementation of PMDS needs to be revisited, offering an opportunity to reassess the process and in so doing developing, through consultation, a system that meets the needs of the institutes and individual lecturers.

The way in which these structures operate will be important as the stories that have emerged in this research in addition to Evans (2008) observations indicate that there is a multiplicity of factors that are combined in different ways to create professional identities and this complexity needs to be accounted for when designing and implementing these structures and frameworks. Because of the dialogic ways in which professional development contributes to the negotiation of professional identity in addition to the autonomy that lecturers seek in their development, a one size fits all approach or a system which is designed to fit new corporate responsibilities will be difficult to implement.

6.4 Policy Decisions and External Environment (theme 3)

This research also explored the policy context to determine what kind of policy issues and external factors impacted on the negotiation of professional identity. The policy context is of particular relevance to this research due to recent policy developments in Irish higher education.
The evolution of the Institute of Technology sector is not linear, however it could be argued, as it is here, that there is a clear trajectory stretching back to the effective establishment of the sector in 1970. The changes signalled by government policy and specifically the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and related documents such as the landscape document (HEA, 2012) point to a watershed in higher education and a future that suggests the possibility of significant change for individual lecturers, institutes and the sector in general.

This research suggests that the changes signalled by the Hunt report are causing lecturers to reflect on their discipline and practice backgrounds, their skills in teaching and research and how these changes will impact on them personally and more broadly on their institutes and the wider Institute of Technology sector. In effect lecturers are renegotiating their professional identities in the context of a changing higher education system.

It is evident from the data and the stories that all of the participants feel threatened insofar as the changes anticipated means change for them personally and changes to the way they go about their work. The anticipated change, and the direction of change involving a refocus away from teaching to research, is impacting on the dialogic process of the negotiation of professional identity. The anxiety of the participants is articulated mostly in an expectation that this will mean not just a change in the way lecturers do their work, but will result in a change of culture, a more profound change. Furthermore, part of this anticipated change in culture will impact on the nature of Institutes of Technology to the extent that it will impact on the essence of the sector; the focus on students and the provision of practical, vocationally orientated programmes and the regional focus of the institutes.
What is evident from the narrative stories is that the forces of new public management and neo-liberalism are at play in the context of the Institute of Technology sector even though the participants do not name these forces. The narrative stories are infused with anecdotes of quality processes, quality improvement, competitiveness and efficiencies, the international currency of neo-liberalism and new public management. What does this mean for higher education policy and how is this diffused to the level of the individual lecturer/academic?

These neo-liberal and new public management agendas are most apparent in the discourse around changes ushered in as a result of the financial and economic crisis and successive public sector agreements such as the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010). These agreements have led to reductions in salaries and increased workload and are mostly met with resignation and opposition. While there is an element of pragmatism in the reluctant acceptance of these agreements, the arbitrary way in which they have been imposed has generated reflection on professional identities and the role of government in the Institute of Technology sector.

There appears to be a contradiction between higher education policy of consolidation in the Institute of Technology sector to be achieved through mergers and technological universities, with a subsequent refocus away from teaching to research, and the requirements for increased productivity in the sector realised through measures such as additional teaching hours imposed by the Croke Park Agreement (DPER, 2010). A similar anomaly has also been noted by Locke (2012) in the context of UK, so this tension should not be seen as unusual. Nevertheless the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Education and Skills have, through the Croke Park Agreement, added
teaching hours to lecturers’ timetables in a crude, yet apparently successful attempt to achieve productivity increases. It is evident from the research that this is counter-productive to generating a reorientation and adjustment to research in the Institute of Technology sector. This research draws a link to the inconsistency and ambiguity between the message of culture change in higher education, driving a move in focus away from teaching to research in Institutes of Technology, to the message of productivity increases emanating from the Croke Park Agreement and subsequent agreements which suggest that lecturers are not spending enough time in the classroom/lecture hall.

Equally there needs to be a period of reflection at collegiate level among faculty across the sector as to what these changes mean for lecturers and how they negotiate their professional identities now and in the future. Since the data collection phase there have been a number of reports published by the HEA that will impact on the autonomy of individual lecturers and institutes and signal increasing levels of managerialism and performativity.

The reports and policy documents that have been published since the data collection phase include the Report to the Minister for Education and Skills on System Reconfiguration, Inter Institutional Collaboration and System Governance in Irish Higher Education (HEA, 2013a), the Towards a Performance Evaluation Framework: Profiling Irish Higher Education (HEA, 2013b) document, the Review of Workload Allocation Models in Irish Higher Education Institutes (HEA, 2014) document and the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) (HEA, 2015) a report compiled from the Irish student Survey of Student Engagement which was established in 2014. All of these documents point to increasing levels of managerialism and performativity and suggest a future policy backdrop that will emphasise the link between
higher education and the knowledge economy, yet increasingly eroding the autonomy of the higher education institutes and lecturers and academics in them. These reports and the implications of them are indicative of the increasing influence of neo-liberal and new public management ideas in Irish higher education.

It is a conclusion of this research that there is a need for informed debate and discourse on higher education in Ireland in general as advocated by Clancy (2015) recently, and there is also a pressing requirement for robust discourse on the future direction of Institutes of Technology in the context of Irish higher education policy and what that means for lecturers and the negotiation of their professional identities. This discourse should be informed by people working in the sector so that the qualities and contribution of the sector can be identified and critiqued and so that the implications of higher education policy for the sector and those who work in the sector can be fully explored.

Furthermore at system, sector and individual institute level cognisance of the types of change required to achieve the vision as outlined in the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and subsequent policy documents and reports will have to be taken. There will have to be both functional change and attitudinal change (Evans, 2008) if a restructuring and reconfiguration of Irish higher education is to be achieved and how this will apply to the Institute of Technology sector will be an important element in the realisation of this vision.

6.5 Autonomy

Pervasive through the stories of the participants is the notion of autonomy. Although this notion of autonomy was not named or addressed directly in the interviews it was foregrounded by all of the participants to the extent that it could possibly be identified as a
fourth overarching theme. Autonomy was articulated mostly through approaches to teaching and engagement in professional development. In the context of policy decisions and external influences there was an undercurrent of anticipation as to how individual and institutional autonomy might be affected by the prospect of change. The link between this overarching theme and the themes identified in this research propose a final conclusion or challenge. Autonomy is essential to professional identity yet there has been little or no effort to develop a discussion or discourse around important elements of professional identity or define what it means to be professional. Henkel (2005) identifies key notions of professionalism and the distinctive characteristics of professionalism as knowledge, responsibility and autonomy. Nixon (1996); Nixon et al (1997); Nixon (2001); Nixon et al (2001); Nixon (2004) detect a crisis of professional identity in higher education and call for a reconstruction of professional identity encompassing notions of institutional change and professional regeneration, urging the adoption of new moral bases for a ‘new’ professionalism. These notions informed by the distinctions between professionality and professionalism described by Evans (2008) could lead to a profession that grows with the changes that have taken place and that are set to take place underpinning the agency of lecturers and enabling and empowering them to speak with a strong and unified voice on matters relating to learning and the public good (Nixon, 1996).
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## Appendix 1 Institutes of Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Merged with Crawford Municipal Institute in 1976 which had been originally established in 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Established initially on an ad hoc basis by City of Dublin VEC. 6 Dublin Technical colleges, some with histories stretching back as far as the 19(^{th}) century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology (DLIADT)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Origins in Dun Laoghaire College of Art and Design established by Borough of Dun Laoghaire VEC in the early 1970s,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LKIT)</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Origins can be traced to 1852 – Athenaeum Society established a School of Arts in Fine Crafts in Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo Institute of Technology (ITSligo)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT Dublin)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Technology Tralee</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

196
Appendix 2 Interview Schedule (first interviews)

The aim of the proposed research is to examine how this change impacts upon current and evolving professional identity with the following research questions being identified:

1. What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the negotiation of professional identities?
2. In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how do these relate to issues of professional identity?
3. What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional identity construction?

Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the negotiation of professional identities and how does this impact on the emerging professional identities?</th>
<th>Can I ask you about your background? What is your highest level of qualification? When did you graduate? What HEI(s) did you attend? Did you engage in a change of career? When did you commence working at “Institute”?</th>
<th>Becher and Trowler (2001); Henkel (2000, 2005); Kreber (2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What influence does your own HEI (alma mater) have in how you do your job? How does Institute compare in terms of scale, level of operations, and potential?</td>
<td>Becher and Trowler (2001); Henkel (2000, 2005); James (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What brought you to lecturing? How many years did you work in industry/practice prior to commencing your lecturing career? How long have you been</td>
<td>Wenger (1998); Blåka and Filstad (2007); Hockings et al (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecturing in HEI? What HEI? How long have you been lecturing at “Institute”?</td>
<td>Henkel (2000); Becher and Trowler (2001); James (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a member of a professional body or do you have connections with any professional bodies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how do these relate to issues of professional identity?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What training/development/engagement in research have you been involved in recently? If any?</td>
<td>Blåka and Filstad (2007); Fitzpatrick et al, (2011); McMahon (2011); Quinn (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you see your future development needs? What areas etc.</td>
<td>James (2007); Fitzpatrick et al, (2011); McMahon (2011); Quinn (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the impact of SIF on professional development</td>
<td>Davies (2010); Fitzpatrick et al, (2011); McMahon (2011);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you engaged in development work either directly or indirectly that was stimulated by SIF</td>
<td>Fitzpatrick et al, (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you believe you are the driver of your own development?</td>
<td>Clegg (2008); Quinn (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional identity construction?</td>
<td>• Do you think differently about your role as lecturer and what it entails now than last year or in the past? If yes, why?</td>
<td>Nixon (2001); Nixon et al, (2001); Nixon (2004); Clegg (2008); Lea and Callaghan (2008);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you feel that you are increasingly becoming a ‘managed’ professional? If yes how?</td>
<td>Becher and Trower (2001); Nixon (2001); Nixon et al, (2001); Clegg (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you feel that IOTs are responsive to external influences? In what ways?</td>
<td>Nixon (2001); Nixon et al, (2001); Lea and Callaghan (2008); P. Taylor (2008); Tight (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In what ways do you think the sector is subject to demands for greater social and economic relevance? How are these manifested and made operational?</td>
<td>Nixon (2001); Hunt/DoES (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you see yourself as belonging to a distinctive and bounded sector of society? Do you feel that your standing in society has changed in recent times? Do you feel your quality of life has been affected by recent changes?</td>
<td>Henkel (2005); Jones (2007); Clegg (2008); Taylor (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you familiar with the recently published criteria for designation as a technical university?</td>
<td>Hatton (2002); Norgård and Skodvin, (2002); Ursin et al, (2008); Marginson (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Sources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion of the discussion/debate around a merger of the 4</td>
<td>Hatton (2002); Norgård and Skodvin, (2002); Kelly (2003); Ursin et al,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin ‘institutes’? For/against/don’t know...........Why?</td>
<td>(2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes in your role do you anticipate should there be a change in</td>
<td>Hatton (2002); Norgård and Skodvin, (2002); Kelly (2003); Ursin et al,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the status of “INSTITUTE” whether as a result of a merger and subsequent</td>
<td>(2008); Clegg (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-designation or through re-designation of the institute itself?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see yourself capable or motivated or pressurised into changing</td>
<td>Hatton (2002); Norgård and Skodvin, (2002); Ursin et al, (2008); Clegg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialism or focus of your job (from teaching to research)? In other</td>
<td>(2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words do you expect you will change to ‘become’ in the new university?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 Interview Schedule (second interviews)

1. Question around Alma Mater linking directly to interviewees’ professional identity... How much do you believe/think .......... makes up how you do your job today? Not necessarily a discrete percentage but perhaps in terms of how pervasive your experiences from your Alma Mater are in how you do your job – or do you think it is your work experience - or is it your experience here – or is it a combination.

2. Coherent structure for professional development. Is there a requirement for CPD? However there is evidence that there is a huge amount of CPD whether through T&L or doctorates in relevant areas, - why do you think that? Maybe a question about PMDS.

3. Question around career structure (or lack thereof)

4. One of the themes that have emerged from my initial interviews is that of autonomy. I haven’t asked a direct question on autonomy nor have I probed or engaged in discussion around autonomy. It has been highlighted directly in discussion/discourse on being left alone to get on with the job or manifested sometimes through discourse/discussion around course design and/or programmatic review. What is your senses of autonomy in our job, how important is it to you and in what ways is it manifest?

5. Do you think you have agency in constructing/negotiating your identity – in what ways? What impacts on this?

6. The interviewees from the smaller institutes are more conscious of impending change and possible impacts of the proposed merger – why? Where are you in this?

7. Much of the discussion of outside influences on higher education have been at a micro level – how these changes impact on you in an everyday way – and not much look in at the bigger picture of socio-economic environment and change and the higher education landscape could you comment on or discuss your views of what if any of these factors are impacting now or in 5 – 10 years’ time.

8. One of the research questions is in what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how does this impact on the emerging professional identity/ies – how has your own engagement in professional development fit in with your sense of professional identity?

9. Do you see or perceive a change in the way the institute or management talks about your role and your role in the future?

10. Membership of professional bodies/associations has net emerged as being a significant influence on the negotiation of professional identities. What associations /affiliations appear to you to be important in the negotiation of your own professional identity?

11. Relatively less discussion of identity in comparison and contrast with university lecturers – what are the differences, is there a sense of elitism in HE in Ireland, how in your experience is this manifest?
<p>| Question 1 | Question around Alma Mater linking directly to interviewees’ professional identity... How much do you believe/think ......... makes up how you do your job today? Not necessarily a discrete percentage but perhaps in terms of how pervasive your experiences from your Alma Mater are in how you do your job – or do you think it is your work experience - or is it your experience here – or is it a combination. | How much are you influenced by your former work as |
| Membership of professional bodies/associations has not emerged as being a significant influence on the negotiation of professional identities. What associations /affiliations appear to you to be |
| Question 1 | To what extent are you still in contact with that type of work |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are your senses of autonomy in your job, how important is it to you and in what ways is it manifest?</td>
<td>One of the themes that have emerged from my initial interviews is that of autonomy. I haven’t asked a direct question on autonomy nor have I probed or engaged in discussion around autonomy. It has been highlighted directly in discussion/discourse on being left alone to get on with the job or manifested sometimes through discourse/discussion around course design and/or programmatic review. What is your sense of autonomy in your job, how important is it to you and in what ways is it manifest?</td>
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<td>Do you think you have agency in constructing/negotiating your identity – in what ways? What impacts on this?</td>
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<td>Question 2</td>
<td>One of the research questions is in what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how does this impact on the emerging professional identity/ies – how has your own engagement in professional development fit in with your sense of professional identity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Coherent structure for professional development. Is there a requirement for CPD? However there is evidence that there is a huge amount of CPD whether through T&amp;L or doctorates in relevant areas, - why do you think that? Maybe a question about PMDS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>The interviewees from the smaller institutes are more conscious of impending change and possible impacts of the proposed merger – why? Where are you in this?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Much of the discussion of outside influences on higher education have been at a micro level – how these</td>
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changes impact on you in an everyday way – and not much look in at the bigger picture of socio-economic environment and change and the higher education landscape could you comment on or discuss your views of what if any of these factors are impacting now or in 5 – 10 years’ time.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Do you see or perceive a change in the way the institute or management talks about your role and your role in the future</th>
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<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Relatively less discussion of identity in comparison and contrast with university lecturers – what are the differences, is there a sense of elitism in HE in Ireland, how in your experience is this manifest?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Question around the increase in workload – linked to productivity – doesn’t blame union, blames management for not targeting individual ‘slackers’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>You talk about (p13) having to learn new languages – new software – buying new hardware and software to keep up – do you associate that in some way with your discipline?</td>
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| Just a glorified teacher                                                  | You talk about hand holding in [ ]  
You talk about working in training in SAP liking it and noting [ ] was being built--- |
| Loss of regional focus of IOTs (RTC)                                     |                                                                                                                                  |
| Distinctive bounded sector of society                                    |                                                                                                                                  |
| Relevance to students and wider stakeholders                            |                                                                                                                                  |
| Research                                                                  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Insider outsider                                                         | J Mercer                                                                                                                          |
Appendix 4 Initial Coding and Preparation for follow-on interviews

The initial coding, identifying emerging themes, is documented in this appendix. This coding and analysis took place at an early stage, prior to the second set of interviews. It is apparent in this document how, in the early stages of the analysis, participants were each given a two letter identifying code. Later in the research first name pseudonyms were introduced which brought the participants and their stories/narratives to life.

The objective at this point in time is to make decisions around what questions, if any, to ask in follow on-interviews. The follow-on interviews (8) have been delayed partially as a result of the delay in interviewing the 8th interviewee. This interview has now taken place and follow-on interviews can commence now. None of the interviewees have received transcripts of their interviews yet. In advance of this I would like to make decisions around the follow-on interviews. Should they be, as was the case for the first interviews, semi-structured interviews or should interviewees be allowed to restory their accounts unprompted. A number of themes appear to be emerging from the initial interviews and the question arises here is what questions if any could be developed from these emerging themes? I think it would be useful at this point to restate the research questions.

1. What is the impact of academic and/or professional background on the negotiation of professional identities?
2. In what ways do lecturers in IOTs engage in professional development and how do these relate to issues of professional identity?
3. What impact do policy decisions and external influences have on professional identity construction?

Emerging Themes

1. Autonomy
2. Lack of career structure, opportunity for advancement
3. Croke Park (Public Sector Agreement)
4. Membership of professional bodies and associations
5. More than a glorified teacher (not a theme, more a statement or declaration)
6. Changed role in the future (as a result of merger/Hunt report/Government policy)
7. Outcome of proposed merger(s)
8. Local – regional mandate
9. Link to industry
10. Fear of larger organisation – loss of identity
11. Link to Alma Mater

This section was written after the completion of the first round of interviews with the 8 participants.
1. Autonomy

“I think I’m totally the driver of my own development” [AA]14
“…………..we have always had a real high degree of autonomy here.” [BB]26
“…and we do have input into things like school development…and a very fair say in where the school wants to go” [CB]59

“No I would be happy with that (blank canvas) for development, I don’t like to be micro-managed” [DB] 74
Contradictory statement? “In think the role needs to be defined more clearly of what is expected of academic staff” [AA]15

“But I just feel that I’m not trusted to deliver and I wonder why that is? After I personally feel I’ve delivered very well” [AA]15

“I think that at a higher level outside our department…. That that is something that is coming down the line (in response to question on managed professional). I think that in our school there is a lot of autonomy and trust imparted and rightly so. I think it possibly can (change) and will in the future.”[CA] 51

“From internally from I’m very much left to my own devices” [DB]75
“because they have been out in industry so they know people and they know the trends and that does influence how we are maybe changing courses and stuff like that. [DA]68

“Programmatic review...take on board...but we’re an academic institution...we’re not here to train people to specifically work in specific jobs” [DB]76

“I do value the autonomy we have and the kind of lecturing we do in our faculty, you know it’s all...we do thing in ways that other people won’t do, and we’re very lucky in that sense...” [BA] 35

“I feel that we have quite a bit of freedom in terms of writing our course, and that has served us well and we’re quite a progressive young course, I think. I think if we were merged with somebody else or another institute, Yeah it could influence it, negatively, I suppose maybe we’re over comfortable in our current situation in terms of if it doubled in size or tripled in size.” [BB]46

2. Lack of career structure – opportunity for advancement

“The head of department’s there for life, great guy, but there’s never going to be a place” [AA] 14

“you know I was interested in maybe being, you know going for a head of department job, but I don’t know how...how as a lecturer do you get experience that would be valuable in that role?” [AA] 10

“It scared me that I would be asked to move into a more management role” [BA] 31
3. Theme around Croke Park – Public Sector Agreement

“We’ve had a very favourable culture, over here up to I would say it’s finally hit on the head now, I’d say the workload…” [CB] 59

“enjoyment killed off, changed atmosphere” [AA] 14

“Yes, yes, the administration of it, you know, it’s just the administration and just keeping a check, definitely, because, definitely my work load has increased, and certainly with the fourth years” [AB] 84

“Externally maybe we are, with the Croke Park agreement and all that sort of stuff, or you know…. what I feel is that when they introduce certain rules and regulations, sometimes it’s not very clear as to the exact meaning of how it will affect us.” [DB] 75

“we will sound like whining civil servants, you know, who are just protecting our bloody ivory towers and our comfortable pensionable jobs.” [BA] 33

4. Membership of professional bodies

Note: Membership of professional bodies did not appear to be significant. Is there a need to drill in here? Link to Gee (2000) discussion on A-Identities and being postmodern?

5. More than a glorified teacher

This is based on a statement by one interviewee  “and I feel like I’m just a glorified teacher” [AA] 14

“If I hadn’t ended up getting a job in ______

“Most people, I live in ______, I would say most people wouldn’t have a clue… “she’s a teacher” as far as most people are concerned” [AB] 89

“I don’t know at a higher level… there’s a tendency…once a semester…starts…your focus is on the…where’s the next class? Have I prepared? Once a year do I have to grade?” [DA] 68

“I think people still have an inherent respect for teachers and teaching and education” [DA] 69

“that’s not our job, wait a sec, that’s not our… but kind of wait a sec, it’s our discipline as educators” [BA] 39

“but definitely I’m a teacher first and a researcher second” [CB] 60

6. Changed role in the future

“with the change in technologies with the amount of information that is accessible on the Internet even the types of information that is available…. there and what we can now do
individually at our desks or in our studies and what we can do in the classroom I see my role as have... very far along the change from teacher to facilitator” [CB] 60

“There will be a lot more collaboration, ...my role would probably change, to a certain degree it will still be a teaching college... I can’t see it changing that much” [DB] 79

“They (university lecturers) spend a lot of time researching, and also funding, building up funds for the college, links with industry, you know I would love to get involved in that...yeah a lot of opportunities” [DB] 79

“I feel quite confident that I can tackle any role. I really do, I know that sounds arrogant, but I do, with time, I can do it. If there’s a changing role though into deliver research there will need to be a change in... the hours teaching... the balance, or I don’t think that’s possible.” [AA] 20

“I think no matter what happens, things are going to change, there’s no doubt about it” [BA] 38

“I do feel that I should be doing either sort of I suppose some kind of academic writing or I suppose practice based work” [BB] 47

“Well I think that in some areas yes, that it definitely will change. I think there will be more online delivery of courses for example.” [CA] 53

“No, if anything, what I’m doing and my job descriptions are catching up, as it were, with my interests.” [CB] 62

“I’m looking forward to it, sometimes, you know the same old, it’s nice to have new opportunities, new challenges” [DB] 79

“one of the areas I lack is research, so certainly from that perspective I would probably have to become more research oriented, that’s one area that I feel that I need to spend more time on probably” [DB] 80

7. Outcome of proposed merger

“Process of rationalisation” [BA] 32

“Again I see a lot of opportunities in what’s happening as well as challenges” [BA] 32

“And I think that’s.. this is what worries me about the technological university that we lose that focus. Now maybe we want, but... I would be worried” [AA] 17

“I think the fear is that we would just be swallowed....I think that we could be all gobbled up (by ) [BA] 37

“I don’t care which I go to. Hop on bike, will do, I don’t, I don’t have a problem or get worried about what college or faculty or school I’m called you know once I feel I can get in there and make a contribution so I would welcome and I think there’s huge synergies” [CB] 62
“at the end of the day I still go into a room and teach students. You know, and where you do it, or what the sign over the door is where you do it, doesn’t necessarily change too many things about that aspect of it, I suppose” [DB] 70

“I think it’s fantastic, I think it’s great for the students” [DB] 78

“So it would be lovely to team up with people in [redacted] to see how do they do this” [DB] 79

“this is what I was saying about the opportunities, I think there are a lot of things we’re not doing, and there are a lot of things we haven’t touched, in our discipline in our teaching and learning and I think that’s the opportunity is to touch... to reach out for those things, to give ourselves more capability and as I said to you before, to reach new clients” [BA] 38

“I think it would be a public, national and indeed an international recognition of the fact that we have in quite a number of areas where we have achieved, you know, capability to operate at a serious university standard” [CB] 62

“.. I’m like one of those guys that can play anywhere” [AA] 21

“So, does that leave us vulnerable to being moved, or it might stop here altogether and you have to go and move and work somewhere else. Well that might be the case, who knows?” [DA] 70

8. Theme around local/regional focus

“I often felt the [redacted] had a positive social impact on the area. A lot of students will come in from [redacted] and they would do our course and they would have successful careers. Things that wouldn’t have been open to them if they hadn’t had the access I’ve always felt that [redacted] was a successful entity” [AA] 5

“and if, if for example, this just became a feeder, you know, it would be an awful shame. It would be an awful shame for the local community. I think. That’s the big thing, what courses are going to be taught in [redacted] in, say, 2018..... and that’s a shame because I think this college would have had a positive influence on the local environment” [AB] 87

... and the parents would tell you at the graduation, that they were the first, ..... of their family to go to third level ... they would never.... go to [redacted]... but because it was in [redacted], it was accessible, ... and he came in that route (level 6),... we’ve lots of students like that... and I don’t think they would have done it if it wasn’t on their doorstep. If this college wasn’t here or if this college changes after the merger, I think it will be a big loss to the local area ... they finished their second level education and it made perfect sense to come to [redacted]. You know, it takes them ten minutes... the population of [redacted] is huge, I don’t know how you could just... I don’t know how they survived without it, they obviously didn’t go to third level education, or the motivation wasn’t there to do well maybe in second level. [AB] 88 -89
“have a really, really, really, essential local mandate...they’re hugely marginalise just from a geographical point of view....but like they are terribly isolated” [BA] 32-33

“I think I mean education is becoming more accessible and certainly in disadvantaged areas, you know, maybe ten, fifteen years ago maybe no one from this area very few people would have went to third level” [DB] 76

“a lot of the other small institutes were set up to speak to and to engage with those local communities, and they’re doing a really valuable job...often it’s an entry point to third level...kids coming in there and nobody in their family has ever gone to third level” [BA] 37

9. Link to Industry

“Disconnect between education and industry” [BA] 33

“overspecialisation... leaving people with specific skills stranded when technology changes” [BA] 33

“we’ve a very good connection to industry” BB [45]

“because they have been out in industry so they know people and they know the trends and that does influence how we are maybe changing courses and stuff like that” [DA] 68

“I have always been in an area that has high economic relevance and I think food and Ireland we never had a problem with social relevance... plays a substantially important role in the Irish economy” [CB] 61

“So yes, I think that we’re good at that (economic and social relevance) we mightn’t always be good at some other things but I think those things it’s probably very relevant” [DA] 69

10. Fear of larger organisation

“I just, you know, being small and flexible, merging with a large organisation, one that has big debts. You know, how are we going.. where courses are going to go?” [AA] 20

“I think we were doing a good job... and I hate this notion of well people coming in now that don’t really appreciate, maybe what good work you’ve been doing, be it for your part time or your full time students, and that you’d have your own maybe little personal touch. You know when you have lots of students who’d be very... lacking in confidence and all this, and, you know, you can, kind of, really bring them on in first year... if you’ve the right people teaching in first year you can bring them out of that and I think we might lose... depending... I don’t know what way it’s going to be structured, you know, and say if some of those students might end up going in to , and I just know, you know, that they might be lost in there, because sometimes you can rescue some of them here” [AB] 91

“I think the fear is that we would just be swallowed....I think that we could be all gobbled up (by ) [BA] 37
11. Link to Alma Mater

“Maybe not directly, but maybe it has influenced, maybe the way I, maybe to a small, maybe the way I do things, and hence it does, but then the direct link isn’t there” [little or no link to alma mater][AB] 82

Discussion

Autonomy has emerged as a very strong theme even though it hasn’t been ‘named’ or probed in firsts set of interviews – A question naming autonomy could explore their thoughts around what autonomy means to them echoing Jones (2010) comments on the power of academic elites to secure widespread acceptance that the fulfilment of those roles require a strongly bounded academic arena. Nixon (1996, 2001, 2004) discusses the restructuring of higher education and talks of a crisis in higher education which is in part a crisis of professional self-identity. Is there such crisis around professional self-identity among lecturers in IOTs? Is there a sense that lecturers have agency in how they shape their roles and construct their identities (Becher and Trower, 2001 p16; Clegg, 2008).

Among the 8 interviewees there is a wide range of development activities from relatively superficial to deep engagement. I would like to ask the interviewees to reflect on their development how they got to this point and where they are going, similar to the ideas put forward by James (2007) around trajectories.

There appears to be a greater awareness of impending change among interviewees of the smaller institutes, even among the interviewees from [ ] who are not engaged in merger discussions. Some fear has been expressed by interviewees of being swallowed up however this is not an issue for the interviewees from [ ] (by far the bigger institute) one states “I don’t have a problem or get worried about what college or faculty or school I’m called you know once I feel I can get in there and make a contribution so I would welcome and I think there’s huge synergies” the other “I think there would have to be change. There would have to be, I would assume we would be bigger in one sense, but perhaps more efficient.” Neither feels threatened or challenged, it is going to be business as usual. I would like to probe around getting interviewees (all of them) to imagine or picture themselves in a new entity.

The impact of government policy and the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and subsequent reports and statements from the Higher Education such as the landscape document (HEA, 2012) is discussed throughout by all interviewees, however the discourse was very much on the micro level, seldom at a meso level and rarely discussed at a macro level. What is noticeably absent apart from one or two interviews is a comparison with university lecturers. Perhaps the differences could be probed to see if there are any important insights. Again looking at Jones (2010) who identifies strong pressures on academic communities and institutions not only to change their cultures and structures to enable them to manage in a new policy environment but also to review their assumptions about roles, relationships and boundaries in that changing environment.
Looking at professional identities of lecturers through a lens suggested by Gee (2000) could look at a number of different issues;

(a) Is there evidence of institutions promoting certain sorts of discourse, dialogue and interaction to sustain and promote existing I-identities? Is there evidence of bidding to “achieve” new identities? Is this happening at an institutional level? Is it happening at an individual level? Are these identities achieved interactionally, are they contested, how are they being negotiated?

(b) Membership of professional bodies is emerging as not being critical in negotiating and sustaining identity - is there evidence of networking, shared experiences, the development of affinity groups reflecting A-Identities? How can I probe this? Are there semiotic or representational processes through which the interviewees are negotiating and sustaining identities?

(c) The role/work of institutions in constructing and sustaining Discourse with regard to professional identity. For example is there tension between the IOT sector and university sector? At what level is there an awareness of these tensions? Gee observes (p111) that Discourses are social and historical, but the person’s trajectory and narrativization are individual. I have observed that the interviewees are very much focussed on the micro, the personal, the individual located in a professional space, is there an awareness or consciousness of wider issues impacting on professional identity?

(d) Gee (2000, p113) discusses the role of elites in authoring themselves in more powerful social and political ways. Is there a sense or a consciousness of elitism within or surrounding Institutes of Technology. Becher and Trower (2001) discuss the impact of elites in higher education and refer to the ‘Matthew Effect’ in higher education. Can this be explored through the lens suggested by Gee (2000)?
Appendix 5 Detailed Thematic Analysis

Theme 1. Discipline

Aiden
Aiden is very much a practitioner who has been brought to lecturing through demands for his skills which are based on his experience, as he would say his “reel” referring to projects he has undertaken and produced in the film industry. Having been good at art in school Aiden went to Art College but dropped out at an early stage, subsequently using his artistic ability to develop a career in the film industry. He has built up experience and recognition in his field over the years and worked both for himself, as a freelance film-maker and in a cutting edge studio environment. Due to the nature of his job as a lecturer he completed a degree through distance learning with a UK based university. Whilst very positive about the university and the opportunity it gave him to obtain a qualification, which was a requirement for his job in lecturing, he is nevertheless firmly a practitioner located temporarily in education. His identity as a practitioner is very much based on his experience with the academic qualification viewed in the main as a flag of convenience legitimising and facilitating his role as a lecturer in the Institute of Technology “In our industry qualifications count for nothing, absolutely nothing... all that matters... is “what you’ve done”, “what’s on your reel”, “what projects you’ve been working with”, “who you have been working with”, and there’s a big network then of “what was he like?” ... and I can’t kind of emphasise that enough, they do not rate qualifications.”

His connection to his discipline is inextricably linked to the practitioner element of his background with respect and recognition for the opportunity given by his university. Since engaging in lecturing which initially he saw as knowledge transfer... “And I came in here, it was just knowledge transfer, that’s all. It’s really rudimentary teaching. Crap teaching in fact, that’s what it was. It was very valuable to the kids.” Since his, at first reluctant,
involvement as a lecturer he has become reflective and committed to the teaching aspect of his role at his institute. He has completed a certificate in teaching and learning and was at the time of the interviews pursuing two masters’ degrees, one in teaching and learning based on modules completed with LIN and other providers, and a masters’ degree by research in his discipline using material he has created in his professional career. This belies his practice based background and the culture of the professional arena in his subject area where qualifications are not valued. “I came in as a practitioner, you know big into the knowledge transfer business, you know, that was fine, and now I’m getting much more consciousness, a teaching and learning consciousness.” He has embraced teaching and learning and this has become a strong aspect of his identity “What I found with teaching and learning with the qualifications, such as they are, like you know I’m not any expert, but I found that those qualifications have been very helpful for me in managing change and driving change actually... but I think teaching and learning has helped me, has given me a larger perspective... That we all come in as discipline practitioners and only through teaching and learning do you get a perspective that... “wait a sec!” there really is another job here, another role as an educator. And I feel some of what I’ve learned in teaching and learning is applicable across disciplines.”

With regard to his involvement in professional bodies he discusses one professional body that does not in his opinion amount to a serious professional organisation “...is an organisation that just organises one party every year. They’re not a true... in my feeling. I’m not heavily involved with them, but I really do feel they are only at a first iteration.” Another body does hold value for him although he is not an active member due to its location more than any other reason “...a far more genuine organisation because they very much are an
umbrella body for... But they are a more important organisation.” He is also active in networking with other members of the industry.

Ultimately Aiden’s identity revolves around his professional interest in film-making “fundamentally I still see myself as an animator as a film-maker, that’s my fundamental identity. The lecturing is very much a secondary thing, it’s become dominant at the moment because it’s become my principle activity... But fundamentally I would see myself as a film-maker and I think that always will be the way, for as long as I can practice film-making.”

Andrew
Andrew did not actively seek a job in lecturing. “And I had no idea to go on to be a teacher or a lecturer in computing. I wanted to work in the industry” On being contacted by a former lecturer Andrew returned to do a funded masters’ degree in his original university. During this funded masters’ his attention was brought to an advertisement from a university for a fixed term contract as a lecturer. He applied and was successful. During his time working at the university he was aware of a difference in academic focus and culture between this older traditional university and the relatively young university he had attended. The cultural difference was manifest for him in the focus and orientation of the two universities with regard to teaching, links to industry and research. This difference was also evident from the orientation and focus of fellow lecturers who had arrived from a third, well established, Irish university, which also reflected the culture of the older traditional university he was now working in.

His initial interest in lecturing came from doing lab work to supplement the stipend he received when completing his masters’ studies. He enjoyed this work which provided a rationale or motivation for his successful application to become a lecturer in the university,
on a three year fixed term contract. Prior to the conclusion of his three year contract at the university Andrew moved to his institute and is still employed there. The move was a positive one for him as the focus changed from the more research orientation of the university to a focus on teaching and learning and engagement with industry. “So when I came here the department here and the head of department at the time was very focussed on the teaching and learning and on the industry so it was a good fit with me”. He states that this difference was quite distinctive “There was quite distinctive difference between here             ” His comment that it was a “good fit with me” reflects what he identifies as similarities with his own university experience and the practical focus of his particular subject/discipline of software development. “Very much I suppose it fits with me, the focus of computing here is very much applied to business and that side of things and the teaching and learning is a big issue here and they’re what I really like doing,” This reflects the link to background and highlights the practical or practice based focus of programmes that tend to be associated with Institutes of Technology. As noted elsewhere the Institutes of Technology have traditionally had a vocational and practical focus. This is highlighted in the second interview where he observes “I felt very much, my education in was very focussed on turning out a professional software developer, someone who was prepared to go out into industry… as opposed to preparing you for academic life or research in computer science.”

Andrew reveals an enthusiasm and deep interest in his discipline and details on-going engagement through retraining and research into his discipline throughout both interviews. His enthusiasm is reflected in his comment that software development “Defines who I am.”
The value that Andrew places on teaching is reflected in his professional development over his time at his institute. He has completed an EdD at a UK university and also engaged in a number of other teaching and learning modules and programmes including a higher diploma in education and modules funded by SIF. It is evident that Andrew has multiple disciplinary backgrounds that include his own discipline but also teaching and learning within and beyond the confines of computing/software development. “It really seemed to me there was a problem in teaching and learning in that we were getting students in who according to the leaving cert points weren’t that….you know weren’t as high, and they were failing, and were failing in particular, in software development.”

In defining himself with respect to membership of professional bodies or associations he does not attach significant importance to them. He is a member of the Irish Computer Society but not, as he admits, actively involved. “I am a member of the Irish Computer society and I have gone to a couple of their events, but I wouldn’t say I was an active member. In that they have, they’d have breakfasts maybe once a month, 8 to 9 kind of thing, just, I don’t have the time to take part in them.” This peripheral engagement, ambivalence perhaps, indicates a lack of commitment to being a member of a professional body. Earlier he recounts how such associations are not as well developed as in other professions such as engineers, doctors, or lawyers. He is also a member of the NDLR (National Digital Learning Repository) and is active in a number of LinkedIn groups online. It would appear that whilst he finds these associations useful in many ways he does not define himself professionally in connection with them.

**Beth**

Beth studied business at one of the traditional universities before going on to complete a masters’ in her discipline. On leaving university Beth commenced teaching almost
immediately in the further education sector moving to her present Institute of Technology some years later. Although Beth is positive in her comments on her university “I think it was good a good experience and it would have had a positive influence on the way you would do things”. There does not appear to be a strong association or bond “For me, even when I look back I realise, a lot of the time I think they were offering just a brand. They did give you the knowledge, I wouldn’t necessarily say maybe as skills based in education as now but certainly I would have to say I had a very good grounding in all the business areas.” Beth did pursue an alternative career in accountancy and actively engaged with this career path, working during summer months and preparing for professional examinations. Ultimately she did not pursue this career path. The commitment to such a career could have been diminished due to the relative security of her teaching job in further education. Beth has a broad range of experience in industry however this is limited to periods of working during summer holidays (June/July/August). Beth reflects on this ‘gap’ in her background and is very conscious of bridging this gap so that she can bring concrete experience and examples in to the classroom “…build a, be it a wealth of, be it examples or experience, or you talk to people, you know you spend a lot of time talking to people… and there was a lot of work involved in building up a knowledge of what’s actually happening in industry and you just know to do that and to talk to people. Just through contacts…”

After a number of years in further education Beth commenced working as a lecturer in her institute and began to specialise in areas related to the subject areas she had studied in her masters’. Despite the lack of on-going contact with her university Beth still values her experience there “…very good lecturers in some areas and I think you would still remember certain things, or certain styles, or the way they did things, generally speaking I think it was
good a good experience and it would have had a positive influence on the way you would do things."

Beth identifies strongly with the teaching and learning aspect of her role and has a preference for teaching over research “I would, I’d be putting my hand up if they wanted someone to do more of the teaching...” Beth is not a member of a professional organisation, attending conferences, time permitting, to keep up to date and to develop relationships with individuals from other higher education institutes. Beth has also engaged in the Erasmus teaching exchange programme which gives her an opportunity to experience different cultures and ideas which she finds refreshing.

**Breda**

Breda traces her interest in her discipline (graphic design) to transition year in secondary school where a project led her to an interest in art as a possible career. Her first year in college was a foundation year from which she developed an interest in graphic design. On completion of college she worked for some time in Dublin in a graphic design company before travelling and working abroad and returning to Ireland to work again in Dublin and Galway. In the course of her different jobs she had gravitated towards a mentoring role with new employees and students on placement and this was the source of her initial attraction to lecturing. “I loved the idea when I was in design studios of encouraging junior designers or students who came in as interns and seeing them develop and seeing them understand how the business of design worked and I found it much more uplifting and exciting than getting a big job from a client, it’s just that’s where the excitement for me lay, actually seeing this person blossom, and that’s probably where I’m not probably a business person, because unfortunately money isn’t really a great incentive for me .”
Breda returned to college to do a masters’ degree which built on and complimented her skills as a graphic designer. In deciding to return to college she was conscious of the possibility of becoming involved in teaching and that a masters’ degree would/could be an advantage should the opportunity arise. That opportunity did arise, almost immediately, and over the course of one or two years lecturing part-time and providing maternity cover she began to work full-time. Her initial experience was as a tutor on final year projects and this was something she enjoyed as it mirrored her experience working with new employees and students in industry. “I really enjoyed both of them immensely you know just felt very comfortable, kind of in a tutorial, particularly doing tutorials with students would have been a way I would have worked with younger employees in any of the design companies and any of the students we got in.”

Breda is complimentary of her alma mater, however is definite in her preference for the more structured and thorough approach she and her colleagues in the Institute of Technology take now with students. “We had to fend for ourselves and find your way a little bit more, I think, but, you know, still enjoyed the experience but you know I was happy to work independently a lot.” “I think there seems to be more staff time available, ...so there’s more staff on the ground, say from level... definitely level 1 and level 2 of the programme and we’re timetabled to be with the students and there are more workshops organised, and that goes down to the individual staff members who have structured their module and I suppose within our programme there’s an on-going effort to incorporate workshops for similar groups and it’s been improving yearly.”
She refers numerous times to the teamwork and the approach taken at her institute. She reflects on her own experience in higher education and how she worked independently. Having been lecturing for a number of years and being involved in a number of programmatic reviews she is reflective on what is working for the students.

She is very clear about the importance of her industry experience and what it brings to her role as a lecturer “I would say hugely informs my… well I suppose having the experience I know what students are going to face in reality when they get a job. I would see it as part of my job, teaching and theory is to prepare them for the experience of dealing with clients and suppliers in the real world, so if I didn’t have that experience I think I would be ill prepared, to prepare them.”

Over the course of the two interviews Breda completed a certificate in teaching and learning which has built on her reflections and refocused her orientation to students “but that certificate in teaching and learning has given me a lot of ideas for what I absolutely should be doing, to be a better teacher and to bring more structure to my classes.” She continues to value her industry experience but identifies new possibilities opened up by the certificate in teaching and learning “I don’t think I had the background grounding in teaching practice to... my work experience, that is probably what I mostly based on... based the way I have taught... and it has worked reasonably well, basing it on where I think the student needs to go based on my experience. But I think the grounding in teaching practice has given me a lot of inspiration and guidance in terms of how we can add to it.”

In connecting with industry/profession Breda is not a member of a professional body but maintains industry contact informally through friends which she values as it keeps her up to
date and offers opportunities to connect industry with students “...it’s very important because it keeps me in touch with what’s going on in the business world and it provides me with opportunities to get those people in here to talk to the students which I think is...I’ve got a good few people in over the years, I just think it’s great for the students to hear what happens.”

Cathy

Cathy came to lecturing in her Institute of Technology after a career in another unrelated field followed by marriage and a family before eventually becoming involved in social care and working in the field for a number of years including working in a management capacity. Her work in social care led to her pursuing a qualification in social care which she completed in the institute she is now employed in. Further qualification of a masters’ degree was completed at a UK university and Cathy is at present on a break from a PhD in social justice at one of the established universities in Ireland.

Cathy has a strong link to her original college which is natural given she is now lecturing in it. Cathy strongly identifies with the social care sector and the applied nature of her discipline “So I obviously do associate very closely with . I suppose I’m at the stage in my life, my career path where I can wear multiple hats. Having worked I would strongly identify with the sector of social care and the knowledge of academic acquisition isn’t enough unless you can apply it.”

“So it’s very much about teaching the practitioner, the emerging practitioner to be aware of personal and professional boundaries and how does that empowering and equality work out, or play out in the field.”
Cathy’s link to industry is highlighted in her orientation to her students and how they interact with the people they work with on placement as part of their programme and later when they begin working in the sector “I mean I love my job and I love the fact that I have the ability to influence young people going out into the sector and mature students going out into the sector to adhere to standards and ethics of best practice. And I think the people that they’re serving deserve none less, nothing less than the best standards.”

Cathy is a member of a related professional body and was involved in professional bodies in her previous employment. She is also involved in presenting at conferences and has contributed chapters to books on social care practice. Cathy has a holistic view of her role within the social care sector. “I think we have a great responsibility to keep the students up to date in that regard to make sure that none of our information, that we have the honour, and the privilege to impart to students is of a certain quality and is updated and upskilling them all of the time.”

**Colm**

Colm’s family background had an influence on his college career and later experience before becoming a lecturer. Colm identifies strongly with his university and continues to have strong links with it. “First because I thought it was an absolutely and I still think it’s an absolutely fantastic... But they taught you enough that if you could read up on what was happening 10 years later and bring yourself up keep yourself abreast of the contemporary sciences of the day. So, I think they did a very good job.”

In his discipline there has been increasing involvement in research and the development of PhD programmes, which he is supportive of, however his main focus remains on teaching.
“I’d be more into the teaching and what would you call it, academic community service than I would the research end.”

His attraction to lecturing came about as a result of taking a technical position in the Institute of Technology he now works in. His technical role brought him into contact with students which he found interesting and fulfilling “Oh but you’re meeting the students and it just tended to get, if you didn’t’ have to work in producing the next set of stuff. You tended to get stuck into the practical sessions and meet and work with the students and I just found myself doing that. Found the students rather a nice group of people in general, to work with.”

Colm would consider himself a scientist first and a teacher a very close second. He has a very specific sense of what he is as a scientist “But on the other hand what I do is very focussed for a specialist sector that requires knowledge from physics, chemistry, biology, micro-biology, management, brought together to a particular purpose.” When discussing where research fits in Colm is conscious of the culture of research in his school, however for Colm his focus in research has moved away from his discipline towards research in teaching and learning. His most recent publication has been a paper in teaching and learning and due to reduced time for research and the fact that he sees himself as a generalist rather than a specialist he is becoming more involved in the teaching and learning aspect of research and is engaged in collaboration with others in his institute in this area. “I think I’ve been experiencing a slow metamorphosis in that I started here, I’d been doing all research work in the National Food Centre and I enjoyed it but when I came in here I was ready to stop researching and start teaching and then over the year, kind of realised, you actually need to do a bit of research work and was doing that, but definitely I’m a teacher first and a
Colm gives an interesting insight into what he perceives as a change in the role and orientation of the teacher/lecturer, seeing the role to be less of the expert font of knowledge/information to a role as facilitator and accreditor of learning “what has happened is with the change in technologies with the amount of information that is accessible on the Internet even the types of information that is available there and what we can now do individually at our desks –or in our studies and what we can do in the classrooms I see my role as have, very far along the change from teacher to facilitator because I mean we used, kids used to come to college to learn factual information. It was in technical libraries. You’ve technical libraries, we’ve technical libraries, you kind of had to go to college to access that. That’s all now available through the cheapest computer you can buy and there’s, there’s so much more we can do, there’s so many different focus of information you can access and you can present information from so many more perspectives. So, more and more, I am using other people’s information in a less, you know in a form that I haven’t distilled myself for students, in particular in specialist areas and I see my role as having changed from a teacher to someone who does some teaching but my main job particularly with the more older the higher 3rd, 4th years, masters students is to facilitate their learning and to accredit their learning. So, a subtle change in that one.”

Colm keeps in touch with scientific developments through reading and is also a member of a professional body which he values, however his involvement with the body is not an active one, albeit he would like to become more involved. “It’s moderately important. I’d probably like it to be a little bit more important but the trouble is when things are organised during
"the day, it’s usually the day or the morning you have four hours teaching... something like that. It is difficult to get to stuff during the day...”

Deirdre

Deirdre worked in industry for 11 years before becoming a lecturer at her institute and has been lecturing there since she moved from industry. Deirdre’s academic background is in another Institute of Technology followed by the completion of a degree in one of Ireland’s newer universities. Deirdre completed a masters’ degree at a third Institute of Technology. Deirdre was attracted to lecturing as a result of her experience in training in the computing industry. She had a long standing interest in becoming a lecturer “obviously you have to like teaching, you have to enjoy it. I did... I got into training while working for [Company]. I had my own company and I worked through [Company] as a consultant in [Company]. So I did all their SAP training and I really enjoyed it, and I said, you know what? This could be the route for me, I like teaching, I like training... So I always... had my eye on working as a lecturer.”

Deirdre sees a lot of similarities between her experiences in college and the role she has as a lecturer and the practical based approach that is taken “Whereas I see that’s exactly the way we do things in [Institute]. There’s a lot of, sort of, you know, teacher-student time, as opposed to, you know, just letting students go off...” She considers her college background and time spent in industry as being fundamentally important in her approach as a lecturer “in my situation I’ve a lot of different college experiences, both at the IT sector and the university and then I’ve eleven years’ experience, working for six different companies... and I think certainly at the Institute of Technology level you have to be able to get down to the level of the students. There are smart students in the class, but we do have the weaker students that we have to try and bring forward and having gone to an IT and done my masters’ in an IT
and worked in industry I understand that concept, that I’m not sitting up here as a lecturer on a high stool looking down at the students I try and get down to their level, and I think that’s one of the important concepts of teaching in the Institute of Technology.”

There is a strong link between Deirdre’s higher education background and her professional identity “There’s not as much thought put into the actual way of delivering courses and the way of motivating students at university level... So I would say yes, there is a major, major difference there [between Institutes of Technology and universities] and even from a professional identity.” This link to professional identity through working closely with students is reflected in her involvement in teaching and learning initiatives through SIF which she brings to her role as a lecturer. “The SIF one was learning techniques... I took one of my modules and applied SIF stuff, learning techniques, you know the way you would have active learning, there’s different... basically students have different ways of learning and to try and incorporate a model to cater for the entire class.”

Deirdre is not a member of a professional body, however she uses LinkedIn in connection with her role as a lecturer.

**Dermot**

Dermot’s interest in lecturing stemmed from experiences in college where he found he had an aptitude for explaining elements of the course to fellow students. On completing college he worked in industry for 2 years before taking up a lecturing position on a part time basis in an Institute of Technology. Since then he has worked in another Institute of Technology and for FÁS before taking up his role as a lecturer in his present Institute of Technology.
The university he attended became a university after he had graduated and he has strong links with the practical, industry focussed approach adopted by the institute while he was there. “because the experience there was very good and I suppose the subsequent job that I went into in lecturing that, you know, you would see some of the models of what you expected was maybe what you saw there, and at the time would’ve been probably closer to our system now, than it would’ve been had it been a full blown university, it was still finding its way... So, and there would’ve been a very strong emphasis on the practical, so that people knew what they were doing in theory.”

Dermot feels his time in industry is perhaps limited and one dimensional, being with one company, “so very little industry experience really, went lecturing probably in retrospect maybe little bit too early, you know I think another few years in industry would have been useful over the years in terms of depth of experience to call upon, you know.” Nevertheless he values the time he spent in industry and the insights it has given him “the company itself was good, but professionally I did at least get to see how things should be done properly and how things need to be documented and what’s needed to make something into a product and of course what they did at the time was leading edge technology for the time, so that plus a very strong emphasis on computer architecture in, would have set me up fairly well for the kind of stuff I do since that point.”

Dermot is a member of a professional body but finds his relationship with them fractious due to the body’s lack of recognition of students from the Institute of Technology sector. His membership is one of pragmatism as he believes membership would be important should he decide to change career, as the recognition of members of the body is important
in industry. He also believes the body does not cater for the broader profession and is quite narrowly focussed on one particular branch of the profession.

Dermot’s focus as a lecturer is on teaching and although he was engaged in research in the past this is quite remote now. “I suppose I would see my focus is educational rather than research, you know, so if you were kind of to categorise people into, you know, people who are interested in research and teach, and people who are interested in the, you know, educational aspects of teaching, and putting all their energy into that, I’d say I’m in that camp.”

Dermot has engaged in teaching and learning and was involved in the SIF problem based learning initiative which he sees important in his approach to teaching in his institute.

Dermot sees changes in the way students are learning through familiarity with and access to software online giving them the ability to work outside the traditional laboratory environment “…the way things are changing, the way our students interact with us seems to be going through a change. They kind of would like a lot of stuff that they can work on at home. For example, when we’re choosing packages that we would teach with now. Whereas a few years ago even, we would pick a package that would only work here in the college. You know, we have the licences for it and you need the computers here, more now we can look at things that are open source or something because we can model the students are moving towards having their own laptop, being able to do the work here and being able to go home and do it even in engineering where you traditionally you’re kind of fixed, tied to a lab, because of the equipment, you know I guess people would have always done this maybe more in computing and business, but in engineering that’s, kind of the way it’s going…”

231
Theme 2. Professional Development

Aiden

Aiden’s professional development in his subject area is complex and influenced heavily by his industry engagement prior to becoming involved in lecturing. Aiden states that qualifications in his industry are not valued or considered as important as experience and achievements “In our industry qualifications count for nothing, absolutely nothing... all that matters... is what you’ve done... and I can’t kind of emphasise that enough, they do not rate qualifications. Think about it, fundamentally, all the studio heads here went to college 20 years ago when there weren’t even certificates. You know what I mean, a lot of them did 4 year certs as we call them. So they don’t understand, and they still talk about that.” Aiden had no formal qualifications prior to commencing lecturing in his institute having dropped out of college at a young age. He was approached by course leaders at his institute to deliver what initially were guest lectures before becoming more formally involved. Aiden’s initial involvement was driven primarily by his experience and achievements in the film industry “I was a very hot ticket as a practitioner.” Having become almost reluctantly involved in lecturing Aiden has taken a very pragmatic approach to his professional development academically, completing a bachelor degree at a UK university, something that was effectively a requirement to enable him to be employed in a more formal capacity in his institute. Lecturing is now his main source of income and activity “[insert name] was brilliant. We didn’t know it because it gave me undying respect, never ending respect for distance learning. They gave us the opportunity to do, to complete a BA in one year... It’s not that we had nothing to learn, we had tons to learn, but they gave us the opportunity to do that in our own time... So again to be allowed to do the work in your own time, to fit it in around a job or jobs, I was working in studio for [insert name], I was lecturing here and I was
doing a BA at the same time and all quite successfully. You know that was phenomenal and that for me is the model for education. You have to respect the fact that people are doing other things and that people at certain levels, especially post grad and the rest of it are not going to be available to come back full-time for a taught masters etc. etc.” This dimension to his professional development has been brought a step further through Aiden’s desire to complete a masters’ degree in his discipline area and to use material he has produced as a practitioner as a basis for the completion of a master’s degree by research “And just last week, two weeks ago, they’re starting here a masters’ by research as well. There’s an opportunity to do a component and practice based... I want my industry experience accredited and I want to do basically a masters’ in my own discipline as well. So I suggested to my Head of Faculty that, I might apply for the master’s by research with a practice based component and he was really encouraging...” Aiden reveals an enthusiasm and drive with regard to this project which is also driven by a desire to obtain a qualification appropriate to his position as a lecturer “I know it’s a danger too but the material I will be reflecting on is my own, so it’s very. Yeah, I think it will be a very cathartic process, even doing the literature review over the past fortnight, has really reframed the thing for me an awful lot. It has reframed what I’m doing and what I have been doing a fair bit and I’m kind of really hungry to get into that.” Aiden’s engagement in this part of his professional development illustrates reflection on his role as a lecturer, his experience and expertise as a practitioner and a pragmatism focussed on the consolidation of his position as a lecturer in his institute.

Running parallel to this professional development project is Aiden’s on-going engagement in professional development in teaching and learning. This engagement also reveals the reflective nature of Aiden and his interest in lecturing and teaching. Aiden outlines his initial concerns about the requirements for teaching referring several times to the transfer of
knowledge as opposed to teaching. “it was just knowledge transfer, that’s all. It’s really rudimentary teaching. Crap teaching in fact, that’s what it was…” Aiden’s concerns about his teaching abilities were present at the outset of his engagement in lecturing. He first became involved in formal teaching and learning programmes through the recommendation of a certificate in teaching and learning in another Institute of Technology. He has now [at the time of the interviews] accumulated 40 level 9\textsuperscript{14} credits in teaching and learning and is proposing to add to these credits with a view to completing a LIN diploma in teaching and learning. Aiden is very positive about his engagement in teaching and learning recognising the effect it has had on broadening his perspective “but I think teaching and learning has helped me, has given me a larger perspective... That we all come in as discipline practitioners and only through teaching and learning do you get a perspective that... ‘wait a sec’ there really is another job here, another role as an educator.” He recognises a duality to his role as practitioner and teacher “As I said to her, I came in as a practitioner, you know big into the knowledge transfer business, you know, that was fine, and now I’m getting much more consciousness, a teaching and learning consciousness. I see that now as a new discipline that’s parallel to but definitely set aside from my actual discipline as a practitioner, as an animator.” and perceives the relevance of teaching and learning to other disciplines something he has engaged in with fellow lecturers both in his own institution and in other institutions “And I feel some of what I’ve learned on teaching and learning is applicable across disciplines. Right now I can identify far more readily with other lecturers in other disciplines, I can identify more readily even with teachers now in a way that I couldn’t have compared at all because I was a discipline practitioner that was in the knowledge transfer

\textsuperscript{14} Level 9 credits refer to level 9 of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Level 9 is at postgraduate or Masters’ degree level.
business, the problem solving business, but now I feel there’s a far more theoretical teaching and learning structure to what I’m doing.”

Aiden believes there is excellent support for professional development in his institute “You see the thing I have to say here is that our staff training and development budget has always been absolutely, there’s never been, I don’t know where they get the funds from, whatever. But if, basically if we get an email here about a module we want to do a course we want to do, anything, all I do is, I sign up for it immediately and then I ask my Head of Department afterwards, because there’s never a question.” He sees development as a huge opportunity but he points however to a lack of engagement in professional development “Now the thing about it is, very few of the lecturers avail of it, you know, there are lecturers, I don’t know what percentage, but again it’s a huge problem that, and it’s a huge problem across the sector I realise that a lot of lecturers are just concentrating on doing the job, they do their teaching and they do their assessments and they do that very well and the rest of it.” “I think the staff training and development fund in this college has been consistently underused and it’s… I do not know how big the fund is. But there aren’t many takers, a lot of the lecturers are just too busy to engage in personal development, which I think is completely wrong, but that’s the way,”

He sees this lack of engagement in teaching and learning as problematic and links it to the lack of a requirement to engage “it has to be left to the lecturers to engage with it on a discretionary basis or an elective basis and I think an awful number of the lecturers that we deal with even in tiny teams like my own, have absolutely little or no comprehension of teaching and learning at all. It’s a core, core fundamental part of what we’re doing. And this is starting to cause massive problems now… There’s no compulsion to engage in staff
training and development, it’s not a condition of employment, it can’t be a condition of employment, it’s not seen as desirable, it’s too time consuming, and it is a lot of effort.”

Andrew

Andrew has engaged in considerable professional development over the course of his career in his institute, completing an EdD in a UK university in 2009, followed by an action research project as part of a higher diploma in education in an Irish university. Andrew has also completed a number of modules in teaching and learning funded by and flowing from SIF. Prior to the early 2000s Andrew’s focus was development in his subject area which saw him completing courses in computing and technology. However following the bursting of the dotcom bubble the ability levels of students accessing computing courses in his institute fell and this led to an interest in teaching and learning to address the issue of students failing.

“So, I can see a clear distinction around that, so say from 1993 to 2000... my professional development would’ve been about technically the stuff I teach... since 2000... it really seemed to me there was a problem in teaching and learning... and they were failing, and were failing in particular, in software development. And I suppose I thought, God this is a real problem here and started getting interested in how to address that.”

Andrew reveals a strong connection with the needs of students and an appreciation of the need to develop skills in teaching and learning “where before, previously I wouldn’t have really felt there was any issue in the classroom, and anything I needed help with. You know maybe I was just too arrogant, but you know I needed help keeping up with the technology. Once that student cohort coming in seemed to be less able I felt, oh there’s a real problem, I need to tackle that, I need to introduce something in my teaching that can tackle that.”

Andrew identifies the lack of requirement for teaching skills and sees the acquisition of those skills as a necessary part of a lecturers’ role “Also, to be... as a teacher when you’re
selected as a lecturer... there is no teacher training component to that. So we come in as the main experts and the problem of the lecturing job is to bring the professional skill together with a teaching skill. And that without having some form of formal training I think is difficult to be good at it. And if you’re not good in a classroom, the students will know and you’ll know and that will lead to a kind of a depressed state where you don’t feel good about your job, so to deal with those classroom problems you just have to go and get the skills, and to go and get the skills you have to engage in professional development.”

Andrew is reflective and has thought deeply about what it is that makes him a better teacher and what skills and insights contribute positively to his role “I turned to these other things in ways to try and get solutions and I just felt, they didn’t work and you know I wasn’t really impressed with them. So that’s why I went off and did that, and I took the thesis on directly on teaching software development because that’s what I do to first years and I think if you can get them in in first year and if you can get them. Keep them in in first year and they’ll be more successful throughout...” Andrew also sees professional development in teaching as being an on-going requirement “But I would argue that it [teaching in higher education] actually has changed... So professional development is key.”

It is evident from listening to Andrew’s story that he is continually reflecting and planning his own development. His focus has at this time gone back to developing his technology skills and he talks of the challenges in keeping up to date with his subject area “I don’t know, computing has changed so radically. Moving into this area, so for example, Apple devices and iPads and all that kind of stuff, and iPhones just to keep up to date say with development software for those platforms is a lot of work. You need, you know, you need an Apple PC, you need X code and it’s in a language called objective C and you’ve got to master that and
you know learning a programming language is akin to learning, you know, a real world language, maybe not as complex, but you need to, do it and to get the time to do it.” In reflecting on these needs Andrew highlights the pressure of having to keep up in the context of lecturing for 18 hours a week, something he finds challenging. He is also influenced by changing policy issues and the implications of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011), the “Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape” document (HEA, 2012) and discussions among institutes with regard to merging and applying for recognition as technological universities. This is evident from his reflections on the need to develop research skills and skills for the supervision of research students “Should I move into the research area? right, do I remain as a teacher? Its’ all in a state of flux, I don’t know what is the, the best approach to take. And because I don’t know what I should be doing, to prepare myself for that. I’m, what I’m trying to do now is, you know, make myself employable.” [Andrew] “So, I just think it’s key to keeping us going, and that’s teaching in the classroom, another type of teaching I suppose was once neglected, is the idea of supervision, one to one supervision of PhD or Masters students and that requires a different set of teaching skills to manage”

In discussing the structures and supports for professional development Andrew identifies a lack of structure and consistency within his institute and more broadly across higher education in Ireland “I went with a colleague from [another IOT] and a girl from [a university] who were lecturers there. My colleague in [other IOT] got all his fees paid. Right. The girl in [university] got all her fees paid plus expenses, to go. I got one quarter of my fees paid and I had to pay the other three quarters myself. So while I understand why that was. And I’m, we didn’t have a budget and what budget had to be evenly distributed among the staff so it only came to a quarter of my fees. It is a bit, I was a bit irked by the fact that other people get their full fees paid. He also got a reduction in hours, as did she. I got no reduction in
Aspects of the support of professional development within his own institute are in his opinion sub-optimal and although admittedly objective, ultimately inappropriate “I think the approach to funding peoples’ things was wrong. They had a pot of money and it was divided by the number of people who were doing courses. I think they should have looked at each course and see how relevant it was to the delivery, service delivery and then decided on funding in that way. Because management can’t discriminate against people... And I understand why they can’t discriminate... but I think that’s wrong... I think the system should allow for that type of discrimination.”

Whilst broadly positive about SIF “the higher diploma in education which was useful that was funded by SIF... that was supported but that was a number of years later after I had done my own thing” Andrew is also critical of SIF questioning the investment in areas that for him lack a firm intellectual basis “there was a five hundred thousand pound budget in that SIF course... But anyway, I suppose what I saw was a lot of the teaching and learning, training, to be frankly mumbo jumbo. Some of it was good, but again some of it wasn’t so I wanted to have an intellectual response to that teaching and learning problem. So that’s why I did the EdD and that was very good and then I did the one in [redacted] now while that was much more lightweight, it was focussed on things in a lot better way and it helps with the problems that we face in the classroom.”

In restorying his account of the structures of professional development in his institute and beyond Andrew links the deficiencies in the structures and cohesion of professional development to underfunding, ad hoc or no planning, and to the failure of lecturers themselves to articulate their own needs for professional development “There’s coherence
and incoherence... I think management have been very open to it and have tried to put in place these structures... I think the problem with the selection of professional development, not courses or modules... often it’s done by some, maybe by people that are not... knowledgeable enough about what they need to be putting on... I suppose professional development in many ways has to be driven by the needs of the professionals and maybe the professionals are not articulating those needs to the teaching and learning people in a formalised way... It has to be driven by the staff saying “I need training in this particular technology or this particular software”, it can’t be identified by a head of department because it’s simply... they wouldn’t have the time to know all the things that the people would need. I think there’s a funding problem, or has been in some ways, that there isn’t the resource to send people on courses that are expensive. So, I think it is in some ways ad hoc, but quite well meaning. And I think it’s ad hoc in terms of funding as well in that funding models appear to be different in different colleges and different circumstances. However, I do think that the management in general are very supportive of people engaging in development and I think that goes a long way.” Andrew does not see this as a failure of management, it is more a failure of process and a failure to plan or implement a training and development strategy at sectoral and at institute level.

Andrew is positively disposed towards engagement in a performance management development system (PMDS) however it is evident that PMDS is not current and up to date in his institute. He also questions the usefulness of PMDS in challenging underperforming lecturers. “I think feedback is very important and I think that if you could agree a set of goals with your head of department that you would like to deliver and that would link in to the tactical and strategic goals of the... I just think, it’s beyond my knowledge how you would
Andrew is emphatic about being the driver of his own professional development “I think I’m totally the driver of my own development.” This is as much a comment on the lack of structure and cohesion for professional development in his institute as it is a manifestation of Andrew’s intrinsic motivation and commitment to his role as a lecturer, something that he himself recognises, “I think it’s a response to situational things within the institute. You know, what I mean by that is, you know, I would choose what technologies I want to learn about. It would be to do with what I was teaching, so, but, I feel generally on my own, well I did the EdD off my own bat, nobody... and you don’t get any benefit to doing it. You know, I’m not going to be promoted...” Andrew reveals a stoicism and resignation with regard to the career structure at his institute and beyond in the Institute of Technology sector “I would have just as good a chance as anybody else. But what I mean is that there is no career path... there are no positions opening up for me to apply to... There’s one senior lecturer, one head of department, the head of department’s there for life, great guy, but there’s never going to be a place. Unless you move institute and that means uprooting your family, and moving around, whatever.” “I’m looking at staying exactly where I am for the next 20 years and I came in here and I got promoted within a year of being in here to this L2 grade. So, I could be 40 years here without having any promotional grade... I mean, if you have a department of 16 people and there’s one person that’s the senior lecturer and they remain the senior lecturer forever, there’s nowhere for anybody to go, so it would be nice if there was some kind of flexibility.”
Apart from engaging in teaching and learning initiatives Beth hasn’t engaged in formal development “a few years ago we went to a few things and then it was as if we don’t hear about anything anymore... teaching methods and assessment methods, you know your pedagogical... you know, skills... this time of the year, when you have time to think about it, as opposed to feeling it’s imposed upon you. And then you’re thinking, oh I should be correcting... they were ok, certainly, you know, it gave you something extra to think about, but, after a while, they were kind of, they felt a bit dry.”

She does not envisage a deep engagement in professional development in the future “I couldn’t see myself devoting a huge amount of time to doing a PhD. I much prefer doing something maybe smaller... another little case study, so you go in, see if you can get it published.” Time appears to be a significant barrier to Beth engaging in professional development with engagement in activities outside teaching constricted by her teaching, the days on which she is timetabled and the academic calendar “Time is a huge barrier... and I don’t think I was as busy a few years ago” “again if you can do it, if it’s not a day that you don’t have lectures you can go... It’s not that easy to... to do things during term, so it’s much easier to go to something in May and June.” “if you really wanted to get at it and do the required level of study, let’s assume you’d have to do lots of work outside it, or else give up every single Sunday.”

Despite this apparent lack of engagement Beth pursues informal ways of development through writing up case studies and developing and sustaining links to industry “I’d say informally I’ve probably been active enough in that... say if you’ve been given new courses, I do talk to people who have been working in the field to see what’s really going on. Say if you’re teaching innovation, you will have a chat with someone who’s working in somewhere
like Unilever to see what’s really going on there... just talking to... people be it even small companies or large companies, so that way, I suppose I have, and even the fact I’m open to doing some work in other colleges as well.” “you use your contacts. So, a good friend of mine works in enterprise development, and she comes out to the college now and again and she might give a guest lecture”

Beth perceives a lack of structure and cohesion in professional development in her institute “but their budget is very limited anyway... a lot of it is on your own bat, because, no, a lot of it is up to yourself and I get the impression there’s only a tiny little bit of funding... if they can support you in the way of, maybe your timetable to free you up a particular day, or a particular evening, I’d say they absolutely would, but there wouldn’t be a formal... “and I’d say the system doesn’t lend it. I wouldn’t say... it’s not a fault of personnel, as such, I’d say the system doesn’t lend itself to that.”

Beth has not engaged in PMDS as on the two occasions on which she was due to engage she was on leave.

**Breda**

Breda has been involved in professional development in her own discipline and has organised training courses for herself and fellow lecturers in her subject area. Breda also became interested in teaching and learning a number of years ago as a result of experiencing specific issues around aspects of her teaching. Following an engagement with the leader of teaching and learning in her institute, Breda is now [at the time of the interviews] engaged in a certificate in teaching and learning. “I suppose because I’ve done no training in teaching it’s opened a whole new world for me and I’d be very interested in, I suppose, continuing it, that it doesn’t just end after this year ends and just following up on it.” Breda has found the
teaching and learning course to be reaffirming providing evidence that she had been taking correct approaches in her teaching “I think it’s all, all those things have made... obviously helped me... particularly the course I’ve just done in terms of... I suppose as a confidence builder in terms of well I’m actually doing a lot of those things anyway, I just didn’t realise they fitted under those teaching terms. So that has been... I think, very good from my professional standing.”

Breda’s interest in the practitioner aspect of her background is evident in her stating that she would like to have an on-going engagement in industry as a practitioner “I think in an ideal world I would like to be practising as a graphic designer. I suppose my idea would be that it would be 50:50, you know, I think I would be a better teacher...” Breda is also interested in pursuing a PhD qualification but is not sure about how to go about this. This is related to her discipline in which there are few if any paths to a PhD qualification and could also be as a result of a lack of information and clarity at her institute about supports for lecturers taking on PhD studies. “I think it’s available if you go looking for it but personally I don’t find it that clear in terms of what my options and my chances, I suppose in terms of who to go to. It’s almost like you’re in school and you go to the careers officer, “what do I do now” kind of thing. I suppose beyond the context in the teaching and learning... I don’t know who else I could go to in the institute.”

**Cathy**

Cathy is currently on leave from a PhD she is undertaking in an Irish university. For Cathy professional development is linked to developing practice based skills through practice based modules with students and through the writing and updating of books in her subject area “I suppose, would have been updating our book, the chapters in our book, we have a book on supervision of students in the social studies handbook and a chapter on
management practice in social care, and that’s it really, I suppose the PhD on social justice and the managers’ survey on what managers actually do. What they spend their time in. Particularly now in times of austerity in the HSE.”

Cathy is conscious of the need to update professionally so that students can benefit from up to date information etc. “I think we all have professional responsibility to upskill and update all of the time... and I think we have a great responsibility to keep the students up to date in that regard to make sure that none of our information, that we have the honour, and the privilege to impart to students is of a certain quality and is updated and upskilling them all of the time.”

Apart from wishing to re-engage in her PhD, Cathy feels well supported in her institution with regard to professional development, although it is not clear what supports in terms of fees and time allowance are available. “we have a learning and teaching section, department and they’re very good at up-skilling us in technology, showing us new methods of lecture delivery, etcetera. We have quite a lot of support if we want to pursue further research. We used to get time off, I think that isn’t as available anymore. We used to get even some partial funding so there would be quite a lot of supports in that regard.”

Colm

In reflecting on professional development in the recent past Colm focuses on development in teaching and learning, identifying the need to understand how students learn today specifically identifying learning and teaching technologies as being important to his role as a lecturer. He has identified the need to understand how students learn today “But, I’m now trying to add that to what I know and keep up with and what’s going on in the areas that I work in so that I can do my job better, so I can train students more effectively and that
means understanding how they learn...” He specifically identifies learning and teaching technologies as being important to his role as a lecturer “I would have 1 to 2 sessions a year with the learning technology people sitting here. Getting them to bring me up to speed because if I can’t use this stuff, no matter what, I know I’m gonna be a dinosaur for next September’s first years. So, the more of that I do and I suppose the more confident I’m becoming...”

Colm holds the work of the teaching and learning function in his institute in high regard, particularly its role in bringing an awareness of teaching and learning to lecturers like himself “we’ve had an incredible exposure from our [learning and teaching function] that are a world class organisation in my view, and they have been very effective in slowly, steadily, increasing the awareness of scientists like myself of education. Probably areas I wasn’t even interested in 20 years ago.”

Colm has a positive view of the broader structure of professional development at his institution which in addition to his interaction with the learning and teaching function, extends to his interactions with his managers and other areas of training such as health and safety training, something which he also values. “We get a lot of encouragement from management... in my own area the... management are probably going to cough up the money in the next year or two to send me off to become an accredited... off to do the accredited auditor course...”

Colm reflects on professional development in the context of the additional workload and pressures brought about by Croke Park hours finding it difficult to sustain the same commitment and momentum “over here up to I would say, it’s finally hit on the head now,
I’d say the workload with the pretty much, with the last year, with the extra 2 hours has made me realise there was a very good reason we were teaching 16 hours or equivalent now were at 18 it is simply too tight for me to try to manage. 18 hours or equivalent is very serious work commitment, and there are bits that I am not able to do as I would like to do.”

Colm is fully engaged in PMDS and his engagement appears to be positive and focussed, giving him an opportunity to plan and articulate the development of his interest in teaching and learning. “I was just discussing this with my management in my PMDS last week, I am very keen to stick with the direction I have chosen. I mean, I took a while to settle on it, it was something that came on gradually rather than having a eureka moment but I’ve made a reasonable degree of progress and for my age I’d be one of the better people with webcourses and Blackboard… Because while we have maybe one or two assessments with each group per semester we have tended to overload them in terms of the time requirement but I am increasingly aware of the benefit of getting them to focus on a question, a problem, a ranking, maybe of a few things, maybe with fairly high frequency, probably unmarked for the first couple of years, but to promote engagement between the student and the module.”

Due to the demands of managerial roles Colm is not interested in the career structure as an academic management role would increase areas in which he feels competent, yet averse to, at the same time reducing time available to engage in what he finds most enjoyable in his job. “from my point of view, the difficulty with management positions is that they involve huge amounts of administration, which I’m not good at. I’m not bad at teaching, I like teaching. I dislike administration work… I still find the job challenging, interesting and enjoyable. I get out of the bed in the morning and I’m going to have... this, that and the
other. I don’t... I am neutral or positive, to 9 out of 10 days coming in to work, and I want...
I’m very lucky in that and I don’t want to upset it… the pay difference isn’t worth it.”

**Deirdre**

Deirdre’s engagement in professional development is on-going and extensive including engagement in SIF initiatives, other teaching and learning programmes, participation in conferences and engaging in online training to update her skills as an IT lecturer. Deirdre would like to access more development opportunities to develop teaching and learning and to develop research skills “I would love to do for example the whole PBL stuff. I’d love to take on the course, I missed it, I was on leave when it was run here, but I’d love to have the opportunity to do more problem based learning...” Time is a factor in being able to engage in development activities “I would love to have the time to get more involved in research, but I just find at the moment, it’s because of the long teaching hours, we just can’t really get the allocation time” It is also important to engage in development to be proficient in the role “Obviously there’s a whole area, image impression and that you would like to be thought of as a good lecturer, I mean it’s important, you try to deliver the material in the best way you can. There’s probably a lot of extra stuff you can do, but it’s a matter of getting the time to do it, try and build up that...”

Deirdre does not think there is adequate provision for professional development at her institute identifying time and increasing student numbers as significant constraints in addition to the discontinuation of PMDS as impacting negatively on professional development “...when you look at it from a time perspective, do we have the time to do academic development? And then what sort of academic development is available. So very much it’s... do you know, while there are workshops, conferences, and stuff like that, sometimes it’s very hard to squeeze that into your actual timetable during the week, you
know because you’re just so busy teaching and trying to keep up with... our student numbers have increased dramatically, students are more demanding, you know and in order to deliver quality stuff you just.... time is a problem. Also I think there probably could be more, more done on what we need, you know I felt the PMDS was quite good. But that sort of has, you know the actual interviews with the department head and stuff like that. I actually enjoyed that, and I felt, look it, it’s good to look back at your, you know, what you had done for the year, what you had done for the last few years and what way forward are we moving.”

Deirdre has engaged in PMDS and considers it a valuable tool from her perspective.” I think coming from industry, my experience certainly in industry, we always had reviews, obviously and it worked really well.” She sees it as important to the development of a career structure. “I think coming from industry, I was used to a full PMDS structure and I think going back to the whole career path, that’s what you need in order to structure your career, I mean you need reviews at the end of the year.” PMDS also gives direction to professional development “Going back to the PMDS, I think... I got a lot out of it, I think what it does is it stops you in your tracks, you have a look at what you’ve done over the last year, you look at the next year, you see where you want to go...”

**Dermot**

Dermot has engaged in professional development mainly in teaching and learning and has had an involvement in teaching and learning initiatives through SIF, completing modules in areas such as problem based learning. Dermot has not engaged in development in his own discipline and would appear to see that the next step in his development would be the completion of a PhD, something he finds unrealistic for himself due to the time commitment and the stage he is at in his career “I would feel it more difficult, just personal circumstances, I find the job stressful enough now as I get older, I don’t seem to have the same energy as I
used to have, so to have the energy to do, what to do every day, plus do an extra academic thing would be quite difficult so I don’t feel as drawn to that as I would have even maybe five years ago.”

Although addressed indirectly Dermot feels that the opportunities and motivation to engage in professional development have been eroded due to increased demands around administrative duties and increased demands on time “… the biggest change in the job for me, from 1985 is now we’re doing a couple of different jobs. There would have been very little or no administration work in the earlier years. Now, like and even as course co-ordinator, even if you’re not course co-ordinator there’s an awful lot more to be done about, emails from students that have to be responded to and various things so you might find that, you know, days you don’t have class contact hours, half the day could be gone which is essentially administrative duties, so, if you put that with a little bit of extra hours that you’re teaching whatever, increasingly it’s hard to find time and energy to do something. So I think the biggest resource there is trying to free a bit of time for people to engage in something maybe.”

Dermot thinks that within the existing structures for professional development in his institute funding is not a significant barrier, however he thinks that time is “I don’t think it’s very coherent in the sense of how it’s organised time-wise maybe. If you want somebody to progress professionally, perhaps the system needs to look at being able to release somebody for a particular period of time. If somebody said that… a year and a half, go on do your doctorate. They say this is a sabbatical as distinct from a career break, it’s the university model, where you’re going to be paid your salary minus an ALs’ salary or something like this. You go and do your thing it would make a lot more sense to me, that kind of model, where
somebody could go and concentrate on something, whether it’s a bit of research... and like one has the right to, which is rarely taken though, of a five year’s career break. Something like a similar system, that every x number of years you’re allowed a year to go and update yourself.”

Dermot identifies the lack of promotional opportunities as having a less than positive effect on driving professional development in the sector “I suppose the trouble is that maybe within the system, there’s only a couple of things you can do, in a sense. Once you’ve gone through those, which you will probably do relatively early in your career, if you’re going to be in the career for 30 or 40 years, once that happens there really isn’t an advancement route. Now there would be an advancement route, obviously with a new college like [ ], but, when I would’ve been in [ ], the years I was in [ ], there would have been one or two senior lecturer positions within... and once they were filled, they were filled for 25 years or 30 years, and they only would’ve obviously freed up once those people retired. So therefore, maybe there’s a point where there are so many things that might motivate you to do something else, unless it’s for your own personal choice like to go away and do another degree, or go away and do something else. But once... it’s a quite structured system and even [ ] doesn’t have much say in that. There’s the salary scale and once you’ve had all your increments and so on, so and there are certain roles and it is unlikely that there will be a lot of movement within those roles because of the structure.”

Dermot has engaged in PMDS and sees value in it, however thinks it is limited due to insufficient time to engage more fully with his head of department “I wasn’t indifferent to it, I thought it was good enough, because it did help focus what was going on... but you didn’t actually really sit down and talk about it, because head of department is trying to do this for
twenty people and try and get it organised. I suppose it did focus that a little. But you had a time when you could at least sit down."
**Theme 3. Policy Decisions and External Influences**

**Aiden**

Aiden embraces change and sees it as a means of exploiting opportunities around anticipating the future with a view to improving higher education and widening participation.

“With the disruptive change that we’re going through at the moment, I think it’s, it’s an environment for people like me, who like change, who thrive on change. So, I find all of that very exciting. What I found with teaching and learning with the qualifications, such as they are, like you know I’m not any expert, but I found that those qualifications have been very helpful for me in managing change and driving change actually.”

“If you are the one doing the research in your particular discipline, if you are the one ahead of the posse, actually you can predict the future, it looks like you are predicting the future, and it’s just because you know what’s going to happen, you know. Well some people are being taken by surprise all the time, because they’re not up to speed with what’s happening at all, and I think that’s the way it is in the sector. I think we’re in a very difficult time but I don’t think putting the head in the sand is the response at all. I think actually there are a lot of opportunities in what’s happening and I’m not just talking efficiencies, I’m just talking about the opportunities to do things better, and also the opportunities to reach cohorts that we’re not friggin’ reaching at all, you know.”

Due to Aiden’s orientation to his discipline he does not discuss change in the context of how his role has changed, rather he discusses how the industry [film-making] has changed and how graduates are entering a different environment to the one he experienced despite apparent contradictions “And they do not understand that these kids have been trained to a really high level, a really rigorous level. They don’t understand education at all and they keep bemoaning the fact that we are not training, as they call it “training” the right kind of graduates.”
“The only thing that has changed, we’re deeply conscious that the bar, as such technically, artistically in terms of critical thinking, etcetera, etcetera in terms of professional practice or approaching professional practice for the grads. The bar is constantly moving upwards and we’re really struggling to allow the kids their maximum potential and allow them really reach their full potential. So we’re quite aggressive in terms of chasing the new solutions, the best solutions while still making sure that they’ve got their core principles and that their education as such is solid. We don’t want to specialise them too early etcetera, etcetera we want a good rounded education within the specialisation of animation. I still don’t believe... I think the studios, industry sees the benefit of that because they are getting, invariably good or brilliant grads. But they sort of don’t care how it’s done, at all. They just expect that we keep churning good grads as they say. So I really don’t think... I don’t think they can... they don’t care how it works as long as they can get people who can do that and this and this... and that and this. And then when they can’t get people who can do particular things they give out about that then. They give out about... we’re not churning out enough technical kids, that can do CG rigging and all that sort of thing but again that’s not... that’s not our speciality we just don’t have time or even space within our curriculum so, to specialise to that level.” Aiden is at odds with the industry due to the lack of understanding of the nature of higher education and the types and levels of qualifications students are graduating with.

“Think about it, fundamentally, all the studio heads here went to college 20 years ago when there weren’t even certificates. You know what I mean, a lot of them did 4 year certs as we call them. So they don’t understand, and they still talk about that. This is particularly evident due to Aiden’s involvement in the validation of programmes in his discipline at his institute. “Again, we wrote our documents from the get go, we wrote our own diploma document, we wrote our own BA hons document. We did the HETAC validation ourselves, the lot, the whole thing. We saw the whole process. So that was a hugely reflective process,
hugely reflective, and then when modularisation was inflicted on us then, we again it was up to us to do the modularisation and again that was enormously reflective."

Aiden is aware of the influence of management but is secure in his own position and does not appear to be threatened or demotivated by management agendas “It’s all very exciting and it’s good, you know it’s a good experience, but we’re quite conscious of the fact that the cuts, have changed what we are doing, we are not doing it in a grumbling sense, although we do give out about the fact that they’re continually snipping our hours, inadvertently, you know but that’s about the height of the grumble, we have. Again, I see a lot of opportunities in what’s happening as well as challenges. But there’s no doubt about it, they have been very closely managed in what we are doing.” Aiden’s confidence is linked to his strong discipline identity and the security that being a recognised expert in his field affords him “I think, again, it sort of comes back to, what we were talking about in the original... new public management. I think the way it works here is that the big house are not going to tell you what to do because they don’t have the ideas. There was a time years ago when they used to go off down to Wexford and Waterford to have weekend pow-wows about their strategic planning, and I’m sure they still do that without telling us but very little of that strategic objective stuff devolves down to us. Now as I said in the original thing. That’s not to say that there isn’t a strategic plan there, I think there is, but nobody’s telling us. So really it doesn’t directly come down the chain, so what’s allowed then is that we probably are, guided by the strategy of the faculty, are allowed to change what we’re doing, to modify what we’re doing with, essentially pretty much complete freedom.” This confidence and security gives a sense of being immune to wider changes in higher education and the perception that there is complete freedom in what and how his particular discipline is run.
Aiden also demonstrates a confidence in the relevance of his discipline and the practice based, vocational nature of the programmes he is involved with “I think we have no problem in either demonstrating or expressing the fact that we have a very strong position within society... So, I don’t think we have any, you know, we’re practice based and we have absolutely explaining to parents or students our undergrads, what the potentials of what we’re doing are, there’s vocational potentials there’s post grad study potentials, you know you could work for other people, you could work for yourself, whatever it’s up to you, and we’re just here to help all the kids achieve whatever potential they want.” He sees demands for greater social and economic relevance originating from national government and the European Union, “Well I think, fundamentally, they’re coming from I think they’re coming from government, that’s it, and I think it’s a European plan, again it is the oul’ Hong Kong thing, strategy, it’s you align your institutes, universities, whatever, you go around to them, you ask them, what do you do, what is your niche speciality, and then, you, there has to be a societal dimension to that, you’ve got to be making a contribution to society and you allow them to write their objectives themselves and then you come back after a few years and you tag the funding, their funding, to the achievement of those objectives and I think that’s, that’s probably a European plan, like you know, across the board, and that’s why it’s coming from not only central government, but I think that’s coming from Brussels, you know, it’s a plan.”

Aiden is conscious of being distinctive in society both as a film-maker and as a lecturer. He expresses concern over public perception of public sector workers and is critical of the media in generating negative sentiment about the public sector “I think there are a lot of people, a lot of people in our society are very, not only non-responsive, but they’re very anti the public sector, at the moment. I think to be honest, you know, there’s a point, I think a lot of what
they are saying is despicable, you know to be honest personally, I think a lot, an awful lot, of it is driven by, the absolute complacency, idiotic complacency of the media.” Aiden is also feeling the financial impact of changes brought about by the economic downturn “But we’re not in any way extravagant, we never have been. But I don’t think that’s changed we’re just finding it hard to pay for, it’s not that we’re living beyond our means at all, but I think we’re really struggling to pay.” He is also conscious that as a public sector worker his job may be perceived by others as being an easy job “you know you could never be sure if you said you know, “oh I lecture in an Institute” you know, what the reaction would be, you know. Because you know, someone like that, could, you know ordinary, honest, Joe Soaps can be manipulated. Could say to you, fuck it, that’s a lazy arse job, that’s not real, and it’s not real work either. Christ it’s not like lifting bales of coal, you know what I mean.”

Aiden is aware of policy changes in higher education and is familiar with the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and its implications “they are, Hunt was saying, it’s, it can’t be that undergrads are forced to specialise too early, in any particular discipline, because it does not give them a broad education at all, it’s a broken down model.” Aiden is definite in his support for the direction his institute has taken with regard to amalgamation and consolidation in higher education sector “Now the thing with it, in a merger, you see this is what I think, these are the objectives down the road, I could see if I imagined we could say that I got teaching and learning qualifications, you know, masters or whatever, I could imagine being part of we’d say a teaching and learning unit from here, oh, and that would go in and we’ll say rejig this sort of thing, I know that sounds terribly arrogant, but I could see that happening.” “I think, how would I?... I mean... I personally... I welcome change. As I was saying to somebody about any potential merger down the road with. I said, it’s likely the President here won’t be replaced the exec won’t be dissolved... all those functions
will be devolved to [redacted] over the next while. Even that might be 5 years or whatever coming, and I’m sure there’s a time scale or a timeframe and I think, I said to them, you know HR will become [redacted], financial control will become [redacted], Buildings and Estates will become the same.” Although Aiden is also aware of the publication of the criteria for designation as a technological university and the identification of regional clusters in higher education and did make an effort to access the information, he had not at the time of the second interview absorbed the information or the implications for higher education “Yeah, I think, the regional clustering is all... and the technological universities, is all... you know that’s... I think that for me is very much... that’s been on the cards all the time. One thing... again I didn’t look closely at the damn thing at all. I didn’t even look... I went looking for the report but the bloody Higher Education Authority takes two weeks to put the report on their site. So I couldn’t find it on the day. [redacted] sent a link to the server here, but I didn’t bother accessing.” One of the issues that Aiden is quite emphatic about is the regional focus of Institutes of Technology and the importance of that regional focus whether there is rationalisation and amalgamation of Institutes of Technology “I think the danger for me is the danger of centralisation. I think it would be a crime if in the technological university, cluster, or merger or whatever, centred in [redacted]. It would be an absolute crime if [redacted] and [redacted] were lost in that mix which is a huge danger... But I think it would be a real sin if the more regional places like Letterkenny, Tralee, Tipperary, even though it’s linked in with Limerick, but if all that was centred in Limerick and everybody else was centred in Galway, and everybody else was centred in Dublin or Cork I think that would again... we would be right back to the 1940s as far as I’m concerned because again I think it’s a right of kids in Tallaght, or Tipperary, or Letterkenny to live and work as students in their own communities, I really do believe that... I think it’s really hugely beneficial to their communities, for their families, it’s a lot, so I think the societal benefits are huge, but I don’t
think the government gets that at all. Rationalisation is rationalisation.” This observation is indicative of Aiden’s strong professional identity as a lecturer in an Institute of Technology around the regional and societal benefits of such institutes and the historical basis for their location in the regions. This is all the more noteworthy due to the fact that Aiden’s institute is atypical with regard to regional location and focus.

Aiden perceives a difference between universities and Institutes of Technology and acknowledges that universities are on a higher level in the hierarchy of higher education. He goes on to offer an interesting insight into the main differences identifying the research focus of universities as being a differentiator for universities whilst practice based education is a positive differentiator for Institutes of Technology.

“I think, we definitely see the universities as being, there are no hierarchies but we definitely see them as being hierarchically above us, there’s no doubt about it. And they certainly think... would see themselves as being hierarchically above us... I don’t think we have massive comprehension of how the university lecturers are working or what their conditions are but I think one of the massive differentiations for us is that we’re quite conscious that universities do huge amount more research than we’re doing, and a huge amount more of publications than we’re doing. They’re quite envious of our particular niche in media that we’re the practitioners here, we’re the ones generating the grads with the skills, the makers and doers of film and media etcetera, etcetera... so and I think that comes back to, there is a question of identity there...”

Andrew
Andrew sees changes in his role as a lecturer. These perceived changes are mainly around the additional hours introduced by the public sector agreement with the additional hours prompting a reflection on Andrew’s part on the need for a metric for measuring workload
and the management of underperforming lecturers by management “now it’s got harder in the last year or two... I personally find the increase in workload with the extra couple of hours just, a tipping point... now, I’m just so burnt out, so busy all the time. No time to, to prepare, or to... well I could give you lots of little examples. But I suppose it’s like. Just to do the background reading or to, to deal with student queries, it’s just so busy, there's no time, it’s rushing from one class to another without really the time to prepare and to focus... I think the job is being poisoned a bit by it... I can see the reason for it, I understand that, but I think it’s.......... I don’t think it’s, it’s a good approach, I think there might have been better ways to deal with that, I think some academics don’t do a lot of work, it might have been a good idea to look at their productivity and look at them as a group rather than blanketly roll out the thing across everybody” “So the extra 2 hours wasn't something that we had to play around with, but the people who were lazy beforehand, frankly that’s what I’d call it, are still lazy, still avoiding work, and still not pulling their weight, but the people who were working hard now have an additional burden on them, and my week was full, previously, so to do the 2 hours extra teaching and the thing, I’ve had to cut out the extra things I was doing,” “It’s the other stuff, what is it exactly we should be delivering here in... o.k. I have to attend meetings. I can be an active participant or I can sit there, you know, just making up the numbers. We need to know exactly what is expected of us. You know a strange thing to say after being 19 years in the system? But I think goals should be flexible.”

Andrew also perceives more visible manifestations of managerialism in his job “But, it seems to me over the last 2 years there has become a disconnect between the, the, the, the, goals the higher management want, and the staff, the academic staff there’s a real them and us... what would you call it culture, not culture, but feeling has developed. Non-stop staff are complaining about management all the time. Since they don’t believe management
understand their job and it seems the professional role of lecturer has been belittled, or is not considered important, or that they’re not seen as professionals who can manage their own time to deliver service to customers, but rather as people that have to be micro managed, and that you know if we don’t micro manage them they won’t do any work rather than seeing them as professionals who will deliver a professional service.” “But I just feel that I’m not trusted to deliver and I wonder why that is, after I personally feel I’ve delivered very well.” Despite this increase in managerialism Andrew remains positive about his immediate managers locating the source of this change as coming from outside his department and school “he told everybody to turn up, and the first thing, he came in, he said, you know, he said, we all know, I’m glad you’re all here, you know, and we’re going through a time of change, you know, and he made some, and then he said you know, if I could sack people, I’d sack probably half the people! Who’s he talking about?” Andrew expresses frustration at the apparent failure to address specific matters of underperformance and resents the ‘blanket’ application of measures aimed at correcting underperformance “It would seem to be, for want of a... a quite strong term, and I don’t know if it’s true, but a cowardice about dealing with problem individuals and a falling back on a blanket approach, you know, like, broadcast this problem, but there isn’t really a problem. It’s a problem, there, with that one.” “I felt management should have the power to customise their response to individuals that weren’t performing and so on and so forth, rather than bringing in blanket type things.” The frustration and annoyance would appear to be centred around a failure to address problematic individuals directly with a falling back on general measures which have an unfair and disproportionate impact on committed and dedicated lecturers like himself.
Andrew sees lecturers as being distinct and bounded in the context of education making comparisons with others working in education such as university lecturers, lecturers in private colleges and lecturers in further education. He refers to ivory tower academics but is not sure if he himself is distinct “But I was thinking, how engaged, how connected I was within my community of things and whether I was viewed as somewhat distinct and odd, because I was a lecturer... But certainly within my own group I feel very close to them, I really feel a quite distinctive group.”

Andrew feels his standing as a lecturer remains relatively unchanged, however his standing as a public servant has been impacted negatively “And I certainly feel as a public sector employee that there’s an attack on that role... I feel that that role is undervalued in society and I think it should be seen in many ways. That in many ways the public sector can deliver economic prosperity... and I think it seems to be strange that in that background there’s such an attack on public sector employees.” When asked about changes to quality of life Andrew at first mentions the reduction in salary but expands on the impact of a more demanding workload “And I just have no time to reflect on what I’m doing. I’m just going from one thing to the other to the next. And there’s no time. And it’s like that every day, you know. There’s meetings here and I’m happy to do this, I’m not saying that, but you know I’m sitting here and in the back of my head I’m thinking I’ve got to go.”

Andrew claims to be vaguely aware of the newly [at the time] published criteria for recognition as a technological university. Andrew is also aware of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and indicates broad support for the thrust of the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) with regard to consolidation in higher education and the policy of reducing the number of Institutes of Technology “Maybe we need economies of scale there, I could see that. I think that maybe
the Institutes of Technology sector coming from the old RTC sector have been quite fragmented in that little kingdoms around the place and maybe there’s a need to bring them together... It’s a bit strange that there all not... they’re different bodies”. This support for possible mergers is tempered with the view that the positive aspects of Institutes of Technology such as their regional focus and range of provision should be maintained “I think merging is not necessarily a bad thing if the same provision of services can be provided in the area and if the needs of the industry and stakeholders and students to come in can be managed, that they’re not reduced.” Andrew also expresses concerns around the loss of focus on practice based and skills based education should there be a move to a technological university “If we move to a university, and I suppose this is coloured by my own couple of years there. And I know a technological university is slightly different from the traditional model, but my own experience of the people in university is that they didn’t really care about the teaching and learning or in fact the industry approach their idea of their career was in how much they published and their research output and how good that was. Which is fine but I think there’s a place, especially in an economic downturn for a skills based approach not just training but skills based education... I can see rationalisation advantages, cost advantages I can see advantages of bringing a bigger pool of people together, and having a critical mass, I can see all that. But I wonder about the role over time, do we need another?

Andrew reveals a consistent congruence with the inclusive mission of his institute “I often felt the [____] had a positive social impact on the area”. He expresses concern at the implications of mergers and change for this inclusive mission stating that any vision of a technological university must continue to serve the constituents and stakeholders of his institute and that it is linked to this role.
Due to his experience working in a university Andrew reflects on differences between universities and Institutes of Technology highlighting differences in funding and resourcing in addition to cultural differences and orientation between teaching and research. “I think the HEA fund the universities, and the model of funding needs to be looked at because I just don’t think it’s fair. I think the workload that I have vis-à-vis my university colleagues is quite, quite different. And if I have to now then compete with people that have that background to try and produce quality output research I don’t think it’s a level playing field. They’ve access to funding for equipment, they’ve access to a whole range of supports that we don’t have here.” “people who bring in large amounts of funding or publish a lot of research papers within the universities seem to be held in higher regard than people who focus on teaching and I would argue that both are relevant and there should be a parity of esteem between good engaging teachers who keep their courses relevant and up to date and people who bring in large amounts of money and that is obviously influenced by my own view.”

In reflecting on how change may affect him personally Andrew indicates that he does not fear change, nor does he feel pressurised to change. He is quite comfortable and feels confident in his ability to adapt to any change that may come including a change in location “I feel quite confident that I can tackle any role... I imagine there might be location issues, you know, delivering say first and second year here and then having a centre where we deliver... that might be... issues I don’t know.” In anticipating change Andrew is positive and anxious to see what shape the change will take “professionally I feel quite strong, you know, I mean I feel like I, you know, I’ve got good qualifications, I’ve got good research, proven delivery and that, I do a lot of teaching, I.. I’m like one of those guys that can play anywhere. So what courses I teach, nothing’s... this sounds arrogant... nothing’s a threat to me, I can teach, anywhere. Because I’ve a very broad computing background, so that doesn’t
bother me. What..... I actually think I’d like to do a bit of research and that might be a change 
but I don’t know.”

Beth
The main changes Beth sees over the past number of years has been in the quality of 
students coming in to her institute and the impact of this on ability “Years ago probably the 
students that were coming here, say for example, the students that were in third year, 
definitely they would have been of a higher calibre,”  “A few years ago we probably had... 
the students who came in were probably academically much better.”  “there’s a huge 
difference between, you know, students coming in on 220 points and students coming in on 
300 points. That’s the first thing, and we’d see a huge difference with students on level 8, 
versus level 6, one time the difference wasn’t so great... we’re really noticing it now.” 
“whereas we have more students now that honestly, you know, would find it difficult to give 
you good examples, so you end up, you end up imparting more and more examples, a lot 
more comes back... and sometimes I feel as well that students’ aren’t, some students aren’t, 
you know, as proactive.”  Beth also sees reduced opportunities for students as a result of 
the economic downturn “don’t have the facilities to take some of our students, you know, 
on internships and that’s a pity as well, or certainly more of our graduates would have got 
jobs, in the good companies and that is not happening either, as well.”

Beth does not see herself as being part of a distinctive and bounded sector of society 
although sometimes her views may be valued by those around her due to her occupation as 
a lecturer “Yeah, you know, if people are talking about the economy in general, or something 
like that, they might feel you have some valued opinion because you are a lecturer in 
business,”  However in general Beth is content with her position although there has been a 
reduction in salary “we’re paid less, you know we’re paid a lot less, so certainly we’d have a
lot less money for the extras...” but again sees herself in a better position relative to friends working in the private sector “I probably work less harder than, less hard than most of my friends in the private sector and that would be... I wouldn’t be shouting that out loud. I know how hard a lot of my friends work, be it that they’re accountants or be it that they end up working in marketing or human resources...” Beth also acknowledges the security she has as a public sector worker “I don’t go around feeling sorry for myself, because we have jobs, we have... I enjoy my job, I don’t have to worry about “am I going to be in a job next Christmas?”

In reflecting on outside influences on higher education and on her institute in particular Beth reflects very much at the local level and considers changes to students coming in to her institute before reflecting on possible mergers involving her institutions “What’s going to go on in the Institute of Technology in five years’ time, you know when we merge... with and ? We all wonder about that, and I think... I really know most about business, and we get a lot of local students into the School of Business and if, if for example, this just became a feeder, you know, it would be an awful shame. It would be an awful shame for the local community. I think. That’s the big thing, what courses are going to be taught in in, say, 2018? I don’t know the answer, I don’t think anyone knows the answer to that and that’s a shame because I think this college would have had a positive influence on the local environment and then obviously we are hugely affected by the funding... because the money isn’t there and that’s obviously a huge thing... there just doesn’t seem to be money for anything.” The focus is very much at the level of her own institute and how an uncertain future might affect her own institute and the impact on the local community. “I still wonder what will happen in , what will happen in ? Will we only become a feeder up to level ? In business or whatever, I
have probably thought about it a bit more and then you have the formal announcement, you know we all knew it was going to happen and I do wonder, you know we were talking the last day about research and you know I’d be bottom of the pile.”

Beth firmly believes that calls for greater social and economic relevance for higher education institutions will not overburden her institute and cites examples of students moving into rewarding careers in industry “the feedback is excellent... I think we gave them practical skills that you didn’t... the one thing I like about the Institutes of Technology, you wouldn’t have got if you were in [university] was... was, and I stress was, was the smaller classes and she had even referred to this in her email, how we had them up presenting, doing all their projects, up presenting... working in your groups etc... and it was funny... someone that has graduated in 2004 and writes it in an email in 2013, now I think that that is remarkable, and she always felt, now she went on and did a masters in [university], but she always felt that she got... very good education, but she also got very good practical skills...” Beth is also conscious of the social role played by her institute and the impact it has had on widening participation to underrepresented groups “I don’t want to sound patronising but certainly over the years, I know myself and from speaking to the parents at the graduation, we certainly would have students who’ve gone through the system and done extremely well and the parents would tell you at the graduation, that they were the first, that “John was the first...” of their family to go to third level and that they possibly, and I don’t understand it, and they would never...”

**Breda**

Breda’s perception of change in her role has been driven mainly by her own engagement in development in teaching and learning “I’m just seeing things much more differently but I
think the expectations around my role are sort of the same but I think I’m, I’m now, I suppose considering more about the learning outcomes that I set out, previously and what are students actually learning. And just I suppose in the last few months really questioning sort of how good a teacher I have been and how much I can be.” This engagement has been reaffirming and motivating for her own sense of professional identity “I suppose as a confidence builder in terms of well I’m actually doing a lot of those things anyway, I just didn’t realise they fitted under those teaching terms. So that has been... I think very good from my professional standing.”

With regard to the impact of external influences Breda sees a strong link between industry and the programme she works on, this is related to the industry background and experience of lecturers in her discipline “I think our course is very responsive to I suppose what’s going on currently and I suppose we’re, we’ve a very good connection with industry, all of us having worked in practices in Dublin and internationally and I think our students are quite connected because they work on professional design competitions.”

Breda sees herself as being distinctive and is almost apologetic about the fact that she is a lecturer in higher education. She is more likely to introduce herself as a teacher rather than a lecturer and this is reflected in her views of the differences between universities and Institutes of Technology “when I tell some people that I’m lecturing, yeah, they go “oh you’re a lecturer” kind of thing, but I actually don’t say I’m lecturing generally, I say I’m teaching, because I, but then I had a conversation with somebody recently. Why don’t you just say you’re lecturing like it saves you, like people saying are you secondary or primary, but some people seem to get a bit, sort of funny when you say you’re a lecturer, I don’t know.” Breda also sees a distinction in terms of being a public sector worker and others perception of her
with regard to terms and conditions of employment “I suppose, public sector pay and that, I don’t really feel it myself, but, well actually I do feel it a bit, it has changed, people don’t want to hear about your holidays, but you know, that kind of thing.” Breda feels that she has recently been impacted financially by changes.

Breda has given the issue of changes being driven by the Hunt report some thought and has also reflected to her own institute’s direction. Breda is in broad agreement with what she sees as the general thrust of government policy but is not convinced by the direction her own institute has taken “I suppose my opinion is, may not be politically correct here, but I think if appropriate, I wouldn’t be against, I’m not. I think for some people I work with, who actually studied here and feel very much needs to, I don’t really feel that strongly that, I think that if appropriate, and I can see it makes sense from the top, not having too many courses,” “It seems like an unusual alliance, and I’m not sure, I just... I don’t really have a clear idea of how that alliance would work and where we would stand under the umbrella or do we still maintain our identity within that, so I’d be unclear about it.”

Nevertheless Breda sees more positives and opportunities in mergers and changes from an individual perspective and from the perspective of her programme/discipline. “I think if we were merged with somebody else or another institute, Yeah it could influence it, negatively, I suppose maybe we’re over comfortable in our current situation in terms of if it doubled in size or tripled in size.” “Probably I wouldn’t feel remotely... I know threatened isn’t the word. I’d sort of see it as an exciting opportunity really, in terms of an alliance with a much bigger university. Opportunistically it possibly would be very good, as long as I don’t lose my job... I’d be very interested in working as part of a bigger organisation because I just think it could present a lot of good opportunities for the course.”
Cathy

Cathy is very positive about her role and states that it is a privilege to be a lecturer. She has noticed changes in recent times that have added to the stress of the job, heightening the “I suppose the stress levels would be higher you’d be conscious all of the time of what time you have to do certain things and deadlines and that sort of thing and the academic year is short so you’re, you know, working within a certain timeframe in semester 1 and a timeframe in semester 2 and I think that people generally would say that the stress levels are higher than they would have been say, a year and a half two years ago.” She sees this increased pressure on time as impacting negatively on quality of life “I suppose there is more of a kind of a tension and demand on our time which for me is quality of life.”

Cathy perceives the increasing influence of outside forces beyond her immediate management. She anticipates a faster rate of change in the future “I think that at a higher level outside our department at [ ] that is something that is coming down the line. I think that in our school there is a lot of autonomy and trust imparted, and rightly so... It hasn’t changed that much currently, but I think it possibly can and will in the future.”

As observed above Cathy feels privileged to be a lecturer and takes a societal perspective which is probably influenced by her discipline. She believes that the role of lecturer is bounded and that by and large it is looked upon positively. She believes that public sector workers like herself have been getting a bad press lately but there is not as much public negativity towards lecturers “I think that education is hugely significant in terms of quality in life, I think that people who do not have the opportunity or privilege to embark on further education are seriously disadvantaged and that that goes across all streams and all sectors of society. It’s all pervasive really and I think that we have a significant responsibility and contribution to make to society... I think we are I think that maybe we’re more recognised in
some sectors of society than others, but I do think that we get, by and large, a pretty good press... I think public sector in general have suffered in recent times. I think there is quite a negative thing there, kind of resentment almost. But I think that, in general, people I meet and certainly going out on placements I now meet postgraduates and I get phone calls from Australia and emails all the time from Postgrads who would still value significantly the contribution that [ ] has made to their career paths and their life quality.”

Cathy is familiar with changes highlighted and driven by the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) but is not familiar with the finer points. Cathy sees the changes as being mostly positive opening possibilities for greater cohesion and collaboration “I would hope to think that in the longer term it would be positive. It’ll be interesting to see how that actually pans out in terms of, you know, cohesion, discussion, collaboration. I mean, obviously certain areas can collaborate and have their shared knowledge which would be a positive thing. In other ways I’m sure, it may eliminate, if there is duplication it may eliminate some of that, and hopefully make us more productive in the longer term.” Cathy is positive about the proposed changes and takes a pragmatic view of the need for consolidation and greater coherence in higher education “well I think you have to look at the overall socio-economic picture. We’re a small island, there’s a lot of institutes now, of technology, just in Dublin, if we just look at Dublin, there are a lot servicing a small population demographic, so where is the need... And then you look at the economics what’s the cost-benefit analysis to the country, and surely it makes sense then that economically we amalgamate and I don’t like to say downsize, but streamline to the need required rather than mushrooming everywhere and no specific strategy there to what need you are meeting that that has been overestimated... it’s very... well I would think this amalgamation will put some strategy on it.”
Cathy does not see profound changes in her job should there be a transition to technological university status as her particular discipline is very much a hands-on, practice based one. “Well I think that in some areas yes, that it definitely will change. I think there will be more online delivery of courses for example. But I think where there is a human element like in the social sciences... I think that there should always be that face-to-face element and that kind of thrashing out in group work and in practical placement elements.”

Colm
Colm sees subtle differences in his role due to the changing nature of information and the ready access to information in the digital world “So, more and more, I am using other people’s information in a less, you know in a form that I haven’t distilled myself for students, in particular in specialist areas and I see my role as having changed from a teacher to someone who does some teaching but my main job particularly with the more older the higher 3rd, 4th years, masters students is to facilitate their learning and to accredit their learning. So, a subtle change in that one.” On a practical day to day basis Colm finds the additional (Croke Park) hours difficult to manage and absorb into his working routine “We’ve had a very, we have had a favourable culture, over here up to I would say, it’s finally hit on the head now, I’d say the workload with the pretty much, with the last year, with the extra 2 hours has made me realise there was a very good reason we were teaching 16 hours or equivalent now were at 18 it is simply too tight for me to try to manage. 18 hours or equivalent is very serious work commitment, and there are bits that I am not able to do as I would like to do.” He is also conscious of increasing numbers of students allied to a decrease in academic staff numbers “Yeah, the, the fact that we have eighty, seventy to eighty per cent more students than we had 5 years ago. On five fewer staff, means you don’t get out of here in the evening the way you used to, or if you do you’re bringing a rucksack home with you.”
Apart from the bureaucracy associated with post graduate research Colm is positive and complimentary of management in his department/school “There is, I mean our management have been very supportive, getting involved in post graduate research has proved a very mixed experience for me in terms of the bloody bureaucracy that is associated with it. The bureaucracy can be more trouble than the student. And students inspire me, bureaucracy I’m afraid doesn’t. I tend to run the other way, I’ll stick to students.” “As I said to you before, we’ve been exceedingly lucky in having very good management in the school over time, we now have absolutely the best management, I think I’ve worked for, under in my life.”

Colm does not see himself as being in a distinct and bounded sector of society. He is resentful of the media portrayal of public servants “as a public servant, yes. We’re getting a lot of stick in the media and I resent that. We didn’t cause the problem, we are not responsible for having caused the problem. We have made no contribution to the problem, and we are paying a hell of a price for it.” He sees changes in quality of life in the context of increased workload “It’s, the workload this year I would say has been comparable probably to the first year I was here when you had to write nearly every lecture from scratch. Even though I would have a good reservoir of material.”

Colm is vaguely familiar with changes proposed in the Hunt report (DoES, 2011) and is in broad agreement with the thrust of change taking a pragmatic view of the need for consolidation “I think it’s a good idea, because I think for far too long we’ve had, we’ve been, education has, third level education has been far too fragmented. You have effectively 5, is it? 5 universities... I think that’s crazy, I think we should have, that is far too many players,
all doing something quite similar and I mean, I think in this day of instant almost instant communication that it makes no sense for a small country with scarce resources to be spreading itself that thinly." "For goodness sake we are a city of what?.. a million, a million and a half, it’s not big in terms of the rest of the world and we have 5 third level institutes in the one town, really not doing a whole lot with each other apart from UCD/Trinity at a post graduate level. That is beginning to work now. I think that is ridiculous I think that the experiences I’ve had in visiting other universities has been very interesting, very positive for me and I would like... I would hurry... I’m encouraging the HEA to really start looking to work on... I won’t say rationalising, but I would say fine tuning and getting the parts of our third level education system to work better together.”

Colm had become more informed about the proposed changes at the time of the second meeting and discussed the recent publication of the “Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape” document (HEA, 2012). He also reflected on wider changes in education despite indicating he would be more familiar with wider changes in his own discipline “If you were going to ask me how they were going to affect the food industry... that would be a much easier question... how they influence education? I suppose, if you have the whole issue of the Worldwide Web this incredible availability of information, much of it good, some of it bad almost malicious, extremely biased, inaccurate, whatever. You’ve this whole issue of globalisation, not just of the food industry but globalisation of education. You’ve the whole push to internationalise our education system and get foreign income... basically through international students and it is quite gratifying to see the standing we are held in by other countries and other educational institutions...”
The differences that Colm sees between universities and Institutes of Technology are mainly in structure and orientation with Institutes of Technology doing a slightly different job “I... not in terms... no I think if you’re among staff in the different Institutes of Technology versus the traditional universities, there may be... there’s a recognition that it’s a different. There may be a slight and I can see where they’re coming from.... If they did their PhD straight after graduation or whatever, when I still haven’t done one. I know where they’re coming from, but we do a different, we’re a slightly different breed. We do a different, slightly different job...” Colm highlights a significant difference in orientation and focus between universities and Institutes of Technology. “But my experience you see before I was here was in industry and I... if the organisation is losing anything, it’s an appreciation of that. Because I can read the literature as well as, or almost as well as my colleagues who have PhDs or who are doing PhD research. But those who do, I don’t think there’s anybody who has a PhD and industry experience and I think we’re in danger of losing that, a little bit, and it’s interesting that those who do most teaching on the masters’ courses are the people... not the ones most qualified on paper but the ones who’ve industry experience. Because we can relate to their environment, their problems.”

Deirdre
Initially Deirdre did not see many changes in her role in recent times apart from the ability levels of students coming into her institute “We are taking in more students, and some of them are weaker, so there is a lot more programming, a lot more clinics, lot more handholding and I realise that’s important.” Having read through the transcript of her first interview Deirdre revised her story to emphasise the “I’ve said no, but I actually would like to change that, I think, yes it has changed to some extent, it’s got a lot more demanding, there’s higher student numbers, in many cases weaker students, because we’re taking in students with lower points than we were, more clinics, there’s more programming clinics, we
need to look at ways to reduce retention, keep students going, so there’s a lot more
handholding I think, which is good.”

Deirdre does not feel managed in her role as a lecturer in her institute and she values that
aspect of her relationship with her immediate manager “I tend to, as my department head
said to me, look at it Deirdre as a white canvas and you decide what area you want to work
in, and we will try to fit that in… I don’t like to be micro managed, I don’t like… I like the fact
that I can pick my own area, and I’ve tried a range of different subject areas, and now I know
what I like, I really enjoy…..” She does however, feel that beyond her institute there are
external influences impacting on how she does her job “Externally maybe we are, with the
Croke Park agreement and all that sort of stuff…” “we are looking at reduced pay, more
hours, greater numbers of students and less resources.”

Deirdre does think that she is part of a distinct and bounded sector of society in the context
of being a third level lecturer. She also discusses the fact that she is a public sector worker
and comments on the bad publicity the public sector has been getting since the economic
downturn “The public sector certainly have bad publicity…” however Deirdre thinks that
there is a positive public perception of educators in general “there is a lot more interest in
the whole area of third level education and I think people have more of a respect for
lecturers.”

Deirdre is aware of the implications of changing government policy and the implications for
Institutes of Technology “there is a landscape document and it is coming together gradually,
so yes, I would be aware of certainly what’s going on in that whole area.” She is positive
about the anticipated changes and points to her own experience when her alma mater
gained university status just prior to her graduation, which she believed had a positive impact on her employment prospects at the time. “I graduated the first year we became a university we were absolutely thrilled, with the fact, simply because we had the word university our degree. It was, like when I went to Munich, no problem getting a job with a university degree. Whereas if I’d had a degree from the Institute of Technology or an RTC, they’d have been saying “well what’s that?” She sees changes in the future but the role will remain much the same “So from a student perspective yes, and from a personal perspective, it does, hopefully it will lead to more interesting things rather than just teaching, teaching, teaching... There will be a lot more collaboration, I would hope a lot more collaboration with the other players. Yes, my role would probably change, to a certain degree it will still be a teaching college, I mean we’re very much a teaching college. I can’t see it changing that much, however I do know they want a higher proportion of people with PhDs and research, but I’m not too sure how that would pan out, given the fact that we’ve massive teaching hours.”

In comparing and contrasting Institutes of Technology with universities Deirdre sees evidence of elitism in universities however considers that the quality of teaching is better in Institutes of Technology “I think lecturers in universities consider themselves a lot more superior than lecturers in Institutes of Technology, I think they consider themselves lecturers, they’re not teachers and that’s the nature of the answer. If you look at lecturing as opposed to teaching, the students aren’t taught as well. There’s not as much thought put into the actual way of delivering courses and the way of motivating students at university level.” Deirdre sees this as a differentiator in professional identity between Institutes of Technology and universities “So I would say yes, there is a major, major difference there and even from a professional identity.”
Deirdre thinks that Institutes of Technology are socially and economically relevant citing specific initiatives in the local area “I’m involved in a project called young women in technology and we bring in 5th year, transition year students and 5th year students in, obviously girls and what we try and do is we build, help them increase their knowledge of what technology subjects are about, because there is a massive shortage in young women in technology, so we bring them in, we’ve three different workshops.” She also points to the impact of her institute on participation in higher education in the local area “you know, maybe ten, fifteen years ago maybe no one from this area very few people would have went to third level.” She also points to high levels of employment for graduates in her discipline.

**Dermot**

Dermot who has been a lecturer for over 20 years talks about the changes he has seen with an increasing emphasis on administrative duties and requirements around programmatic review and course boards, issues or aspects of the role that were more informal in the past. “I suppose certainly in the long past there’s a huge difference, but I think that’s kind of very true, but I suppose in the last 8 or 9 years well the issue I suppose of a lot of administrative duties would be something that has increased a lot over the time, you know.” “there’s a lot more things that you’re linked into like through programmatic reviews and even course board meetings twice a semester and so on. I mean in the past there mightn’t have been, all that would’ve been probably very informal, possibly quite infrequent, whereas now it is structured so, yes you are managed in the sense that these are things obviously part of the job and you’re engaging with like you know, so that would probably slightly more managed than it would have been in the past.” Dermot also sees a shift in the focus of his job from what he describes as lecturing to a teaching role and addressing issues with students “I think the fact that we take in a lot of people now that are coming in at a lower academic level,
and because of that, there is much more now of an emphasis on initiatives, the first year initiatives, to try and do something with the teaching and learning models and assessment of student’s that have learning disabilities and that. And very often that’s the kind of communication that you hear. So you’re hearing something that now sounds more like I’m a teacher, and it actually sounds a bit more than that, it actually sounds like I’m a remedial teacher rather than a lecturer.” Dermot sees changes in the relationship with students with an increased awareness of broader issues impacting on student life “I think it is a far more interactive process now, and I think people generally are more open to change and I think there is more of a kind of social interaction with their students, you know, whether it’s course boards, or students services or, I’m a little bit more aware of the whole student, like you know, that there are issues going on and everything.”

Dermot sees himself as belonging to a distinct and bounded sector of society “…I think in many senses you are kind of like are typecast to an extent. You know, you are definitely seen as a professional, whether you are or not you’re seen as being very smart or intelligent… …it kind of shifts things a little bit maybe in a conversation something like that… I think that is, you’re kind of bound a little bit by that, but that, it mightn’t be necessarily as staid as it used to be in the past…” He does not perceive any change in his standing in society in the recent past and still thinks that education and educators are valued in Ireland “I think people still have an inherent respect for teachers and teaching and education, whether they, you know, they may have issues with the system, or how the system works, or, you know, what happened to their Johnny when they were in college or something like that. People still value education, certainly in Ireland anyway, a lot of statistics you see coming back, and papers and stuff, seem to see that we value it so therefore, you’re, you know, you’re seen, it’s an
Dermot feels that his quality of life has been negatively impacted in the context of changes over the course of his career since the 1980s. “I would’ve felt that an awful lot more was put on the plate, you know. And, you would kind of ask yourself the questions, I suppose would you have signed up for the job as it is now when you signed up originally in the eighties... the whole administrative side of it and all the extra things that you have to do, would be a big difference. And I think they kind of pull at you, like there’s a lot of things pulling in different ways. So I think you’re a much more careful of, there’s less slack from the point of view of what you can do and the amount of energy you have to do it, so I think I have to be careful about managing that now in this new environment in recent years, like you know, that these things tug away somewhere.”

Dermot is familiar with policy decisions with regard to mergers in Institutes of Technology and the possibility of technological universities. He takes a pragmatic view of the direction that Institutes of Technology are being pointed by policy “...we’re a country of 4 and a half million people, or 5 million people if you pushed it, I suppose. We have thirteen Institutes of Technology, 6 universities and we’re the size of a decent city in Europe, so certainly there must be a whole lot of scope for things coming together and if you’ve 3 Institutes of Technology, like in the Dublin area, like it makes more sense that something is done with that, I don’t know whether it really makes it will be interesting to see how it pans out on the ground. You know, obviously there will be changes and changes can be difficult. But it seems to me like a good idea overall, you know, hopefully it works well in practice.”
“...in terms of an educational structure then you do have to look at 4½ to 5 million people, 6 universities and 13 IOTs and wonder about that a little bit. I think the IOTs maybe, because they’re smaller and there are more of us, realise maybe more, that well the others can’t go on forever, there has to be change, there has to be some form of bringing together, and a rationalisation, that we’re all doing the same courses and stuff. I think mergers are a realisation of that at the moment.”

Although Dermot is familiar with policy issues in higher education he is not conscious of wider issues beyond his own particular role in his institute “…we maybe don’t have enough say interaction with industry... you just get caught up in your own little world, kind of, and you don’t necessarily go out and visit things... because they have been out in industry so they know people and they know the trends and that does influence how we are maybe changing courses and stuff like that. But, largely speaking, I think we’re quite insular really like. I don’t know at a higher level, probably things influence maybe more like at a management level, maybe things, you know, there’s more interaction that’s with other colleges and stuff, but there is that tendency, you know, once a semester starts, you know, your focus is on the, you know, where’s my next class, and have I prepared and once a year do I have to grade. Unfortunately I suppose it does come down to very mundane everyday things.”

Nevertheless Dermot shows incisive insight into the historical development of Institutes of Technology and the social and economic role played by them “I think the social relevance may always there, within the history of the RTCs were kind of set up to bring people into education, who wouldn’t have necessarily come from that background and I think like where is situated now, that’s still a big huge social function that the college exists for you know and then from an economic point of view we’ve had... people who didn’t do a fourth year degree because you know they are just getting offers from industry, so to go and work, so
the relevancy is definitely still there. You know we are producing the people that people want and they’re crying out for, so from an economic development point of view in the country like we’re even, and a social point of view we’re still ticking very very important boxes, like we’re not, we’re very much focussed. I think that most of the students that come through here are... would be very employable and immediately an asset to the workforce. So yes, I think that we’re good at that, we mightn’t always be good at some other things but I think those things it’s probably very relevant.”
Appendix 6 Vignettes

The vignettes documented below form part of the analysis. The vignettes are generated through a cross cutting analysis of the individual participants, illustrated in figure 4.2 above. The individual vignettes inform the generation of theorised narrative portraits outlined in 5.4 Theorised Narrative Portraits using Gee’s Identity Framework above.

Vignettes – Aiden

Aiden is a reluctant academic and hankers for a role in film-making. Despite this conflict Aiden brings energy, empathy and commitment to his role as a lecturer in his institute. Aiden is essentially a practitioner who is teaching due to the fact that he is unable to access a suitable film project that will keep him occupied and financially stable. Despite this it is clear that Aiden enjoys teaching and has invested himself into the role of lecturer.

Aiden was talented at art whilst in school and went to Art College when he left school. He was to drop out of Art College relatively early before starting to work with his father on the production of stop-go animation features. From there he became more involved in the film industry, working for film companies and working as a freelance film-maker also.

Aiden is unequivocal in his assertion that educational qualifications have little or no standing in the film industry. Nevertheless he has immersed himself in his role as a lecturer and has through engagement and reflection re-evaluated his views taking the viewpoint of a lecturer and adopting almost a contradictory stance identifying the need for structure and rigour in educational programmes. He highlights the need for transferable skills and preparation of the students beyond narrow focussed industry needs that can be temporary and unsustainable over the period of a graduates working life.
He was drawn to lecturing reluctantly at first, however, colleagues were persistent in asking him to bring his expertise to the institute so that students could learn from his expertise and experience. He was then gradually drawn further and further into lecturing and he now has a full time contract at his institute.

It is evident that he finds his role as a lecturer very fulfilling and that he has developed as a result of this new direction. One of the first things to emerge on his taking this role was that he had no formal educational qualifications. He addressed this by completing a bachelor’s degree at a UK university, an experience that he found challenging but positive and one that lent him insight to his new role.

His professional identity revolves very much around his role as a film-maker and he is a member of a number of professional bodies of which there is one that he feels is important and carries real weight. His academic background is not as important to him however he is continuing to address his lack of formal qualifications.

Aiden is very much the driver of his own development. He is ambitious in establishing an underpinning platform for his new role in the form of taking on two masters’ programmes, one a teaching and learning masters’ degree and a second masters’ degree by research which is a vehicle by which he wishes to validate and give currency to his film-making experience and productions. This was outlined in the first interview and perhaps inevitably the stress of trying to complete both these projects whilst working was becoming apparent at the time of the second interview.
Aiden’s enthusiasm and drive are apparent in his discussion of his engagement in teaching and learning initiatives and the teaching and learning masters he is undertaking. Aiden also relates how at different points in the past he developed skills and competences in developing his role as a film-maker, switching from film to digital video and working with computer generated imagery (CGI). His natural inquisitiveness and pursuit of understanding of his role as a teacher has driven his engagement in teaching and learning.

Aiden sees huge opportunities to engage in professional development and has received very positive support from his institute for his development. He is critical of fellow lecturers stating that the opportunities for development are not, in general, availed of by them. He feels this is short sighted particularly in a changing environment. Despite his positive engagement in professional development in his institute he thinks that it is not structured and lacks coherence.

Aiden is aware of outside influences in higher education, is familiar with, and shows insights into the Hunt report and government policy with regard to higher education. He believes his institute is a niche operator and as it is small it is vulnerable, so the Hunt report is potentially a threat. Given this view he is in favour of his institute’s decision not to pursue a merger with other institutes of technology in the Dublin region and states a preference to amalgamate with a university instead.

He believes that his institute would be swallowed up in an enlarged institute of technology and perhaps conflictingly believes the same threat is not present in a merger with a large university. He is critical of management at his institute as he believes they are short sighted.
and too comfortable in their niche and have not challenged themselves to operate beyond their comfort zone.

He is very positive towards future change and sees exciting opportunities ahead for higher education and the institute of technology sector. Aiden is upset by recent portrayal of the public sector and believes that it has received a very bad press in recent times. He is comfortable in his role as a lecturer and is pragmatic in comparing his job to those in the private sector. Aiden does not discuss increased workload but is feeling financial strains at the moment.

Vignettes – Andrew
Andrew has a broad range of experience academically as a lecturer initially in a university and subsequently in his present Institute where he has been employed for more than 10 years. Andrew also has practice based experience in America and in Ireland where he continues to practice in his capacity as a consultant in software development. Andrew’s identity is framed by his experience as an undergraduate and postgraduate in his HEI and by his practice based experience in America and Ireland. The vocational and practice based nature of his programmes of study have influenced his career as a lecturer in giving him a preference for working in the Institute of Technology sector. Although his career in academia started in a university, Andrew chose to work in the Institute of Technology sector.

He values the vocational practice based nature of the programmes in his institute and enjoys the closeness he feels to his students. He identifies with the practitioner dimension of his experience and reflects on his early career being orientated towards the technical aspects of his job and keeping up-to-date with developments in computing.
He places value on the social role of his job and the positive empowerment of people, enabling people develop knowledge and skills to help them achieve in life, particularly those who experience social disadvantage.

He conveys his grounding in his discipline by expressing his enjoyment of software development “it’s a strange combination of creativity and rigour” and describes how he interacts with his children using problem based approaches to problem solving with his children. He identifies his professional identity a nexus between software developer and academic referring to himself as having a hybrid identity “a teacher, an academic, a researcher, and then a developer.”

The teacher/lecturer aspect of his professional identity reveals deep reflections on his role as a lecturer with engagement in teaching and learning through the completion of an EdD and other formal and informal teaching and learning programmes. His deep reflection is evident from his critical appraisal of some elements of teaching and learning programmes, particularly some SIF projects.

His engagement in teaching and learning was stimulated by a desire to develop a deeper understanding of the teaching of computing in an effort to make improvements so that retention issues at his institute could be addressed. This also shows deep reflection on his role as a lecturer.

Andrew is deeply affected by changes introduced by the Croke Park agreement and refers to stress and demotivation wondering how the increased workload can be justified. He
believes the additional workload is unfair and criticises weak management in the system creating a culture where underperformance is left unchallenged.

He sees the structure of the contract in his institute, and all other institutes of technology as inflexible and constricting in the sense that there are no opportunities or incentives to engage in research. This is one of the areas I which he differentiates his role in the institute to that of university lecturers. In reflecting on the difference in orientation between teaching and research between institutes of technology and universities, his natural orientation to practice led teaching is prevalent and more valued.

It is here that he draws attention to inconsistency in the system with regard to supporting professional development and with regard to the unequal resource allocation between universities and institutes of technology referring to the institutes’ “second hand Cinderella” status. In this respect he sees the technological university as an opportunity to reduce inequalities in the system.

Perhaps related to the orientation towards practice led teaching is Andrew’s loose affiliation to fellow lectures in research and developing aspects of his work as an academic.

Andrew disapproves of changes to his terms and conditions of work especially the additional hours introduced by the Croke Park Agreement and he personalises the additional stress and demands of the new regime. However Andrew does not engage in the discourse around managerialism and performativity, but talks mainly about the impact on him personally and the unfair way in which what he sees as punitive measures have been applied to hardworking lecturers. Andrew also sees these changes in a wider meta context as an attack
on the public sector in general and through these reflections expresses his own commitment to addressing wider issues of socio-economic and social inequality. Andrew’s social conscience is also evident in his engagement as an election observer.

In considering the possible impact of changes driven by government policy and the stated intention of his institute to merge with others, Andrew is broadly positive with some misgivings about changing culture leading to a re-orientation towards a more research led university, something he witnessed with his own HEI that moved across the binary divide to become a university.

Notwithstanding these misgivings Andrew sees possible changes as an opportunity not only for him personally, but to a wider constituency including fellow lecturers and students. While naturally apprehensive and uncertain as to what the future as a technological university holds he is confident in his abilities as a teacher and as a researcher. Andrew sees himself as capable and ready to achieve and develop in a changing environment.

**Vignettes – Beth**

Beth attended a university where she completed a commerce degree before continuing to the Master’s in Business which was funded by the European Social Fund. Beth’s preference had been for the finance stream of the Masters’ as she had an interest in accounting and finance, however, she was to be allocated a place on the management and organisational behaviour stream which bothered her at the time. Despite this she enjoyed the Masters’ and is complementary of the lecturers she had at the university although she does not hold firm attachment to it.
On completion of her studies Beth started teaching in a post leaving certificate (further education) college where she taught business. Whilst working in this college she began teaching in her institute at night time for a number of years before being offered a full time job. Beth still retains close ties with the post leaving certificate college through the transfer of students.

Beth is conscious that she does not have the depth of practice based industry experience as some of her colleagues. She sees this as a disadvantage and talks of her attempts to “bridge that gap”. Nevertheless Beth has practice based experience from early in her career with stints working in business in Ireland and overseas in Poland and America. Beth uses contacts with her former classmates and with local industry to have practitioners give classes to her students, which she finds useful in her role at the institute.

It is perhaps as a result of her background that Beth’s orientation to her role is as a teacher and does not appear to be interested in developing a research profile. She has some experience of writing case studies but is not engaged in research in a significant way. She shows great empathy with her students and is anxious that they achieve. She is also conscious of the social role that her institute plays in its location in a socially disadvantaged region. She feels that the proposed merger and possible technological university may undermine this role in the future.

It is through her teaching role that Beth finds the greatest expression of her identity and is enthused by working with students and being a part of their development. She is challenged but stimulated by developing new modules and subjects to teach, highlighting the demands within a tight schedule and she is excited when discussing former students who have
achieved in their careers and in further studies, particularly those with difficult or disadvantaged backgrounds.

Beth is pragmatic about increases to her workload brought about by the Croke Park agreement and draws comparisons with the private sector where she believes people are working harder. When reflecting on the proposed merger between her institute and others Beth believes that there will be changes but she will be doing much the same as she does now.

Apart from engagement in one or two SIF funded projects on learning and assessment Beth has not engaged in professional development during her time at her institute. Beth is unsure about the level of support she would receive should she decide to engage in further studies or research. Apart from favourable timetabling to facilitate such development it is evident that support in the form of time or financial support not certain. She comments on some of her colleagues who have and are engaged in PhD studies, but does not see herself willing or able to make such a commitment.

Outside influences have impacted on Beth through falling ability levels of students with consequent changes to teaching methodologies. Beth is also conscious of the impact of the economic downturn on students work opportunities and sees her institute as having an important role in helping prepare students for employment particularly in the region it is located. At the time of the first interview Beth was unaware of the criteria for designation as a technological university but had reflected more fully at the time of the second interview.
Beth has some misgivings about a possible merger and change in status wondering what impact it would have for people from the local area accessing higher education. She does not feel threatened by proposed developments and feels confident in her own ability as a teacher in any new setting. She is also confident in making any changes necessary to adapt to a new or changed institute. On balance she would prefer to have things remain as they are as she believes that the institute as presently constituted better serves the needs of the local region.

**Vignettes – Breda**

Breda was heavily influenced early at secondary education by her art teacher and attended a college of art and design graduating with a degree in graphic design. Breda then worked for a year in a related area before commencing work with a company which she had completed an internship with. This was excellent experience before travelling abroad where she worked in graphic design in Australia. On returning to Ireland she again worked in graphic design all the time building on her practice based industry experience.

It was then that Breda applied and was successful in getting a place on an ESF funded masters’ degree in multi-media. This was an enriching experience as it involved people with different backgrounds bringing different experiences, knowledge and competences to the learning space and group work in the programme. Breda had anticipated using this qualification as a possible entry route to teaching, something she had recognised as appealing through experiences at work where she found working with new entrants and work placement students enriching and rewarding. She was perceptive in this respect as it was shortly after completing these studies that her role at her institute commenced.
Breda reflects deeply on her teaching and is at present engaged in a certificate in teaching and learning which she finds fulfilling and useful in her role as a teacher. Breda’s orientation is towards teaching and she feels her practice and industry experience are important in preparing students for work in what she refers to as a “creative discipline for commercial purposes”. She values the structure and rigour of the programmes she teaches and has helped to design. She contrasts the learning experience of her students with the unstructured and loosely directed nature of her own experience as a student. Her teaching is informed by her industry and practice based experience something she values highly. Although not formally a member of a professional association she continues to connect to industry through colleagues in industry who she regularly invites in to her institute to give classes and workshops.

Breda is, at the time of the interviews, engaged in a certificate in teaching and learning and is positive about the insights into her teaching practices that she has gained. She believes her professional development is driven intrinsically and has been proactive in organising training events around the technical aspects of her role. She has considered pursuing further studies through a PhD, but due to the nature of her discipline is not aware of many opportunities in this area. She anticipates that should her institute merge in the future that there will be a change in expectations with regard to publication and research, however she does not anticipate significant change in her own role.

Breda has availed of support for professional development in her institute, however does not feel that there is a structured and definite system in her institute, stating that there is uncertainty with regard to the nature and extent of supports available and that support for professional development has to be sought out.
Breda is open to possible changes in higher education, driven by the Hunt report. Unlike her institute, which has pulled out of merger talks with other institutes, she doesn’t feel a merger with other institutes of technology would be undesirable, particularly on a meso or macro level. She is open to current discussions with a university and generally positive seeing it as an exciting opportunity, although she does feel that the programmes she is involved in may come under pressure to increase numbers to an undesirable or unsustainable level.

She feels that as a lecturer she is in a privileged position in society and modestly refers to herself as a teacher when asked. She does not feel pressurised by additional work load introduced by the Croke Park agreement and rather sees changes to her role as flowing from her engagement in the teaching and learning certificate which is giving her new insights and opening opportunities within her role. She does however feel more pressurised financially as a result of changes but does not elaborate on this point.

Breda feels that there is an increase in the demands on programmes she is involved with to develop work ready graduates and sees this as being driven by industry. She is relatively secure in her role in her institute with apprehension flowing from the fact that programmes she is involved with are a small part of a small institute of technology that is vulnerable in a changing environment.

**Vignettes – Cathy**

Cathy has a diverse professional experience prior to working in academia. On leaving school Cathy worked in financial services in a bank before becoming involved in working in the social care area and working as a manager in a social care setting. It was through her work
in social care that she came in contact with her institute and was persuaded to complete a degree there. She then went on to complete a masters' degree at a UK university.

Cathy’s professional and personal experience shape her identity as a lecturer. Her personal experiences have given her insight into, and inform her professional practice. Her extensive professional practice has enabled her to gain deep insights and access to issues in social care. Due to the nature of her professional and academic experience Cathy uses her knowledge and skills to retain a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged users of services through preparing students to enter professional practice. Cathy’s commitment to equality and social justice are evident in how she describes the focus of her role as a lecturer. She emphasises the need to empower people and to generate empathy among students through reflection and commitment to social justice. She is also committed to the development of standards at a national and international level in social care.

Cathy is a member of a professional body which serves mainly as a channel for her research. She has on-going engagement in research but the focus of her role is the service users who her students will work with. Cathy has also worked extensively with stage agencies engaged in social care work.

Cathy was engaged in PhD studies at an Irish university and the focus of her studies was on social justice. She has had to take a break from these studies due to family commitments but hopes to return to her studies in the future. She believes that provision for professional development at her institute is good and acknowledges the role of a dedicated development unit in her university. However, she feels that there are significant time pressures that mitigate against involvement in professional development.
In considering outside influences on her role she believes that there should be more accountability in institutes of technology but believes that they perform an important role in higher education whilst acknowledging the perceived higher status of universities. Cathy takes a pragmatic view of proposed mergers with other institutes and sees these developments as bringing more coherency at a strategic level to social care education. Cathy does not see the proposed mergers as having any significant impact on her own role in her institute or that there would be significant change in the immediate future.

Vignettes – Colm
Colm has a very strong practice based orientation to his role as a lecturer. He graduated from an Irish University with a masters’ degree and worked in industry in a variety of roles related to his academic background. This background was in turn influenced by childhood experiences on his grandfather’s farm.

Across the two interviews with Colm he reflected on his professional identity and whether he saw himself as teacher, researcher or scientist. By the time of the second interview Colm identified himself as a scientist, teacher and researcher in that order. Later in the second interview he referred to himself as “food safety management trainer”. These reflections reveal a very focussed identity around the role he plays in his institute.

Colm’s enthusiasm for his various roles prior to lecturing and now as a lecturer is unreserved and he is enthused by his job and the interaction with students. Colm feels that within the parameters of his role he can opt to concentrate on the teaching side, as he has done, or on the research side as some of his close colleagues have done. He is unenthusiastic about the
level of bureaucracy associated with research and choses to concentrate on the teaching aspect of his role.

Flowing from his identity as a food safety management trainer is Colm’s practice based experience, including contribution to the development of a patent, which enriches his teaching. As stated above he is not involved in research in his discipline area, however he places importance on research. To further develop his role as a teacher his research at the moment is focussed on his teaching and he brings a typically scientific and analytical approach to this aspect of his role.

He is very positive about the role of the teaching development unit at his institute and is fully engaged with the unit through short courses and research into teaching and learning. He sees himself as the driver of his own development and engages fully in the PMDS process in his institute. He feels supported in his development although he feels pressurised by increased workload as a result of the Croke Park agreement.

He believes that the area in which he lectures is highly relevant and contributes positively in the context of higher education. He feels that the public sector, of which he includes himself, has been unfairly blamed for the economic crises and fall out and resents the way in which it has been portrayed in the media. He thinks that his workload has increased not only as a result of the Croke Park agreement but also as a result of increasing student numbers and reduced staffing in his institute.

He is broadly positive of the proposed changes as a result of the Hunt report and welcomes the increase in size and opportunities to collaborate with others in his institute and in
prospective partner institutes. He adopts a very pragmatic view of the size of the higher education system relative to the population and sees the proposed mergers and other developments as being a rational way of addressing the structure of the system. He does not reveal any apprehension or anxiety about what his role might be in an enlarged institute and believes he will be doing much the same as he is now.

Vignettes – Deirdre

Deirdre’s academic background is in the Institute of Technology sector where she spent two years as an undergraduate before transferring to a university where she graduated with a degree in computing. She then completed a masters’ degree at another Institute of Technology. This experience has influenced her approach to her role in the institute she is now lecturing in.

In addition to Deirdre’s academic qualifications she also has 11 years’ experience working in industry in a variety of different organisations and roles. This experience in invaluable in her role and her experience in training in industry was to bring her to her present role as a lecturer.

Deirdre sees most of her role revolves around teaching and she takes a very practical approach to teaching, emphasising the hands-on approach that she believes is typical of the approach in institutes of technology. She acknowledges that students coming into institutes of technology are weaker than their university counterparts, however believes that the practical approach, and a certain amount of “hand holding” are characteristic of the approach in the institutes that addresses any deficits. Her commitment to her students is evident in the way she describes her interaction and contact time with them.
Deirdre has been involved in SIF projects, doing some work on the learning styles project with colleagues at her institute. She identifies research as an area she would like to become more involved in and develop professionally. Due to recent changes in personal circumstances Deirdre is on a reduced contract approximating to three fifths of a normal contract. She puts this down to personal circumstances and the changing nature of her role as a lecturer with increasing student numbers and falling levels of ability adding to the demands and stress of the job.

Deirdre believes she is responsible for her professional development and engages in on-line delivery of workshops and classes to keep up-to-date with the technical aspects of her job. She enjoys the flexibility she has around her role and the support of her head of department in mapping out her professional development. Despite this positivity she does not believe that the provision for professional development is adequate with the lack of time allocated to development and a lack of availability of programmes or courses identified as wanting.

Deirdre is positive about the status and position of lecturers in society although she is conscious of a negativity with regard to the public service. She finds this negativity misguided and unfair although she feels that teachers and lecturers are respected, particularly where people have contact with education personally or through family members. She feels that pressure and workload have increased in recent times “less pay, more hours, more students, yes your quality of life definitely has been affected” and this increased burden partly motivated her decision to reduce her time at work.

Deirdre is conscious of outside influences on institutes however is convinced that the institutes are relevant and especially so with regard to computing, pointing out the lack of
supply of computing graduates for industry. She is also assured of the relevance of the institute through civic engagement through initiatives such as ‘young women in technology’ and other community initiatives in her institute.

She is positive about possible change in the institute of technology sector flowing from the Hunt report and sees this as an opportunity to develop further and specifically to become involved in research. She is confident in her own abilities and her industry skills and experience seeing further opportunities through collaboration with a wider cohort of lecturers in an enlarged institute.

**Vignettes – Dermot**

Dermot went to college in a national institute of higher education that was to become a university some years after he had graduated. Dermot graduated with a degree in engineering and subsequent to that worked for an IT company for two years. After this period working for the IT company Dermot started lecturing in a Regional Technical College and was to work in a number of different RTCs/institutes before commencing in his present institute over 10 years ago. Dermot has over 25 years’ experience as a lecturer and has seen many changes over that period.

Dermot’s experience at his HEI was formative and he draws parallels between the way his own degree was structured and the way in which programmes are delivered by him in his institute. His connection to teaching is located in his experience at his HEI where he was often called upon by his fellow students to explain concepts and theories. He is confident in the system and with its emphasis on practice based student experience. Dermot is mindful that his industry experience is limited and would like to have more industry based experience and would in other circumstances build on that experience.
Dermot has let his membership of a professional body lapse in recent years partly as a result of tension between his own views of the abilities of his graduates and the failure of this professional body to recognise his students and others from the institute of technology sector whilst recognising graduates of universities who do not have the same practice based experience. Another reason is the professional bodies orientation to a particular branch of the profession other than his area of expertise.

With Dermot’s length of experience in the sector he has seen many changes and describes a different job to the one he started out in. He finds it difficult and stressful to have to manage what he sees as increasing administrative tasks and the requirements of course boards and programmatic review, duties he sees as outside the original scope of the role.

Dermot was involved in research but this was quite a long time ago. He reflects on his professional development and says that he would consider pursuing a PhD but it is too late in his career now and that he would be too close to retirement for such an undertaking to be worthwhile. Dermot does not think that there is adequate provision for professional development in the sector with time being a significant barrier to professional development and the absence of opportunities such as sabbaticals as being an example of this lack of opportunity.

Related to the lack of opportunities for professional development Dermot is also critical of the career structure, citing the absence of opportunities for advancement to senior positions and the absence of a system of rotation of academic management posts such as head of department.
Dermot has been involved in online delivery in the past and it is evident in his description of his interactions with students that he is learner focussed. He was involved in some of the SIF projects in his institute and completed a problem based learning programme in another institute. He sees his role as very much a teaching one although he sees this role as having changed in recent years with progressive falls in the levels of ability of his students, something which he finds challenging. He doesn’t see a renewed involvement in research as being likely in the future.

He thinks that in his area the institute is relevant and often sees students taking up employment on completion of their level 7 ordinary degrees prior to completion of their honours degrees. This he believes is a manifestation of the economic relevance of the institute. He sees the institute of technology sector as being particularly relevant in offering access to education for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and acknowledges the historical basis of this role and function.

He feels quite insular in his role and appears to be focussed on what is happening in the classroom around his own particular modules. In considering outside influences he reflects on the institute of technology system as being quite inflexible with little opportunity for innovation among and between the institutes.

He is broadly in favour of the changes signalled by the Hunt report citing a country of 4½ million with 6 universities and 14 institutes of technology as being unsustainable with a reduction in the number of higher education institutes as being a rational development. He
doesn’t see future developments as threatening him personally and believes that should a merger take place that his institute will remain in some form or other, however he is apprehensive should a downgrading of the institute in the form of a drop from third to 2.5 level be a consequence of such a merger.
Appendix 7 Higher Education Authority Criteria for a Technological University

1 Mission

1.1 A technological university will have a systematic focus on the preparation of graduates for complex professional roles in a changing technological world. It will advance knowledge through research and scholarship and disseminate this knowledge to meet the needs of society and enterprise. It will have particular regard to the needs of the region in which the university is located.

1.2 Having regard to the mission of a technological university, these criteria set out the requirements that are to be met by an applicant before designation can be made.

2 Institutional Profile

2.1 The university will –
- be characterised by the breadth of its programme provision across higher education Levels 6 to 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications.
- have programmes of study that are vocationally/professionally oriented, with a strong focus on science and technology.
- have programmes of study that incorporate structured work placement.
- have programmes that address the social and economic needs of the region in which the university is located.
- have sufficient resources and critical mass to ensure appropriate pedagogical and research quality and depth of faculty expertise to meet the mission of the institution.
- have sufficient critical mass to support effective and efficient governance and administration and to provide an appropriate level of student services.
- maintain an active research policy primarily focused on applied, problem oriented research and discovery, with effective knowledge transfer alongside the provision of consulting/problem solving services that are particularly relevant to the region.
- support intensive and broad-based links with regional business, enterprise, professions and related stakeholders that inform curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and research.

3 Student Profile

3.1 The student profile of the university will match its stated mission. Specifically, the university will provide programmes at higher education Levels 6 to 10 to meet local, regional and national demand and to meet the university’s responsibilities in respect of educational opportunities at these levels.
3.2 At the time of application for designation as a technological university –
• enrolment in the applicant institution in research programmes at Levels 9-10 will not be less than 4% of FTE enrolments at levels 8 to 10. In addition, the application must evidence a developmental trajectory, showing that the institution will raise these enrolments to 7% within a period of ten years from the date of designation. Level 10 provision will be concentrated in a small number of fields/departments which have the capacity and credibility to offer this level of study and training to the level set by the national PhD standard;

• a combined minimum of 30% of all students in the applicant institution will be lifelong learning students enrolled on professional focused programmes and industry up-skilling, including part-time, work-related programmes and work-study programmes and/or mature learners.

3.3 Where the institutions that consolidate to comprise a technological university have been providing, prior to consolidation, non-higher education programmes (as defined by the National Framework of Qualifications) the university will, if necessary to meet local, regional and national demand, ensure this activity continues, either directly or indirectly, through appropriate administrative and academic arrangements that allow for the sharing of academic facilities and the progression of students.

4 Staff Profile

4.1 A technological university will in the appointment, management and progression/promotion of academic staff to and within the university have in place contractual and appointment procedures that, inter alia, -

• give weight to professional practice and institutional engagement activities

and

• provide existing staff members with a balance between teaching, research, engagement activities and academic administration that is appropriate to their subject area and their academic experience.

4.2 At the time of application for designation –
• 90% of full time, academic staff engaged in delivering higher education programmes in the applicant institution will hold a Level 9 qualification or higher.

• at least 45% per cent of full time, higher education, academic staff, will hold a Level 10 qualification or the equivalence in professional experience, combined with a terminal degree appropriate to their profession. The proportion of such staff that hold an equivalence in professional experience shall not exceed 10% of full time, higher education, academic staff. There
will be demonstrable evidence of a developmental trajectory that shows the capacity, including staff with equivalence in professional experience as referred to, to increase and reach levels consistent with other Irish universities but not less than 65% within ten years of designation. These staff will not only hold Level 10 qualifications or equivalent in professional experience, but also be able to demonstrate sustained activity in relevant areas of research and development.

• in the fields of knowledge/study in which doctoral level training and research is on-going, the proportion of staff holding Level 10 qualifications will be in excess of 80%. As a general principle, only those with Level 10 qualifications will be engaged in the delivery and supervision of Level 9 programmes. Only those with Level 10 qualifications and with a sustained record of research publications and mission-appropriate research outputs will be engaged in the delivery and supervision of Level 10 programmes.

5 Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Development

5.1 A technological university will have the curriculum and the teaching, learning and assessment processes to support its core mission to develop graduates who have a focus on the world of work. The full opportunities provided by the National Framework of Qualifications for enhanced teaching, learning and curriculum development will be incorporated, with a particular focus on-

• Curriculum development focused on knowledge, skills and competencies developed in conjunction with business, professional organisations and, workforce, student and occupational organisations;
• Curricula that embed the full range of generic attributes linked to employability and citizenship;
• Curricula that embed engagement in the workplace as part of its programmes;
• Research-informed and practice-led teaching, learning and assessment that uses problem-oriented, practice-based and is community engaged.

6 Research

6.1 The research dimension of a technological university will-

• Focus on applied, problem-oriented research and social and technological development and innovation, with direct social and economic impacts and public and private benefits in the region in which the university is located;
• Support and sustain research activity among its staff that can be compared to appropriate international benchmarks. Such benchmarks will include inter alia evidence of cooperative research groups of a viable scale, success in winning competitive research funding nationally and internationally and inter-institutional research collaboration;
• In linking research to teaching, demonstrate methodological approaches to the formation of level 10 knowledge, skills and competencies that are appropriate to the institution’s research mission and meet national PhD level standards. This will be through the integration of practice-led, professional, and industrial doctorate structures alongside more traditional PI-led approaches, all within the context of national policy for structured PhD provision.

6.2 An applicant institution will, at the time of application, –
• have existing research capacity to support on-going programmes, projects and doctoral training in at least three fields of knowledge/study as defined by ISCED fields of study at the 2-digit level (ISCED2 – “Narrow fields”); 5

5 ISCED codes are outlined on the HEA website at http://www.hea.ie/files/files/file/statistics/SRS%20User%20Files/EurostatISCED.pdf

• demonstrate a developmental trajectory showing that the institution can extend research and doctoral activity to sufficient capacity to support two further fields, as defined by ISCED2 within five years of designation as a technological university.

7 International Profile

7.1 The international engagement of a technological university will specifically reflect its mission and orientation.

7.2 At the time of application, an applicant will demonstrate a developmental trajectory for the enhancement of internationalisation related to teaching and learning, research and staff development and a sustainable range of international collaborations such as joint projects, student and staff exchanges including the collaborative provision of academic and training programmes.

8 Leadership, Management and Governance

8.1 The leadership management and governance arrangements in place will be fully reflective of and in line with the stated mission of the institution. In practice this will mean -

• governance structures that reflect the external orientation of the institution and the engagement focus of its programmes of study;
• an integrated academic governance structure that gives coherence to multiple units, with consolidation of previously autonomous institutions where these existed, within the framework of the institution’s mission.
• a leadership team that combines strong academic credentials and experience with experience in enterprise and professions relevant to the institution’s mission.
• effective institutional-level academic governance with the authority, processes and competence to ensure the quality of programmes of study and the quality and integrity of other academic matters;
• workplace practices and employment contracts are reflective of a modern university including, *inter alia*, such matters as the flexible delivery of programmes for diverse learner groups, the length and structure of the academic year, the efficient utilisation of the institution’s physical resources and other infrastructure.

Appendix 8 Participant Information Sheet

The negotiation of professional identities of lecturers in Institutes of Technology in Ireland

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a study required to complete a thesis as part of a Doctorate in Education (EdD) programme at the University of Manchester. The aim of my research is to examine the negotiation of professional identity of lecturers in Institutes of Technology (IOTs) in Ireland at a time of profound policy change in the higher education sector. The research aims to develop a conceptualisation of the negotiation and re-negotiation of professional identity, acknowledging the never fully formed, constantly changing, dialogic nature of identity. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the study?
Pat O'Connor
School of Education
Ellen Wilkinson Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL

Title of the study
The negotiation of professional identities of lecturers in Institutes of Technology in Ireland.

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of my research is to examine the negotiation of professional identity of lecturers in Institutes of Technology (IOTs) in Ireland at a time of profound policy change in the higher education sector. The research aims to develop a conceptualisation of the negotiation and re-negotiation of professional identity, acknowledging the never fully formed, constantly changing, dialogic nature of identity.
Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as a lecturer working at an Institute of Technology.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview during which questions will be asked about your experiences as a lecturer at an Institute of Technology. The transcript of this interview will be returned to you to give you an opportunity to reflect and ‘restory’ your account of your experiences as a lecturer in an Institute of Technology. You will then participate in a follow-up interview where you will again recount your experiences as a lecturer at an Institute of Technology.

What happens to the data collected?

The data will be used to gain insight and information on the negotiation of academic identity in the IOT sector.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All participants will remain anonymous. Data will be stored on a personal laptop which will be encrypted. Only the researcher and his immediate supervisor at the University of Manchester will have access to this data.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

Once you have decided to participate in the research you may decide to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason for the withdrawal.

Will I be paid for participating in the study?

There will be no payment or compensation for participants’ time or any inconvenience caused as a result of participating in this research.

What is the duration of the study?

The study is in the form of an initial interview and a follow-up interview. Completion of the interview should take no longer than 1 hour per session, a total of 2 hours. Time will also be spent in reading and reflecting on the transcript of the first interview.

Where will the study be conducted?

The study will take place at you place of work.

Will the outcomes of the study be published?

The research study is part of a thesis at the University of Manchester. A copy of the study will be made available to all participants. Participants will be informed of any publication of data with regard to the research.
Contact for further information

Should you wish to discuss this research further please note my contact details below;
Pat O’Connor
6 Manorfields Crescent
Castaheany
Dublin 15
pat.oconnor@itb.ie
(087) 973 9359

What if something goes wrong?

If a participant feels that they have made an error or wish to amend or withdraw from the research they should contact the researcher (contact details above).

If a participant wants to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the study they should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9P
Appendix 9 Consent Form

The negotiation of professional identities of lecturers in
Institutes of Technology in Ireland

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below.

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals

I agree to take part in the above project

_________________________    ___________   __________________
Name of participant    Date    Signature

_________________________    ___________   __________________
Name of person taking consent    Date     Signature

312