What Is Required to Optimise Professional Development Opportunities for Academic Staff in a Specific College in the Further Education Sector?

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What is Required to Optimise Professional Development Opportunities for Academic Staff in a Specific College in the Further Education Sector?

A thesis submitted to the Dublin Institute of Technology in part fulfillment of the requirements for award of Masters (M.A) in Third Level Learning and Teaching

by

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July 2006

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I hereby certify that the material which is submitted in this thesis towards award of the Masters (M.A.) in Third Level learning and Teaching is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any academic assessment other than part-fulfilment of the award named above.

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Signature of Candidate: Anne o'Donohue

Date: 1st July 2006
Abstract

The main aim of this research was to identify what was required to optimise professional development for the academic staff of Liberties College, a college in the further education sector. This research was a case study, focusing on the micro, one case on one site, with the emphasis on understanding the unity and the wholeness of this particular case. The theoretical perspective applied therefore, was constructionist and the research methods interpretive in design.

The research design was mainly qualitative though there was also a quantitative element in part of the questionnaire which was followed up by semi-structured interviews. The relevant literature was consulted and reviewed in order to establish a framework for the research and to inform the validity of the findings.

The findings from the questionnaire show the identified continuing professional development requirements, needs and interests for working in the classroom, for working in the institution and for the self. The follow-up interviews provided more precise detail for some of the questionnaire responses.

The recommendations from the study include suggestions that emanate from the findings and which have been contextualised to the culture and practice in Liberties College.
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This research study could not have happened without the assistance, co-operation and encouragement of my colleagues, the staff of Liberties College. Not only did they complete the questionnaire and agree to be interviewed, they also showed continuing interest in the progress of the research and always had a kind word of encouragement for me, reassuring me that I would successfully reach the end. I received assistance any time I asked for it, which I appreciate very much.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The main aim of this research study was to identify what will enhance the professional development strategy for academic staff in a specific college in the further education sector; the sector which bridges the gap between school and work and which provides nationally and internationally recognised qualifications and also provides an access route into tertiary education. Chapter 2 discusses the aims, context, rationale and ethics. In summary, it was intended that the approach would be holistic, researching the perceived needs for the classroom, the institution and the self. The location of the research was Liberties College which is under the aegis of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee. I am a member of the academic staff and hold an Assistant Principalship, with responsibility for staff support and staff development, an innovative role at the time of its inception.

Apart from the fact that research on continuing professional development within any educational institution would be a worthy area of study, there was an added reason behind this particular focus. After June 2008, Liberties College will no longer be a provider of secondary education, but will be exclusively a college of further and community education. Along with this change at local level, there are educational developments at national and international level which will further generate change.

As this was insider research, it was important to be aware of the ethical considerations that this implies, and to take decisions about applying the measures necessary to ensure the progress and success of the research. This meant among other things, the need to ensure that there was fully informed consent to participate, and the need for the researcher to emerge from the experience unharmed.
The current thinking and literature was researched and is reviewed in Chapter 3. Among many other things, this indicated the need for flexibility around any continuing professional development framework so as to meet emergent needs. The framework must also be linked to both individual and institutional needs and individual needs include career development and personal professional development. There are several important points which have emerged from the literature, two of which I will mention here. One is the importance of the awareness of the need to continue to learn throughout a career, and another is that the responsibility for continuing professional development is not the sole prerogative of the employer, but teachers themselves must play a key role as professional development is an aspect of personal development and ideally, they should interact with and complement each other.

The research design is dealt with in detail in Chapter 4. This was a case study and as the researcher was an insider, interpretivism was the theoretical perspective employed as it seeks meanings and not just descriptions. It was a qualitative study, the characteristics of which are that it is holistic, empirical, interpretive and empathic and which therefore seemed the most appropriate to fulfil the stated aims.

As the aim was to try to understand the issues and context of this particular case, each part of the process in data collecting was essential in generating the information that would inform how professional development could be best progressed. A combination of questionnaire and interview were used which gave a good idea of the variety of feelings and views. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were quantitative in design so as to generate an audit of staff in relation to such areas as age profiles, gender ratio, length of time teaching, coming into teaching from a prior career. However many were qualitative in design so as to ascertain the attitudes and opinions of the respondents.
The outcome of the questionnaires was represented on a spreadsheet which greatly assisted in the analysis of the questionnaires and which in turn generated the topics to be focused on in focus for the semi-structured interviews. I used a combination of stratified and purposive sampling in order to fulfil the parameters of the criteria I was applying to the selection of the interviewees. This resulted in conducting five interviews, from each of which there is a verbatim transcript.

As this was a qualitative research study seeking to generate the information that would inform how to maximise continuing professional development in Liberties and as such was not looking for fixed truths, the way chosen to fulfil the purpose of the research was thematic analysis which aims to understand the data.

The findings from the responses to the questionnaires and from the recorded interviews are to be found in Chapter 5. There were twenty nine questions in total in the questionnaire and the findings are presented question by question. Some of the quantitative data is presented in chart form, but this was not possible with the qualitative data which is not reducible in this way for computer analysis. Qualitative analysis cannot be assigned to categories; instead the categories had to be developed during the analysis. This was greatly assisted by the use of thematic analysis. There were eight questions which emanated from the themes I had identified from the questionnaires. I adopted semi-structured interviews which gave me the scope to pursue clarification or elaboration of any point made. The themes selected were not the only themes identifiable, but were what I considered the most valuable to focus on in pursuance of the aims of the research. Mindful of my insider status as a researcher, I had to be assiduous about the methods used throughout the research process so as to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

The findings from the questionnaires and from the interviews are each dealt with separately in the discussion of findings Chapter 6. The findings from the questionnaires indicated that there was a high number of respondents engaging in continuing professional development
in their own time and which to a large extent was self financed. The encouraging factor that emerged was that progressing one's own personal plan was the highest motivator for this engagement.

However, there were contradictions in respondents' perceptions about several areas regarding continuing professional development. These contradictions were about the status of contract held, the right of access to continuing professional development and the financial assistance. Other main topics in the findings from the questionnaires were about aspects of change and about the integration of staff.

The findings from the interviews gave further detail about these perceptions. There was greater expansion on the experiences and attitudes of interviewees about the conditions that prevail and which might be improved upon in order to enhance the integration of staff.

In the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 7, the suggestions from the respondents and interviewees are supported by the research of the literature as well as being contextualised in the culture of Liberties College. As the staff of the college was working on the Liberties College Plan 2006 – 2010, it seemed an appropriate time to consider the recommendations which included publication of a loose-leaf teachers' handbook, containing information on contract status, accessing continuing professional development, financial assistance and how to apply for leave from college responsibilities to attend continuing professional development. The handbook could also contain information about providers of continuing professional development and suitable courses.

The thesis was a case study researched by an insider, so the focus was directly guided by the reality of the context of working in a further education institution. It dealt with change happening internationally, nationally and locally and was an attempt to find concrete methods and approaches to optimising professional development opportunities for the academic staff of Liberties College.
Chapter 2
Aims, Context, Rationale, Ethics

Aim of the Research
The main aim of this study is to identify the perceived ongoing professional development needs of academic staff in a specific college in the Further Education sector with respect to three dimensions of the role (i) the demands of teaching in the classroom; (ii) the needs of the institution in which they work; (iii) the needs of individuals in the progress of their careers. From this it should be possible to extrapolate the implications for continuing professional development in order to maximise the provision to the learner. In the context of this research, continuing professional development is accepted to mean increased personal and professional skills to meet the needs of the institution, the needs of the classroom and the needs of self. The ultimate aim is to identify what will enhance the professional development strategy in Liberties College, which is part of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC), as a typical example of a Further Education institution.

Context of the Research
Liberties College has been selected as the locus for the research as this is where I am employed as a teacher and Assistant Principal with responsibility for staff support and staff development. There is a time allocation of four hours a week, out of which one hour and twenty minutes is devoted to the weekly management meetings which are attended by the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principals. On my appointment in 1996 to what is now known as Assistant Principal, but was then known as an ‘A Post’, the role which I was asked to take on was unprecedented in Liberties College, and to my knowledge unprecedented in the CDVEC. The definition of the role was innovative and was the result of repeated general discussion around the fact that staff members were gaining promotion,
but were receiving no particular support or training in managing changing roles or acquiring essential new skills.

Rationale of the Research
This was the rationale for its inception and the role has subsequently developed to become broader and deeper. Now apart from the many and various professional development courses and workshops engaged in by staff, two separate days each academic year are in the college calendar for the sole purpose of engaging in professional development issues which involve all the staff. There have been many changes in all aspects of education since 1996, which has put even greater focus and emphasis on the necessity to have a policy and system with regard to continuing professional development.

A further consideration as to the pertinence of this research at this time is that in June 2008, Liberties College will no longer be a provider of secondary education, but will be exclusively a college of further and community education. This is entirely due to demographic changes in the area. In 2002, when the decision was finally taken after much discussion with all the stakeholders, there was a total of only sixty sixth class students in the primary schools from which Liberties College and the other three local providers of secondary education traditionally attracted their students. The eleven students applying to Liberties College was not a viable number for the continuation of secondary education.

At this time Liberties College had already reached the end of its five-year plan 1999-2004 and the academic staff, as a whole were beginning to work on the production of the next plan 2006-2010. In view of the organizational changes within the college, the plan for continuing professional development was particularly important.

Such change as this at local level impacts on teaching staff and furthermore there are educational developments at national and international level which will further generate change. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) established in June
2001, has responsibility for developing a common system of qualification for the further education and training sector. Within its auspices now are what were disparate providers of education and training such as the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Council for Education Recruitment and Training (CERT) and Teagasc. The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) has the same responsibility for the higher education and training sector. Qualification development in further education is not happening in isolation, but has been incorporated into the National Framework of Qualifications. This is a framework for the ‘development, recognition and award of qualifications in the State, based on standards of knowledge, skills or competence to be acquired by learners’ (Qualification Act 1999). This integration has been achieved by referring to the relevant level statements or indicators provided by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), which includes all awards available in Ireland.

The NQAI has further defined the Qualifications Framework as

\[\text{The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationships between all education and training awards}\]

(NQAI, Policies and Criteria, April 2002)

This international dimension makes it easier to compare qualifications from different countries. Thus the recognition of FETAC Awards abroad is facilitated, as is the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland. This is a pertinent outcome at Tertiary Level Education, as in the European Union, Ireland is one of the two largest importers of students.

(Council of Europe, 2004)

The European Union’s policies on the free movement of labour, revealed the obstacles to movement related to incompatible qualifications systems. In the area of Vocational Education and Training, which is the emphasis at Level 5 and Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework, the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
(CEDEFOP) was established. From this the European Five Level Framework of Vocational Training Qualifications was devised and was adopted by the European Council in 1985. While this framework has not been adopted on a widespread basis by the member states, it has served as a guide to the development and revision of qualifications systems.

An outcome of this, in the Irish context, was that a gap in educational provision was identified that students who were unsuccessful in attaining tertiary education had no further education options. In order to overcome this deficit, post-leaving certificate courses were developed throughout Ireland. These are the result of the work done by committed teachers who developed new courses and in so doing, developed themselves. Often it meant diversification from their traditional teaching specialisms. There were demographic changes in the increasing numbers of school leavers needing a further education option and in the decreasing numbers of second level students. Initially, most teachers’ timetables involved a teaching commitment in both second level and further education sectors. With the increasing addition of specialized vocational courses, this profile changed and the parameters shifted as to the criteria applied in the employment of staff. Now staff can be employed on specific courses based on prior industrial experience.

In 2002/2003 there were 28,700 students involved in courses in the Post-Leaving Certificate sector. The term ‘Post Leaving Certificate’ does not adequately define the range of courses, nor the prior qualifications or educational experiences of learners. In any case, these learners are now in the further education sector, with the validating body the Further Education and Training Awards Council. Further education bridges the gap between school and work, provides nationally accredited and internationally recognised qualifications and also provides an access route to tertiary education.

The Qualifications Act, 1999 assigns specific and separate roles to the providers and to FETAC in relation to Quality Assurance. Providers must have a documented policy for Staff Recruitment and Development and also have documented procedures, which will be
monitored (Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training - Policy and Guidelines 2002, p. 9)

FETAC researched both national and international best practice, examining the systems of other European Union states including the United Kingdom. They also examined those used in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. Developments in the EU member states are of particular importance, due to the fact that in March 2002, the Barcelona European Council set the target that by 2010 Europe’s education and training systems would be a world quality reference. Vocational Education and Training was identified as one of the key strategies towards this aim. In the Policy and Guidelines for Providers, FETAC make very clear that one of the key determinants of the quality of a programme or service to learners is the ability of the people employed in its development and delivery.

A provider’s policy on Staff Recruitment and Development should express its vision regarding the staff employed in the development and delivery of programmes and services. It should seek to ensure that staff are well matched to roles and have access to appropriate supports and further training when necessary.

(Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training – Policy and Guidelines 2002, p. 23)

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development policies, in the case of Liberties College, come from the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, (CDVEC) but the evidence of implementation should be identifiable in the College. The guideline is that there should be a process in place based on a plan to identify, prioritise and meet the training, development and support needs of staff.

The Qualifications Act (1999) also promotes lifelong learning which has implications for access, transfer and progression as well as for social cohesion and economic development. The working definition adopted by the European Commission is that ‘all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge,
skills and competence' qualifies as lifelong learning (European Commission 2001, p. 3). The NQAI focus is on Learning Outcomes which are defined in Ireland as Knowledge, Know-how and Skill and Competence (NQAI, 2002).

The National Council for Vocational Awards defined learning outcomes as the specific knowledge and skills that learners will have achieved on successful completion of a module (NCVA). The emphasis on the role of the teacher thus changes somewhat from the more traditional modes to one now where they will ‘support learners to take charge of their own learning’ (European Commission, 2000 p.14).

This concurs with the McIver Report, (2002), on the Post-Leaving Certificate Review, established by the department of Education and Science. In view of the changing profile of learners, courses and services in the further education sector, it is recommended that continuing professional development should be a normal part of the work undertaken by staff, and that teachers have a responsibility to pursue continuing professional development in addition to classroom responsibilities.

However, while development is ultimately in the hands of the individuals (Day 1995), such responsibility is not unilateral but must be positioned in the context of both policy and process. City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) sets out the generic policy and the process is defined by Liberties College which is required to develop a plan to identify, prioritise and meet the training, development and support needs of its academic staff. Thus with more detailed self identification of needs, it is intended that the measures put in place will optimise the continuing professional development opportunities for academic staff.

The principles of quality and accountability as set out in the White Paper ‘Charting Our Future’ (1995) are further defined in the Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training Policy and Guidelines for Providers. It is argued that promotion of quality entails
ongoing curricular, pedagogic and assessment reforms which can only be achieved through professional development. This is the term that will be used for the purpose of this research although in the literature the terms professional development, staff development and career development are somewhat interchangeable. However, Fidler (1997) clearly defines each. He asserts that professional development involves development, which increases the personal, professional skills of a teacher. Staff development involves the development of staff to meet the needs of the institution where they work. Career Development involves the development of individuals so that their careers can progress. I think the first two of these in certain circumstances could be mutually inclusive.

Tam and Cheng (1996) define development as different types of programmes and activities which aim to empower teachers and administrators to develop positive attitudes and beliefs about education and management, to become more effective individuals and teams, be competent in teaching students and managing the school process as well as helping the school adapt to its changing environment. Although this definition does not encompass Fidler’s (1997) concept of career development, it is similar to that accepted by many OECD countries as being central to the way principals manage schools in at least two respects. Firstly, as instructional leaders, principals may be expected to co-ordinate professional progression of their staff. Secondly, they need to manage the learning community as a whole, using development as part of school change (CERI 2001).

Just as Fidler (1997) has identified the need to include the development of teachers’ personal skills, Senge, (1990) has asserted that there is a natural connection between a person’s work life and all other aspects of life. Farber (1991) identifies that the inevitable difficulties in teaching interact with personal issues and vulnerabilities, as well as social pressures and values, to engender a sense of frustration and force a re-assessment of the possibilities of the job and the investment one wants to make in it.

It is the opinion of Day & Sachs (2004) that in today’s world and in the foreseeable future, teachers will need to engage in this more holistic approach if they are to keep pace with and
respond to changes in society, the demands of the results-driven agendas of governments and at the same time retain their energy, enthusiasm and commitment to high quality teaching. Consequently, the researcher must be mindful that each individual is in a distinct career phase with differing histories and priorities.

Liberties College of Further Education has an academic staff of sixty. This is made up of a combination of forty-two whole time permanent teachers and eighteen contract teachers. There is also a fluctuating number of guest specialist practitioners who are employed for short term specific input. Continuing professional development is offered on an equal basis to all academic staff, irrespective of whether they have permanent or contract status. Promotion of quality entails ongoing curricular, pedagogic and assessment reforms, in other words, professional development. One of the recommendations of the McIver Report is that existing memos and regulations on teacher qualifications, currently applied by the Department of Education and Science, should be withdrawn for teachers who teach only in the further education sector. The regulations are seen as more suited to second level education. In some specialisms there may be two situations – there may be no relevant degree, or conversely, even where a degree might be applicable, a professional specialist qualification might be more appropriate.

McIver also recommends a compulsory induction programme which would include an introduction to teaching methodologies for those teachers recruited from industry and who do not have a teaching background. It is also suggested that as the role of the further education teacher is different to that at second level, induction would also be valuable for those with prior teacher training. This thinking concurs with the Quality Assurance Policy and Guidelines for Providers of Further Education, which states that all new staff must have access to induction training in a new role. Further, professional development should be based on a plan to identify, prioritise and meet the development and support needs of staff. This cannot be ad hoc, but must be regularly reviewed and documented.
The key consideration is that while historically professional development was a voluntary process, this approach is no longer appropriate or adequate. The Qualifications Act (1999) demands of both the provider, (Liberties College) and the validation body (FETAC) that there is a systematic approach to the continuing professional development of staff. Liberties College has to ensure that teachers have access to support and development opportunities, based on systematically identified training and development needs.

**Ethical Considerations**

The research process involved in identifying those needs must give due consideration to the issues of sampling, reliability and validity. Yet all are complex in nature because there is no singular or exclusive version of reliability, validity or what constitutes an acceptable sample (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). As a researcher I had the responsibility of taking into account the effects on the participants (Cohen et al, 2000) and as it was my colleagues who were the participants, ensuring validity and reliability had an added perspective.

Becoming a researcher is about more than merely learning specific skills and procedures. It also involves changing the way the researcher thinks about him/herself and the researcher’s relation with others (Bogden & Biklen, 1998).

In this case, the researcher’s working role with peers is not one of authority, but rather is one of facilitator. The hopeful expectation is that the findings will be of assistance in enhancing the planning and implementation of the professional development programme already established. At the same time, it is worthy to be mindful that ‘qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world’ (Stake, 2000, p.447). As the research skills of this researcher are untested and underdeveloped, it is encouraging that there is a belief to be adopted that
However inexperienced in these [ethical] matters researchers are, they will bring to the world of social research a sense of rightness on which they can construct a set of rational principles appropriate to their own circumstances and based on personal, professional, and societal values.

(Cohen et al. 2001:52)

The characteristics of both qualitative work and case study are that they have an intrinsic intense interest in participants' views and circumstances, so it is incumbent on the researcher to be aware that a contract exists between researcher and researched, which, while perhaps being informal, is no less a moral obligation (Schwandt, 1993). Rudestam & Newton (2001) assert that the main ethical issues which pertain to using subjects in social science research are the need for fully informed consent to participate and the need for the researcher to emerge from the experience unharmed. This has been synopsized by them as 'The Five Cs of Research Ethics Principles' namely, confidentiality, coercion, consent, care, and communication' (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). Decisions need to be made around these to ensure the following: confidence in the researcher and the research project, informed consent; participation is at all times voluntary and participants have the option and right to terminate their involvement at any time; all agreements reached will be honoured; transparency with the participants in relation to confidentiality; time commitment. All these factors will need to be reviewed periodically. Any research study raises ethical considerations, but they have a particular focus in qualitative research due to its unstructured nature (Lewis, 2003). It was pertinent therefore to follow the advice of Cohen et al (2000) to consider these issues from the outset. The following are the measures which I put in place to assist in ensuring adherence to ethical principles: the letter of information (Appendix A), requesting participation in completing the questionnaire, (Appendix B), the letter explaining the purpose of the interviews (Appendix D), and the consent form permitting the interviews to be used for analysis (Appendix E), which also reassured interviewees that participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
Some of the advantages of being an insider are that I will have prior knowledge of the participants and awareness of existing practice and structures both within the educational institution and within the broader educational system. Robson's (2002) definition of insider research as being where the researcher has a direct involvement or connection with the research setting is obviously applicable to this research study. At the same time there are other considerations that might not be advantageous and which must be given due consideration.

The ongoing debate about what is meant by ‘research ethics’ has resulted in multiple definitions, both broad and narrow, so for the purpose of this proposal the researcher is identifying that of Marshall as being applicable

*The application of moral rules and professional codes of conduct to the collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research subjects, in particular active acceptance of subjects’ right to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent.*

(Marshall, 1998:56)

As all teaching staff will be invited to participate in this research project, it is important that complete pertinent information is given as to the focus, aims, parameters, system of reporting and what use might be made of data or findings. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) contend that not only should informed consent be based on an understanding that participation is voluntary, but that it is particularly important where the researcher has already a professional relationship with the proposed participants as is the case in this research study. This is supported by Bell (1999) who states that where there is close contact with the institution and with colleagues, then objectivity has to be worked on so that relationships with colleagues are not adversely affected. Thus, agreed participation will be from informed consent and all agreements reached at this stage will be honoured. Colleagues will have the option to refuse to take part, just as they also have the option and right to terminate their involvement at any time, and they will be informed of these options. These terms of agreement will be presented at the initial stage of the research project. It is
also important to be mindful that while it is possible not to use real names, it would not necessarily guarantee anonymity internally (Robson, 2002).
Introduction
Professional Development is no longer an optional extra. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has certified a systematic approach to the further professional development of those engaged in programme and service delivery as a key determinant of quality. This is corroborated by Day and Sachs (2004) who maintain that continuing professional development is no longer an option, but an expectation of all professionals. They are of the opinion that the circumstances in which teachers work and the demands made upon them are changing. The role of the teacher as the exclusive holder of expert knowledge is being eroded by communication technologies. As the social fabric of society is changing, Day and Sachs (2004) identify that the educative role of schools becomes more complex.

The further education sector has largely emanated from a secondary education model, especially with regard to time-tabling and resources, yet it is not solely staffed by teachers with secondary level teaching experience and teaching qualifications. The vocational nature of further education and the requirements of the validating bodies have resulted in the application of specific experiential criteria, not necessarily pedagogy, for recruitment. Any continuing professional development framework needs to be sufficiently flexible to meet emergent needs and also be linked to individual and institutional needs (Thompson, 2003).

This further suggests that professional development is not an entity in itself, but has a continuing dimension as roles and responsibilities change, so it is the intention to review
the literature concerning continuing professional development. This is undertaken on the 
assumption that teaching is a profession in the first place. In relation to the literature for 
continuing professional development, it is Bolam and McMahon's (2004) contention that 
while reports, articles in academic journals, books and chapters in books are being 
published at an overwhelming rate, they are rarely mutually informing and are often 
contradictory. This is due to the perspective from which they are written: teacher self-
development, classroom or subject teaching, school organization and leadership, national 
policy implementation, theoretical development. A consequence of this, as identified by 
Bolman and Deal (1997), is that there are too many, rather than too few, approaches and 
thories.

Notwithstanding, it is incumbent to examine the purpose, definitions, enhancements, 
limitations and models that are current, in order to devise a model for the specific research 
proposal. The emphasis for this research is on further education, which for the most part 
can identify with the exigencies of higher education. However, there are the very notable 
exceptions as elaborated by Becker and Trowler (2001). It is their contention that in further 
education there is not the competition between teaching and research that exists in higher 
education, where individual promotion is often based on research output. There are further 
differences between the two sectors. Requirements for those teaching in higher education 
include teaching, assessment, research, publishing, income generation, consultancy, 
entrepreneurship and administration. On the other hand, requirements for those teaching in 
further education include teaching, curricula development, programme development, 
assessment and administration.

Definitions 

Just as Bolam and Deal (1997) assert that there are too many, rather than too few 
approaches and theories, the same statement could be applied to definitions of professional 
development. There is increasing focus on managerialism in education alongside the 
growing awareness of staff development as already mentioned. Senior staff are beginning
to look at staff members as a resource, whereas, traditionally the teacher was viewed as the knowledgeable subject specialist who would have been insulted at a suggestion that ‘staff development’ would be beneficial. While staff and educational development are relatively new areas in education, the emergent literature is expanding, is grounded in practice, thus encouraging theoretical development. Furthermore it is accessible to new developers. Parallel to this, it reflects the problematic nature of the field.

The importance of the terminology emanates from these rapidly growing, recent developments in education. It is essential that academic staff willingly and voluntarily avail of opportunities, rather than interpreting it as imposed training or in-service (Partington and Stainton, 2003). They assert that such expressions as ‘training’, ‘continuing professional development’, ‘lifelong learning’, and ‘staff development’, all need to be considered carefully for their differing connotations. ‘Staff training’ implies the acquisition or development of basic skills which bring staff up to a required level of competence. ‘Continuing professional development’ is the term that has become widely used to define ongoing education and training for the professions. It is the opinion of Earley and Bubb (2004) that one of the hallmarks of being identified as a professional is to continue to learn throughout a career. Further, an important characteristic of belonging to a profession is the commitment shown towards self-improvement or development.

While the terms professional development, staff development and career development are somewhat interchangeable in the literature, Fidler (1997), as explained in Chapter 2, clearly defines each. Fidler (1997) further identifies two contributors to job satisfaction for the teacher: the art of teaching and its rewards, and the prospect of joining a profession, which offers rewarding development and also clearer career paths. He does not state whether salary is one of those rewards.

On the other hand it is Brew’s (1995) contention that the area of development falls into three sections: educational development, staff development, the learning organization. This
approach seems to preclude any focus on career development or personal development as prescribed above.

As in Ireland, school environments are changing all over the world. Tam & Cheng (1996) working in Hong Kong, define development as different types of programmes and activities which aim to empower teachers and administrators to develop positive attitudes and beliefs about education and management, to become more effective individuals and teams, be competent in teaching students and managing the school process as well as helping the school adapt to its changing environment. Bolam, Dunning and Karslanje (2000) support this viewpoint.

While the school management obviously has a role and responsibility in the professional development of teaching staff, development is ultimately in the hands of the individuals, Day (1995). He further states that conditions need to be created to encourage professional learning and enhance professional development. In his opinion a key element is reflection. Reflective practice is a continuing, conscious and systematic review of the purposes, plans, action and evaluation of teaching in order to reinforce effectiveness and where appropriate, prompt change. Day (1993a) has a caveat to this, that reflection in itself will not necessarily lead to self-confrontation.

Just as Fidler (1997) has identified the need to include the development of teachers’ personal skills, Senge, (1990) has asserted that there is a natural connection between a person’s work life and all other aspects of life. Further to this, Gosling (2005) has developed this holistic approach in describing personal development planning as being a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect on his/her own learning performance and/or achievement and to plan his/her personal and career development. Therefore, there is a need for opportunities at different times in an individual’s career for the kinds of learning and development that will be focused upon the personal needs of the teacher as a human being; on the long-term professional needs of the
teacher as a member of a learner community of professionals; and as a classroom practitioner and member of a particular education institution with needs. All this is perhaps best encapsulated in Day’s contention that

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

(Bolam and McMahon, 2004, p.34)

At any rate, whatever system is put in place, a lot depends on the culture of the school/college for opportunities and motivation for professional discourse (Clark & Yinger, 1997).

**Purpose/Function**

Engagement of teachers in continuing professional development is to ensure that students are provided with the best possible service (Earley and Bubb, 2005). According to Grundy and Robinson, (2004) there are three inter-connected purposes of continuing professional development: ‘extension’ through introducing new knowledge or skill into a teacher’s repertoire; ‘growth’ by the development of greater levels of expertise; ‘renewal’ through transformation and change of knowledge and practice. These to some extent agree with Sachs (2003), who also identified three purposes: to align teachers’ practice with educational policies; to improve the learning outcomes of students by improving the performances of teachers and a third purpose that I have not found proposed by anyone else – to enhance the status and profile of the teaching profession. Eraut (1995) argues that the professional development of teachers is integral to the development of schools as professional institutions that create, monitor and review educational programmes and policies. This is much the same view held by Boud (1995) that staff development is
intimately linked with changing conceptions of the educational institution, so it must respond to the conceptions that the institution has of itself and as the conceptions change and grow, so must staff development lead and respond to change.

The second of these has been the focus for Fleming et al (2004), who used a questionnaire survey and focus group meetings to develop an understanding of the key themes and issues surrounding continuing professional development. The findings were that such a method has the potential to contribute effectively to professional development when appropriately resourced and where there is a clear differentiation between on-going professional development and formal appraisal activities.

Professional development should present opportunities for teachers to escape being prisoners in their own classrooms by combining action and reflection (Day, 1997). One means he suggests to achieve this, is through the active encouragement of critical friendships, which may be defined as practical partnerships, entered voluntarily and based upon a relationship between equals and rooted in a common task or shared concern. This, along with collegiality, contract making, and entitlements are all elements within professional development schemes which support teacher autonomy and reinforce a sense of responsibility by affirming confidence in teachers' professionalism.

Continuing professional development is not merely to produce direct beneficial consequences in classroom learning and student achievements. To achieve this is not simplistic as there are so many other variables which prevent immediate transfer of learning. Rather, the emphasis on creating and sustaining schools as learning communities under leaders who recognize the value of collaboration and who put continuing professional development at the centre of school (college) development efforts and who themselves are lead learners. All indicators are that continuing professional development is becoming to be understood as having a range of forma, locations and practices appropriate to its many purposes (Day and Sachs, 2004).
This thinking is corroborated by Rudd, Rickinson and Benefield (2004) in their final report for the General Teaching Council for England in which they cite a Local Government Association discussion paper (2000) where the view was expressed that by 2020 schools will have been transformed into ‘community learning centres ... a community resource for all people of all ages’ (LGA, 2000). Thus schools will serve groups beyond pre-defined age cohorts. Such thinking will presumably also apply to further and higher education.

**Location**

As already stated, Day (1997), sees professional development as a means of presenting opportunities for teachers to escape from their own classrooms, so it is worthy of examining the current thinking about the inherent importance and value with reference to location.

The findings of John and Gravani (2005) concur with Day’s theory. They found that all teachers in the sample they used perceived their participation as being positive in terms of breaking from the classroom and refreshing themselves. A different environment helped the teachers involved to think and become more reflective. The participants identified the need for the creation of a friendly and hospitable arena, where learning might develop in an atmosphere of openness, collaboration and mutuality. These researchers established that their findings were in agreement with those of Wood & Thompson (1980), Brookfield (1986), Knowles (1990), Claxton (1996), Bickel & Hattrup (1995), and Pallinscar et al (1998) who stress the importance of establishing a climate that is conducive to learning as a necessary pre-requisite to effective professional learning.

There are three ways of organizing professional development – school-based professional development; school focused/school centred professional development; off-site professional development. The distinctions also relate to purpose and orientation (Craft,
2000). Off-site in this context is where a number of schools/colleges come together for varying lengths of time for either short courses or courses which result in awards. In Ireland there is increasing interest from Higher Education Institutions in the accreditation of professional development courses. Rudd et al (2004) cite this aspect as incentive in participation and gaining a concrete value to participation in professional development.

The inherent weakness in the off-site approach is the perceived or actual gaps between theory and practice and lack of supporting culture in valuing individuals’ off-site experiences for the team or the school as a whole. On the other hand, a useful aspect of off-site development is cluster groups or cross-school /college professional development, where the needs are collectively identified and addressed by the educational institutions involved (Craft, 2000).

School-based professional development aims at optimum matching of a professional development course to the needs and culture of a particular group of professionals and at having direct impact on practice. This can be insular, though that can be reduced to an extent by bringing in an outsider. (Craft, 2000). The target group in school centred/school focused professional development is the same as that of school-based professional development; that is, some or all of the staff of the particular school, with the programme related to the needs of the particular group or school. However, there can be the same problem of insularity.

Grant (2003) and McAllister (2003) both verify that a block of time away from the rigours of both work and family life was the essential element ensuring the possibility of development and change. Both use the term ‘retreat’ in its sense of creating seclusion from everything else. This had the dual function of creating a block of quality time to concentrate on the particular curriculum issues; it also provided opportunity for the staff to bond as a team.
Professional Developer/Co-ordinator

Professional Development is now a legal requirement, as previously explained in Chapter 2 stated, and thus can no longer be conducted on an ad hoc basis. As it involves the entire staff in any institution it is important to examine how it is led, managed, championed. Professional development co-ordinators are increasingly valued for their delegated leadership responsibilities, particularly as school-managed and school-focused professional development gain ground (Law, 1997). This has further highlighted the need for professional support, training and development of the professional development co-ordinator/professional adviser/staff developer/professional developer/academic adviser/ in what seems to be an increasingly instrumentalist and managerial educational environment.

The question arises as to who should fulfil the role of professional development co-ordinator. Warwick (1975), argues that neither Principals nor Deputy Principals are best placed for the role because of the counselling skills and degree of informality required. In the U.K., Page and Fisher-Jones (1995) did a Teacher Training survey and noted that schools with professional development co-ordinators were more likely to have a planned programme than where a principal or deputy principal takes responsibility. Hustler et al. (2003) researching teachers' attitudes to continuing professional development, found that the status, knowledge and approach of the continuing professional development co-ordinator could radically affect, positively or negatively, teachers' attitudes towards and understandings of professional development. The role of the co-ordinator needs to be less about administration, and more that of facilitator and staff supporter (Earley and Bubb, 2004). However, in contrast to this, Louis and Miles (1991) and Barth (1996) see the role the principal takes in supporting professional development as a critical variable in determining whether it is an integral part of the conception of the school / college as a dynamic community of learning for adults as well as for students. Thus the interpersonal skill and learning orientations of principals are key factors for judging their effectiveness.
Some of the literature uses the term ‘staff developer’ which could be interpreted as a pejorative nomenclature as it has connotations of pre-determined change imposed on others. It also implies a power relationship. The ‘staff developer moves from being a colleague to being a colleague and expert’ (Grant, 2003). Grant prefers the term ‘academic adviser’ as it is her contention that often in ongoing professional development we don’t need ‘experts’ as much as we think. We need time and space to talk to each other in a critical and thoughtful way with occasional expert input. Grant in New Zealand sees meaningful academic advising as interventions that make a difference to those with whom we work. A quick-fix approach will not work, as a process of change needs to be sustained over time and any intervention must be a response to a felt need which comes from the individuals concerned. In this scenario, the danger is that academic advisers can become marginal figures in the educational institution, which in turn forces them into a position where they feel superior to the academics they are supposed to be advising. This, in turn, endangers relationships with colleagues. The more workable option with better potential outcome, is when the interventions are long-term, responding to shared, felt and declared needs, then collegiality results. All participants, including academic advisers, show they have more to learn, and collegial teaching and sustenance are reciprocal.

These opinions are corroborated by McAllister (2003) working in Australia who asserts that quick-fix workshops are not conducive to stimulating or inculcating change. She is adamant that for curriculum development, even where academic staff involved have knowledge and experience, provision of expertise to support the process is essential. It is also her assertion that as the person providing staff development and support for new staff and for the development of new curriculum, she herself would have found it advantageous to have had a mentor.

While there are no fixed methodologies for continuing professional development, a range can be chosen from for the most appropriate in any given scenario, it is the opinion of Edwards et al. (2003, p.181) that ‘bringing in the right external consultants can have
distinct advantages. A key assertion of theirs is that developers should become part of the fabric of the institution, while having the support and input of powerful decision-makers. This is corroborated by Oxley (2003) in her case study based in Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom.

A situation where an outside expert is more valuable and appropriate than peer training, is especially when the training includes assessment, according to Wareham (2002). He contends that such a scenario can reveal difficulties; that even with negotiated content and structure participants can still experience a sense of loss of power. There can be a resistance to fitting in to a systematic programme with rules and requirements which are not of their making.

Models
Just as there are varying definitions as to what is continuing professional development, there are also various models as to how to structure its implementation. The term ‘professional development’ is replaced by ‘continuing education’ by Bolam (1986) who sees it as serving five main purposes. He places these on a continuum of needs, at one end of which the system’s needs are dominant, and at the other end of which the individual’s needs are dominant (Craft, 2000). To be useful to an organization, staff and educational development must tackle key issues (Edwards et al., 2003) contend. In a further education context these might be institutional or might be from outside; such pressures as government policy; fulfillment of the requirements for NQAI. Quality assurance systems will check that programme content is current and pitched at an appropriate level. They might also look at proposed teaching and learning approaches. What they do not offer is a process for development and improvement of practice.

In 1968 when continuing professional development was understood to mean in-service training and development, Jackson identified it as a deficit model in which it was assumed
that teachers needed to be provided with knowledge and skills that they did not already have. This model is still extant around the world, with the emphasis on teacher competencies. In their findings, John & Gravani (2005) highlight the continued limitation of event-delivery models of professional development. Their research participants believed that professional development is vital, as not everything is learned from practice. There was also the belief that as professionals and adult learners, teachers should be seen as co-constructors, not mere recipients of knowledge.

Joyce et al (1999) proposed a model in which the school is a learning community for teachers as well as students. However, case studies show that changing the culture takes prolonged effort by many people over several years and that it is possible to regress as well as move forward (McMahon, 2001). Constable (1995) contends that teachers confront considerable emotional dilemmas in becoming learners, perhaps especially in school-based learning as teaching is embedded in and overlaid by defined power relations. Notwithstanding this consideration, John and Gravani (2005) assert that an outcome of teacher as learner is the engendering of greater sympathy and understanding with their own students.

This approach is compatible with Smylie’s (1995) who drew from a range of adult learning theories in order to identify conditions of effective workplace learning, including opportunities for teachers to learn from peer colleagues in collaborative group work settings with open communication, experimentation and feedback. Thus the focus is on community, with the basis of mutually supportive relationships and the development of shared norms and values. Otherwise, the focus is on the literature and the emphasis is on the acquisition of knowledge and skill, orientation to clients and professional autonomy. (Louis et al, 1990).
Another model of professional development was identified by Hargreaves (1994) which, he
termed post-technocratic and which emphasizes an inter-connection between individual and
organizational needs. There are four elements: teachers are understood to have life-long
professional needs; to ensure continuity and progress these needs must be assessed on a
regular basis; school development plans must contain professional development
opportunities; personal development needs must be reconciled with school needs.

While this appears to be an improvement on the confines of Jackson’s model, it does not
take into account teachers in different phases of their careers with differing histories and
priorities. Farber (1991) identifies that the inevitable difficulties in teaching interact with
personal issues and vulnerabilities, as will social pressures and values, to engender a sense
of frustration and force a re-assessment of the possibilities of the job and the investment
one wants to make in it.

Such a cognitive approach might be well served by the cyclic model which is based on
three stages: policy and strategic planning; identification of needs and priorities at
individual teacher, group and whole-school levels; planning, implementing and evaluating
the annual programme (Hall & Oldroyd, 1991). This approach is seen by Day and Sachs
(2004) as rooted in the Human Resource Management (HRM) tradition, which is
characterized by Kamoche (2001) as ‘the purpose of HRM is to help organizations achieve
their objectives, which are essentially in terms of performance’.

Boud, (1993) maintains that there are two basic conceptions of staff development and any
future development will need to take account of these in order to flourish. He calls these
‘the conscience of teaching and learning’ which focuses on the impact on teaching and
learning; and ‘a key institutional and personnel function’ (p.204) which focuses on
institutional and management priorities. It is his view that those who espouse the former
conception are keen to distance themselves from anything that might have a personnel or
instrumental function. Conversely, those who espouse the latter conception, view staff
development as intimately linked with personnel and performance management. This conception also places emphasis on the development needs of managers, as they are seen as the key to ALL (my emphasis) other changes in the institution. There is an importance put on the development of policy so that staff development is formally guided. If the strengths of each strategy are combined, it is the opinion of the researcher that development would assume a more holistic approach which would go further to meeting a greater range of staff needs.

The cognitive approach is also promoted by Cochrane-Smith & Lytle (1999) who use a cognitive framework for conceptualizing, planning, analyzing continuing professional development: knowledge-for-practice; knowledge-of-practice; knowledge-in-practice. Day & Sachs (2004) suggest a fourth conception- knowledge of self. Research continues to show that the best teaching involves a combination of cognition and emotion. Good teachers are passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity and joy (Hargreaves, 1998). Fried (1995) had already developed the opinion that teaching is a passionate vocation. Day & Sachs (2004) assert that the person not only cannot be separated from the professional, but also plays a large part in it. So any conception of continuing professional development needs to include in it the education of self; including the emotions.

A cognitive approach does not sufficiently encompass all the perceived factors in teachers’ professional development requirements. A more holistic approach might be more effective. Day and Sachs (2004) assert that the most authoritative studies of teachers’ career experiences and the most influential determinants on them within and outside the institution are those of Swiss secondary school teachers by Michael Huberman (1989,1995); of English teachers by Sikes et al (1985) and of American teachers by Fessler (1992). All these studies suggest five career phases for teachers: launching a career; stabilization; new challenges; reaching a professional plateau; the final phase.
It is further suggested by Day and Sachs that expertise, capability, personal and professional biography situational, emotional and psychological factors as well as the complexity of the students whom they teach and the changes over time and circumstance; affect their effectiveness. This is corroborating Hargreaves’ (1998) identification of the multiplicity of factors influencing how teachers function.

From the case studies used by Edwards et al, (2003) it is apparent that applying only one technique or approach to a problem is not enough. There is no single solution and an approach used in one specific situation might not be able to be replicated in another, no matter how apparently similar are the characteristics. Lines and Muir (in Edwards et al 2003), claim that an action learning approach to staff development is gaining support within staff development units when addressing non-routine problem situations. It allows for the invention or discovery of new knowledge and practices. They also acknowledge that action learning can be laden with difficulty.

In a case study (Edwards et al, 2003) Jamie Thompson in Northumbria University in the UK, was part of a task force examining how a university can make academics feel more valued in their teaching role. He cites Shaw et al (1978) who say that ‘role competence’, and Thompson adds ‘role confidence’, are only possible when the following three factors come together. These are adequacy: the knowledge and skills required for the job; legitimacy: a clear understanding of the expectations of the role, legal, professional, organisational; support: material, managerial, emotional, professional and supervisory support AS REQUIRED (my emphasis).

There can be diverse goals and expectations between participants and other stakeholders of professional development programmes (Cooper in Baume and Kahn 2004). Sometimes participants have clearly defined goals that they want fulfilled on a need-to-know basis with expectations that their needs will coincide with the curriculum of the programme. Others wish to gain accreditation with a view to advancement or promotion; acquire tips and
techniques for immediate application; have emerging problems which need addressing. Participants might have no prior expectations of personal learning outcomes, other than anticipating some new achievement or increased knowledge. In the same group might be others who are happy to reflect and explore without any urgent need for immediate application. It is Cooper’s (2004) belief that if professional development is made compulsory within an institution, it is open to being perceived as an institutional vehicle to train the workforce to meet explicit goals. Compulsion invites criticism and challenge. She suggests that participants engaging in professional development, especially in relation to the classroom, need to be encouraged to take an active role in fulfilling their desired outcomes and expectations; for example by being invited to choose their own topics. At the same time, it is practical not to give all the decision-making about criteria to the participants. It is Cooper’s (2004) contention that while some will prefer clear, pre-defined requirements, deadlines and instructions, others will feel constrained by heavily defined criteria. Flexibility and negotiation can usually accommodate difference.

Day and Sachs (2004) are very clear that the orientation of any possible continuing professional development experience will vary according to the purposes. For CPD to move forward, governments, policy makers, strategists, researchers, professional associates, teachers and students, all need to engage in ongoing dialogue as to what kind of teachers are needed for the 21st century and what kind of citizens will be needed.

However, there is an increasing trend in the United Kingdom towards obligatory participation as exemplified in the United Kingdom Government White Paper on Higher Education (2003). Part of the developments within the area of continuing professional development is the increasing discourse which also has an international dimension. For example, ‘The International Journal for Academic Development’ (IJAD) concentrates wholly on staff and educational development. It is published for the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) which is a network of national education development. This network includes the Higher Education Research and Development
Society of Australia (HERDSA), the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) in Canada, and the Staff and Education Development Association in the United Kingdom.

The future of professional development

When Boud (1998) looked at the future influences on staff development he identified that certain elements need to be taken into account: what is known about learning; the contextualized nature of learning in organizations; differences among staff and within the unit in which they operate; institutional priorities. At the same time he cautions against subservience to these considerations. The following elements he also includes as influencing staff development in higher education in the future; they are also the elements fundamental to professional development in further education. He contends that staff development will recognise the aspirations of staff for development and enhancement and will support them to the extent that these take forms which are valued by the institution. This in turn means that ‘the accreditation of courses and training that are offered in-house must be considered’ (Boud, 1998, p.211).

As staff development becomes more embedded in an institution it will become an increasingly devolved and diverse notion (Boud, 1998). So as to ensure development and energy in further education in order that the educational institution is creative and responsive, professional development must be at the core just as much as Boud contends it has an essential role in higher education. This is in agreement with Connor (1997) who states that where continuing professional development is placed within the context of team and school development plans

_At these meetings development priorities are discussed and agreed within the structure of whole school needs, and action is formulated. This then provides the context for team leaders and the school to plan their professional development activities for the year_ (Connor, 1997, p.98)
Chapter 4
Research Design

Theoretical Perspective
Although the collective teaching staff of an educational institution was the anticipated participants in this research proposal, concern was still focused on each individual. All understanding, whether quantitative or qualitative, are all constructions; none is objective or absolute or truly generalisable (Crotty, 1998). This is because of the nature of the subject matter – people. Unlike the objects of the natural world, people are conscious, purposive actors who have ideas about their world and attach meaning to what is going on around them. In particular, their behaviour depends crucially on these ideas and meanings. This has research implications. Their behaviour, what they actually do, has to be interpreted in the light of those underlying ideas, meanings and motivations (Robson, 2002).

Positivist research methods try to describe and understand phenomena and to explain and predict. Objectivism is identified by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) as viewing the social world, like the natural world, as if it were a hard, external, objective reality. Data collection and analyses, which can be replicable, are sought so that findings can be confirmed or denied. Control must also be maintained over contextual factors that might interfere with data collected. Burrell and Morgan (1979) contend that objectivism adopts the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterized by underlying regularities. Large samples of participants must be used and analyses of the data gathered must rely on statistical procedures. There is great emphasis on objectivity with the use of empirical research techniques. This epistemology would not have suited this particular research design topic as it is not declaring any hypotheses or seeking to make predictions.
As the researcher was an insider, interpretivism was a very applicable theoretical perspective as it uses approaches, which emphasize the meaningful nature of people's participation, and analyses the meanings people confer on their own and others' actions (Creswell, 2003). Interpretivism does not seek mere descriptions, but meanings. There were no theories being proposed, but according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), should theory have ensued from the research, it needed to make sense to those to whom it applied. Creswell, (2003), identified three considerations that play into the decision as to the choice of approach for a research design proposal – the research problem, the personal experience of the researcher and the audience for whom the report will be written. In this research project I had prior knowledge of the participants and awareness of existing practice and structures within the educational institution. The focus was on the micro, rather than a large scale study, and the research methods were qualitative, using approaches which emphasise the meaningful nature of people’s participation and which analyse the meanings people confer on their own and others’ actions. The generation of meaning came from participants and was interpretive in perspective as interpretivism does not seek mere descriptions, but meanings. This further suggested constructionism, which views reality as being socially constructed, that the phenomena of the social and cultural world and their meaning are created in human social interaction (Robson, 2002). Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). The researcher gathered information personally and meaning was generated from data collected in the field. In this research proposal, the research participants helped to construct reality with the researcher.

Applying Day and Sachs' (2004) opinion that teachers will need to engage in the more holistic approach to professional development if they are to keep pace with and respond to changes in society, and accepting the studies which suggest five career phases for teachers, (Huberman, 1989, 1995, Fessler 1995), it seemed that a qualitative design with a quantitative phase would be appropriate. Reeves (1999) asserts that
The research enterprise in education draws on many disciplines and employs a wide variety of approaches to investigation.

(Overview of Issues in Educational Research, 1999, p.3)

Reeves goes so far as to reject the division of research procedures into qualitative and quantitative as he argues that the choice of procedures to be employed depends on the nature of the problem under investigation.

This approach is corroborated by Wisker (2001) who also agrees that the results of qualitative research can be measured to some extent in quantitative data too. It is her contention that subjectivity exists in both kinds of research methods as even in 'pure' scientific research, choice of experiments and the questions asked of the data in order to interpret it, are based as essentially on subjective research questions; a need to know some things rather than others.

Comparison or Non-comparison

Comparison is argued by many as being an important feature of research design, whether qualitative or quantitative. Such proponents as Bechhofer and Patterson, (2000); Bryman, 2001; Pole and Lampard (cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) argue that it helps theory building and also enhances the solidity of research findings. Bechhofer et al, in particular, maintain that ‘comparison and control lie at the heart of good research design’. (cited in Ritchie and Lewis, p.50). Control is useful where the design may involve comparison between an action group which received an intervention being evaluated and a control group which did not receive any intervention. Control also helps to aid understanding of the relationship between the controlled variable and other aspects of the research phenomenon. Control groups are more strongly associated with quantitative research.

However, not all the literature is in agreement on the issue of comparison in qualitative research, which is different in nature to comparison in quantitative research. Bryman (2001) argues that it is harder to gain contextual insights in comparative studies. Stake (2000) contends that the focusing on comparison detracts from the intensity of single case
description and this can lead to less precision. He accepts that researchers report their cases as cases, knowing that they will be compared to others yet, he sees comparison as actually competing with learning about and from the particular case (Stake in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A research design featuring comparison, substitutes the comparison for the case as the focus of study. Stake (2000) contends that with regard to accuracy, differences are fundamentally more inaccurate than simple measurements. Equally, conclusions about the differences between any two cases are less to be trusted than conclusions about one. He identifies that the special characteristics of qualitative study are that it is holistic, empirical, interpretive and empathic. Stake (1995) specifically asserts that for a study to be holistic 'it is relatively non-comparative seeking to understand its object more than to understand how it differs from others' (p.47).

Schwandt, (cited in Stake, 1995, p. 43) also holds the opinion that qualitative inquiry is distinguished by its emphasis of holistic treatment of phenomena and that its orientation is also away from cause and effect explanation and towards personal interpretation. So, in order to focus on the uniqueness and the complexities of the particular case study, comparison would not be engaged in. This concurs with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) who assert that one of the many characteristics of a qualitative approach is the need to examine situations through the eyes of the participants rather than the researchers. They also aver that events and individuals are unique and largely non-generic, thus responses to a questionnaire, for example, are each individual's interpretation of events and situations as it relates to the reality of each person's experience. As well as which, there are multiple interpretations and perspectives on single events and situations.

Concern for the individual is the key distinguishing parameter of the interpretive paradigm, the main objective of which is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Hart, 2005). Thus, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. Again, it is the viewpoint of the participant that is reflected as analysed by the researcher.
Methodology and Method
Case study seemed an appropriate methodology as the questions being asked were ‘What?’ ‘How Many?’ ‘Who?’ ‘Where?’ questions, and as the purpose of the enquiry was to obtain a detailed description of the professional development requirements and priorities of the academic staff in a specific educational institution. The research was undertaken because of the researcher’s intrinsic interest in the professional development process in Liberties College. Case study is a concentrated enquiry into a single case, and is both a process of enquiry about ‘the’ case and the product of that enquiry (Stake, 2000 P.436). The more the researcher has intrinsic interest in the case, the more the focus of study will be on the case’s uniqueness, particular context, issues and story (Stake, 2000).

In acknowledging Day & Sachs (2004) assertion that the person not only cannot be separated from the professional, but the person plays a large part in the professional, then continuing professional development needs include the education of self, including the emotions. Baume and Kahn (2004) contend that ‘Good development successfully combines the academic, the professional and the personal’; thus this research aimed to identify what the teacher required in order to fulfil the demands of the classroom, the demands of the institution and for self as a person.

Questionnaire
In order to gain some of the key information needed to inform the progress of the research, a questionnaire was used. Questionnaires have an advantage over interviews in that they tend to be more reliable as they are anonymous and this fact encourages greater honesty. At the same time, it is probably not possible to identify dishonesty or false information. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) claim that it is more economical in time and money than the interview. However, there are also inherent disadvantages in that there might be too low a percentage of returns. Also a postal questionnaire which requires the inclusion of stamped, addressed envelopes, with follow-up either by mail or phone, could prove to be quite expensive in both time and money. The question type also has implications, for if only
closed questions are used, then the questionnaire might lack authenticity. Equally, if only open questions are used, respondents might be unwilling to write answers for various reasons. Often, too, questionnaires are filled in hurriedly rather than thoughtfully. Oppenheim (1996) asserts that the word ‘questionnaire’ is sometimes used to distinguish a set of questions, possibly including some open-ended ones, from more rigidly constructed scales or tests. At the same time, there are those who see the word as appropriate only to self-administered and postal questionnaires. He advises that as there is some overlap between these two positions, the word should be used in the broader sense to cover postal questionnaires, group questionnaires, self-administered questionnaires and structured interview schedules, including those done by telephone. Thus a questionnaire might also contain check lists, attitude scales, projective techniques, rating scales. He advises that we should think of the questionnaire as an important instrument of research, a tool for data collection.

In this case, both closed and open-ended questions were employed so as to capture the relevant facts and opinions of the participants. Also, as an insider researcher, I was able to distribute the questionnaires on site. It was intended that the data from the questionnaire would assist in creating a profile of the academic staff in relation to such things as age ranges, gender, length of time teaching, type of employment contract currently held, post of responsibility currently held, career experience other than teaching, duration of previous job(s), courses previously taken with no certification, courses previously taken with certification, value of each, value of location, value of outsider/insider facilitator, professional development courses done in own time, who has financed them. Open-ended questions were used to capture such information as to what type of courses participants would like to engage in, in relation to their requirements for the classroom, the institution and self

*The questionnaire will be used to measure attitudes, and will provide information from a large number of people, in terms of the academic staff.*

(Hart, 2005, p. 356)
The use of closed questions required respondents to make ratings as in ‘Agree’ ‘Undecided’; or forced choice responses such as ‘Male’ or ‘Female’. This facilitated some kind of numerical scoring which allows for the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to answer questions such as is there a gender difference in the number of teachers who had a previous career. On the other hand, the open-ended questions were a stimulus to respondents to produce short, directed pieces of writing. It allowed participants time to collect and draft their ideas, rather than having to respond immediately. The outcome of this, of course is that all the comments must be read through and categorized.

Foddy’s (1993) advice that different respondents often give quite different interpretations to the same question, and that the answer given by a particular respondent to a question in one social situation is often quite different to the answer given by the same respondent in another situation is extremely pertinent. Qualitative research demands that the researcher must always be aware that any participant’s response to any situation will always depend on how the participant defines the situation. Even what the researcher might consider to be the use of very ordinary words, can have very different meanings for different people. A definite advantage in selecting questionnaires as a research method was the facility of distribution and return. Further, using interviews as a follow-up research method meant that as an insider researcher, I was able to avail of the rapport already established, but always endeavouring as a researcher to maintain a detached and professional stance.

**Interview**

All academic staff were informed of the aims and objectives of the research project and invited to participate. While it was probable that some would refuse, once the questionnaires were piloted, refined and analysed, they were followed with interviews of a smaller number of participants to gain in-depth qualitative information. Questionnaires have certain advantages, as stated above; interviews also have intrinsic value. The interview is relied on by both qualitative and quantitative researchers (Fontana and Frey,
as a 'universal mode of systematic enquiry' (Holstein and Gubrui, 1995, p.1) and is one of the most effective modes of data gathering in any enquiry (Mc Kehan, 1996).

The interview produces situated relationships grounded in specific interactional episodes and two people, at the very least, create the reality of the interview situation. While the interview is now a commonplace means of generating information, it is actually a negotiated text where power, race, class, ethnicity and gender all bear an influence (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a). Interviews are not neutral tools of data collecting, but active interactions between two or more people 'leading to negotiated, contextually based results' (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.62).

The advantage of the interview over the questionnaire is that it allows the interviewer to probe areas of interest as they arise during the interview and allows the focus to settle upon a specific issue which can be explored in greater depth. Interviews are advantageous in that open-ended questions can be asked which allow participants to say what they think and to do so with greater richness and spontaneity (Oppenheim, 1996). It 'provides access inside a person's head' (Tuckman, 1972) so as to make it possible to measure what a person knows, (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks, (attitudes and beliefs). Further, Mc Kehan (1996) asserts that the goal for the teacher-researcher is to gain the wisdom which he or she does not yet possess through studying his or her own work and that the use of interviews determines what an issue looks like from another's vantage point (Mc Kehan, 1996). He further defines the three types of interviews in terms of their content and organisation as: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Fontana and Frey, (2003) use the same categorisations and state that it can be a one-time brief event or take place over multiple lengthy sessions. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) also identify that there are three major forms of interview in the social sciences: structured, unstructured and open-ended. They assert that within these, the interview can take the form of focus group interviews, oral history interviews, creative interviewing and gendered, feminist and post-modern or multi-voiced interviewing.
Mc Kernan’s (1996) description of each of his named types helped to bring clarification as to which would be the most appropriate for this study. He states that in the structured interview, the interviewer has a list of specific questions ‘an orally administered questionnaire’ (Mc Kernan, 1996, p. 129) and does not deviate from the wording. Further the questions are often ‘fixed-response’ types (p.129). On the other hand, in the semi-structured interview, the interviewer has certain questions that are asked of all interviewees, but also allows the respondents to raise issues and questions as the interview progresses. He cautions that these must be allowed to occur naturally throughout the course of the interview. As well as fixed response questions, the interviewer may also wish to ask open-ended questions which are particularly useful in a semi-structured or unstructured style interview. Stake (1995) advises to keep main questions in mind and to carefully create probes. In the third form, the unstructured interview, Mc Kernan (1996) advises that the issues and topics are left entirely to the interviewee; then the interviewer can ask for explanation or expansion. This is the style which allows respondents to tap in to issues which may not be tapped by other styles of interviewing.

No matter what style of interviewing is used, Stake (1995) advises that questions should be probing and not mundane, and certainly not asked for the sake of it. The need is to learn about a particular case, in this instance clarifying how best to identify and answer the continuing professional development needs of the academic staff of Liberties College. Thus it could be called an ‘intrinsic case study’ (Stake, 1995). On the other hand, as a multiple number of respondents are involved in the questionnaires and a lesser number in interviews it could also be termed ‘collective case study’ (Stake, 1995, p.3). Stake (1995) further reminds us that good case study does not depend on being able to defend the typicality of what is under research. This is important to keep in mind, because generalisations can rarely be made from case studies. Certain activities, problems or responses will recur from which generalisations will be drawn certainly. However, there is very rarely new understanding arrived at; rather refinement of understanding is reached (Stake, 1995).
Interpretation of Data: Values of the Researcher

How the researcher interprets data has is related to role of the values of the researcher. In the practices of positivist research it is often assumed that truth can transcend opinion and personal bias; thus qualitative research is seen as an assault on this tradition (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b). Qualitative researchers use a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience which they have studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a). It is their belief that the socially situated researcher is carrying the complex and contradictory history of the depth and complexity of the traditional applied qualitative research perspectives. As well as this the researcher must also confront the ethics and politics of research. Thus it is the contention of Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) that value-free inquiry for the human disciplines is over.

This concurs with the thinking of Hart (2005) who states that there is a great deal of potential for conflict with all or any of the stakeholders over all aspects and stages of any research project. So it is incumbent on researchers to know what integrity is in order to practice it in their research. (Hart, 2005)

\[
\text{Research involves analysis set within particular value systems and the ability to be objective is problematic if not impossible.} \\
\text{(O'Leary, 2004, p.47)}
\]

Again, Denzin and Lincoln, (2003b) assert that researchers operating within the theoretical perspective of interpretivism, emphasise the value-laden nature of the enquiry. This stance is corroborated by Figueroa (2000) who advises that research cannot be value neutral, but it can and should be ‘value critical’. We must remember too, that whatever the epistemology, knowledge is not apolitical and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but it is in some sense political and permeated with values (Rouse, 1996; Schwandt, 2003)
Reflexivity

According to Guba and Lincoln (1981) reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher. They maintain that it is the conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent. Researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching. They are research instruments (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). This viewpoint is supported by Alcoff and Potter (1993) who assert that reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with the choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research problem, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting. That this is important to bear in mind, especially when writing about the process and findings, is emphasised by Richardson (2000) who makes very clear that writing is not merely the transcribing of some reality, but rather is also a process of discovery of the subject, the problem itself and the self.

As epistemological theorising progressed from the positivist foundational paradigm through to the current method of enquiry defined in North America as the future, which is now, (2000 - ), researchers using the new interpretive, qualitative perspectives, have to struggle with how to locate themselves and their subjects in the new, reflexive texts which call into question the issues of gender, class and race (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a). Gergen and Gergen (2000) also contend that reflexivity moves qualitative research into the 21st century. We are reminded by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000) that in all qualitative methodologies, reliability includes

\[ \text{Fidelity to real life, context- and situation-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents.} \]

(Cohen et al. 2000, p.120)

This will intrinsically incorporate the impact made by the identity and reality of the researcher which can have significant on the research process (O’Leary, 2004). It was therefore important to be mindful of these issues throughout the research process, that the methods used were constantly scrutinised so as to ensure adherence to Cohen et al’s, (2000) verification of reliability as stated above.
Approach
As this was an intrinsic qualitative case study, which did not have the development of theory as an objective, there was some emphasis on categorical aggregation, but greater emphasis on direct interpretation. The aim was to try to understand the issues and context of this particular case. Thus, each part of the process in data collecting was essential in generating the information that would inform how professional development was to be progressed. Using a combination of questionnaire and interview gave a good idea of the variety of feelings and views. Interviews can provide the detailed information that is the focus of the research and can also engender further contextual information which might be useful.

Refinement of understanding is very dependent on the interpretation of data by the researcher and Stake (1995) reminds us that the function of the qualitative researcher during data gathering is to maintain vigorous interpretation. As each respondent has unique experiences, it is Stake's (1995) opinion that the interviewer should have a short list of issue-oriented questions. It is then important for the interviewer to stay in control of the data gathering, thinking about what form the account will take in writing and as stated above, keep main questions in mind and carefully create probes.

Taking the advice in the literature into account, I opted to use a semi-structured approach in the interviews. As the questionnaires revealed certain data and information, it was a method of further developing more detailed responses and opinions to some of the issues. The wording and sequence of questions were determined in advance and all interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order. In some of the interviews I looked for further clarification or further development of a response. It also seemed the most appropriate method remembering Stake's (1995) exhortation that there are many more interpretations than that of the researcher. I was also able to answer questions concerning both the purpose of the interview and the study as well as any misunderstandings experienced by the interviewee. It must be remembered that as with questionnaires, the
same interview questions can have different meanings for different people. Also, interviews could be conducted at a speed appropriate to the topic and the interviewee. It must be kept in mind that as with questionnaires, the most important determinant with both the rate and quality of responses, is the motivation of the participants. It is they who are asked to give time, thought, privacy and effort.

**Treatment of Questionnaires**

The first step in the analysis was to read through all the questionnaires with what Nygren and Blom (2001) define as ‘naïve reading’ to ‘get a sense of the whole’. From this I was able to get a general impression as to what were some of the prevalent issues for the respondents. This was in keeping with Cohen et al’s (2000) assertion that in qualitative research, data analysis commences during the data collection process. In order to further clarify the issues and to consolidate the data generated, all the responses were transferred to a spreadsheet which gave greater clarity as to the frequency of some of the issues and also the range of issues emanating from some of the questions. It also made the data collective, as opposed to a series of individual responses. Furthermore, this method assisted in ensuring the anonymity of the respondents. It was really only then, from examining the spreadsheets repeatedly, that the possible topics for focus in the interviews began to evolve from being general impressions to being pertinent and significant subject matter. As Bassey (1999) asserts, in this situation, there is an intellectual struggle with an enormous amount of raw data in order to produce a meaningful and trustworthy conclusion which is supported by a concise account of how it was reached. Partlett and Hamilton, (1976) call this ‘progressive focussing’ where the researcher sifts, sorts, reviews and reflects on the salient features of the situation emerging in order to create the agenda for subsequent focus.

The data generated to achieve an audit of staff profiles is obviously quantitative and therefore easier to represent in diagrammatic form. However, unstructured data emanating from open-ended questions is not reducible in this way for computer analysis. It cannot be
assigned to categories (Cohen et al, 2000); rather the categories must be developed during the analysis.

Selection of Interviewees
In deciding on what qualities or characteristics I would apply in the selection of those whom I would ask to be interviewees, I had to consider the extent to which the sample would represent the whole population if it were to be a valid sample (Cohen et al, 2000). As it was my own colleagues, access and arranging mutually suitable times were not problematical. I made efforts to be available at a time and location that suited the interviewees. Examination of the questionnaire’s quantitative responses, and identification of the topics for the interview, helped to set the parameters for the selection of interviewees. I used a combination of stratified and purposive sampling. Firstly, the respondents were divided into homogeneous groups and then discreet groups or strata. I made efforts to strive for simplicity as far as possible so as not to make the sampling more complicated than it need be. Then I incorporated purposive sampling in the selection of the interviewees who, in my opinion, were typical under the criteria applied.

The first criterion in the selection was to maximise what could be learned (Stake, 1995). I wanted to ensure that the different age groups, types of contract holders, building in which people worked, having a previous career, not having a previous career and the gender ratios were all represented. By using these criteria, I judged that I could achieve my aim with five interviewees, which represents 10.5% of the respondents. While it could be argued that such a selection system was deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased (Cohen et al, 2000), I felt it was the system which best suited the aims of the research project and which would elicit the most valid and reliable range of ideas and opinions.

Treatment of Interviews
In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the data to the greatest extent possible, though time-consuming, I transcribed the full interviews verbatim. (Appendix G) As with
the spreadsheets showing the outcomes of the questionnaires, (Appendix C) the verbatim transcripts meant that I could read and re-read the material so as to identify the pertinent knowledge, information, values, preferences, attitudes and beliefs on those topics that emanated from the questionnaire. Furthermore, I transcribed each of the interviews from audio discs within forty eight hours of the recording and corrected any errors from further listenings, until the transcription was absolutely accurate to the recording. Once transcription of the interviews was completed, I listened to the discs several more times. Verbatim transcriptions must of necessity include the hesitations and repetitions as interviewees were striving to communicate as clearly as possible what they thought about the various topics. It cannot, however, transmit the nuance, intonation, change of pace, volume or tone. Familiarity with the voices of the interviewees meant that I was reading the transcripts with awareness of the above characteristics. According to Atkinson and Heritage (1984) the production and use of transcripts are essentially ‘research activities’ as they involve close, repeated listenings to recordings that often reveal previously unnoted recurring features of the organisation of talk. Gillham’s (2000) contention that much of what people say is redundant or repetitive is borne out on reading the transcripts (Appendix G). At the same time, they are also a public record, available to the scientific community in a way that field notes are not (Silverman, 2003).

In order to identify the substantive statements I dealt with one question at a time, going from one transcript to the next, using a highlighter to identify the key words and phrases, thus following Gillam’s (2000) advice to ignore repetitions, digressions and other clearly irrelevant material. Having done this, I read all the transcripts again to ensure that I had not missed an item worthy of inclusion in the presentation of findings, including a key point that might have been made by just one individual.

**Analytic Method**

As stated, the aim of this research was to generate the information that would inform how continuing professional development opportunities could be maximised in Liberties
College. As qualitative research offers a debate and insight, rather than a fixed truth (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindal, 2003), it seemed pertinent and appropriate therefore to identify and explore the relevant themes that were generated from the responses to the questionnaire and which were further developed through the interviews. Thematic analysis aims to understand rather than know the data (Marks and Yardley, 2004). Such an approach is within one of the twelve tactics suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) for generating meaning from transcribed and interview data. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that a system of coding responses be used and that codes should be kept as discrete as possible. This in itself implies reading and re-reading the data in order to become totally familiar with it, so that interesting patterns, unusual unexpected features and any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions can be identified (Hammersley and Atkinson (1983).

O’Leary (2004) asserts that to gain meaningful understanding, analysis of qualitative research is dependent on both deductive reasoning, generally associated with quantitative research and inductive reasoning which derives theory from specific instances. Thus, inductive processes are often confirmed by deductive verification so that themes can be discovered and identified through inductive analysis, through deductive analysis, engagement with the literature, prior experience of the researcher, and the nature of the research question. They can also be garnered through the process of data collection. Whichever method is used it is O’Leary’s (2004) advice, that there is a need for ‘rich engagement with the documents, transcripts and texts that make up a researcher’s raw data’ (p.196). This reiterates that of Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). Textual engagement can occur during the data collection as the researcher reads, overviews and annotates the text. Qualitative data can be explored thematically by four possible methods: the words that are used, the concepts that are discussed, the linguistic devices that are called upon and the non-verbal cues noted by the researcher (O’Leary, 2004).

Focusing on the concepts that were discussed seemed the best method to use in order to fulfil the aims of this research study, in preference to any of the other three methods of
exploration of qualitative data. At the same time it was important to be aware that here is a tension in qualitative data analysis between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomise and fragment the data thus separating them into constituent elements, which results in losing the synergy of the whole. In interviews often the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (Cohen et al, 2000). The advantages of using thematic analysis in this research study were that it provided a meaningful, organisational structure.
Chapter 5
Presentation of Findings

Questionnaires: Overview.
As the aim of this case study was to identify the perceived ongoing professional development needs of academic staff in a specific college in the further education sector, so that provision of continuing professional development can be maximised, it was incumbent on me to ask the staff themselves as to what they saw as their needs. I used two methods to achieve this, questionnaire and interview. One great advantage in using a questionnaire as a research tool for this study was that I was distributing it to my own colleagues. This in turn meant that I had no postal costs or postal delays influencing their return. Many of my colleagues already knew that I was engaged in this research and in conversations I had flagged the fact that I would be distributing questionnaires for their attention.

Every member of the academic staff received the questionnaire and a cover letter in an envelope with his/her name on the envelope. These were put in each individual’s letter slot in the college on January 10 2006. The letter requested that they be returned to my letter slot by January 20 2006. I checked my slot several times each day and ensured that completed questionnaires were removed quickly. For me, it was important that respondents knew that I valued their effort and participation. A copy of the letter is available in Appendix A. and a copy of the questionnaire is available in Appendix B.

In total there were twenty nine questions, which were a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative design. The quantitative questions were necessary in order to do an audit of such aspects as gender ratio, age profiles, employment prior to teaching; the qualitative questions generated information from each individual as to his/her self-perceived requirements for continuing professional development to fulfil the needs of the classroom, the institution and the self.
Questions 1+2: Gender and Age

Sixty questionnaires were distributed; twenty to male colleagues and forty to female colleagues. Of these, forty eight were returned; seventeen from male respondents and thirty one from female respondents. The response was 80% of the distribution which is a high rate of return. Of the respondents, 35% are male and 65% are female.

This was a very encouraging response rate which indicated the possibility of an increased validity to the findings.

I considered that as this was a holistic approach to continuing professional development needs, it was essential to look at the age breakdown as this information can give indicators to some extent as to the career stages some people are at. It is not a definitive indicator, however, for as will be seen later in the presentation of findings, a considerable number of people have engaged in other careers prior to teaching. I have shown age breakdown of
male and female respondents, though for the purpose of this study I did not sub-divide the age breakdown according to gender for specific continuing professional development needs; rather have left the respondents as a collective number. It was not my intention to do comparative analysis of continuing professional needs between male and female, or in each specific age group; though such analysis would be the basis of an interesting study. Taking the respondents as a total number, 71% are over the age of forty and 29% are over the age of fifty.

![Age Breakdown](image)

Questions 3+4: Type of Teacher Employment Contract and Posts of Responsibility

There are now three types of teacher employment contract: permanent wholetime {PWT}, pro rata part-time eligible {PRPTT (E)} and pro rata part-time non eligible {PRPTT (NE)}. 65% of respondents are permanent wholetime teachers, 21% are eligible pro rata part-time, 10% are non eligible pro rata part-time and 4% (two people) did not indicate the status of their employment contract. When it came to the question about posts of responsibility 27% indicated that they held the post of principal, deputy principal or assistant principal; 23% the post of special duties teacher; 30% class tutor; 10% indicated ‘other’ and 10% were
unmarked. It is possible for a respondent to indicate more than one area of responsibility, e.g. assistant principal and class tutor.

Questions 5-8: Length of Time Teaching and Career Prior to Teaching

Length of time teaching was divided into five-year options. The highest number of people in any option is eleven who have been teaching between sixteen and twenty years. Close to that, there are ten respondents who have between one and five years teaching experience, while seventeen people have more than twenty years each. One person did not indicate length of time teaching. Thirty two respondents, which represents 67% of the total have engaged in another career prior to teaching, while fifteen, 31%, have had teaching as their sole career. One respondent left this question blank. The gender breakdown of those with other careers prior to teaching was twenty two female respondents and ten male respondents. When asked how many years were spent in another career prior to teaching the largest group was seven females who had spent between one and three years. The other noticeable groups are six males who spent between three and five years in another career and six females who spent more than ten years in another career. The shortest time in a previous career was 1 year and the longest time was 28 years. One respondent did not
indicate length of time. Service industry at 44% was the most frequent response to the type of area of prior employment in general terms.

![Previous Career](image)

**Figure 4**

**Questions 9-14: Courses Being Undertaken and Certification**

The next set of questions dealt with courses being undertaken in their own time at the time of this research, as well as courses that respondents had already engaged in in their own time. 15% of respondents were doing courses from which they would gain a teaching qualification. Three of these seven respondents have been working in education for less than five years; the remaining four for longer periods. 27% were undertaking a course of further study which would lead to an additional professional qualification. Participants were asked whether they had undertaken professional development courses in their own time which did not have formal certification. 65% of respondents have done so and of this number 30% preferred that the courses would have had formal certification. Lack of certification has prevented one person, 2% from taking a course. However 48% of respondents said that lack of certification did, not in the past, prevent them from taking a course.
Questions 15-18: Motivators and Inhibitors to Engaging in Professional Development in Own Time.

Participants rank-ordered motivators and had the option of including any other areas that were not already mentioned. ‘New curriculum’ and ‘meeting and networking with other teachers’ did not feature at all as any respondent’s prime motivator. This changed slightly when the first three rankings were taken cumulatively, to 4% rating ‘curriculum’ and 1% rating ‘meeting and networking with other teachers’ within the first three motivators. Personal development and interest was cited by 40% of respondents as their prime motivator for engaging in professional development in their own time. Again when the first three rankings were taken cumulatively, 77% of respondents had placed personal development within their three strongest motivators. Keeping up with change was the prime motivating factor for 23% of participants and was rated by 52% of respondents when the first three chosen motivators are considered cumulatively. Two interesting results were that 31% rated enjoyment within their first three motivators to engage in professional development in their own time while 10% engaged in them with a view to change of career.

![Motivators within first three rankings for prof. dev. in own time](image)

Figure 5

To assess barriers/ inhibitors participants were asked to place a tick ✓ against those from a list of ten options that they experienced as a barrier. They then had to circle from a
selection of three options which best applied to the extent of their experience. Thirty one people, 65%, indicated which of the options they had experienced as a barrier. The column was left blank by 35% of respondents who did complete the task of circling ‘Highly Significant’ ‘Significant’ ‘Somewhat Significant’. However, I did not think that I could include these results as there were no clear indications as to what the respondents might have meant. Therefore the analysis of the results for question 16 was based on the responses where specific barriers had been ticked. Time commitment was rated as the being the greatest barrier for 28% of participants and financial costs the next greatest barrier for 24% of participants with family commitments the main barrier for 12% of participants. Cumulatively, these top three represent 64% of respondents. Also, it is worthy of note that 45% of respondents rated time commitment within first three barriers; 35% financial costs of course within first three barriers; 12% rated family commitment within first three barriers.

In answer to question 17 which gave three possible options to choose from as to why the participant has undertaken professional development courses in their own time, 60% responded that they engaged in the course for specific reasons with clear objectives. To the next question which asked if the decision to engage in such courses was spontaneous, part of the participants’ professional plan, or for some other reason 58% responded that it was part of their own professional plan.

**Question 19: Finance**

This question dealt with the financing of professional development courses in participants’ own time. The results show that 62% of participants totally financed their courses, while for 29% the courses were partly self-financed. 15% of respondents have engaged in courses which were totally financed from another source.
Questions 20 – 21: Shared Time
These two questions focused on whether participants had undertaken courses which were partly in work time and partly in participants’ own time and what percentage of their own time was expended. 35% of respondents have engaged in courses which straddled both private and work time. The private time percentage ranged from 97% to 10%.

Questions 22 – 28: Future Planning
These questions dealt with future planning as to what, where and by whom participants felt continuing professional development should be done

Question 22 What: classroom
Question 22 dealt with what participants considered were the type of workshop or short course area or topic to be organised within professional development provision in the college that they currently needed or would benefit from. These were under three headings: working in the classroom; working in the educational institution; development and progression of your own personal development plan. Participants were asked to prioritise a maximum of three in each of these areas.

In the first section dealing with working in the classroom priority 1 choice was given by 71% of respondents, which represents thirty four participants. Seventeen people in this group indicated specific areas dealing with Information Technology (IT) skills. A further sixteen people indicated specific areas focusing on teaching skills, assessment and curriculum. This represents 97% of those who completed this section. Twenty participants, 42%, gave two preferences and 29%, fourteen participants, indicated three areas. While the areas already mentioned in the first choices were repeated in choice two and three, other areas were mentioned which included developing creativity, role-play, equality and diversity, group work/facilitation skills, health and safety, time management. It should be noted that 29% of participants did not fill in this section at all.
What: Educational Institution

In the second section dealing with working in the educational institution, priority 1 preference was given by 58% of respondents, 37% gave two preferences and 23% indicated three areas. This meant that 42% of participants did not complete this section. The emphasis for 50% of the first choice indicators was focused on people: teamwork, group work, anti-bullying strategies, group psychology, health and safety. There were also indicated needs for courses/workshops on management areas: time management, network management, continuing professional development and enhancing management capacity, overseeing a department, developing leadership skills, course management. There were also suggestions around strategy: course planning, college planning, discussion on current educational questions, anti-bullying. These suggestions for the most part were replicated in choices two and three which were completed. However, there were a few further specific suggestions not already mentioned: new techniques – educational use (presentation, administration communication), meeting educational needs as well as markets, strategic/tactical planning, staying in school strategies, especially for VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, my italics) students, project management, leadership without power, administration, change management, CDVEC revealed- opportunities and structure, managing stress, how to be an efficient organisation.

What: Own Personal Development Plan

In the third section dealing with development and progress of participants’ own personal development plan, 56% of respondents gave a priority 1 choice, 33% gave two preferences and 18% indicated three areas. Given the low response to second and third choices, I decided to group them together. IT skills, time management, teaching skills featured again, though not as predominantly as expressed needs for the classroom and the institution. Career planning, personal career review and plan on a one-to-one basis, coaching in making a personal development plan, self reflection every few years, reflective diary, personal development self-audit, planning for retirement/alternative career, were all suggested around career planning. There were some specific suggestions in the areas of
formal study: taking a Masters degree, developing work already done for a Masters degree, studying psychology, studying guidance counselling. There was also the need expressed by a few to have a look at continuing educational opportunities, to get information about what is ‘out there’ as regards workshops and courses, to ascertain what courses could be engaged in that would be beneficial to the college. Other areas covered were working with ‘non national’ students, interview preparation for Assistant Principalships etc., choosing a mentor, peer-mentoring, finding out about funding available for courses, personal finances, getting a driving licence for the school bus, Christian spirituality in the workplace, yoga, playing the guitar, flower arranging. One respondent said it was impossible to have a personal development plan in college.

Some of these areas were the focus of the interviews to get some further insight into their relevance. As 56% of respondents completed this question, it was worthy to pursue what was the perceived need/importance of having a personal development plan. Again 29% did not declare any perceived needs for working in the classroom; whether this meant that they did not have any needs, or that the wording of the question was not sufficiently clear, was also a focus in the interviews. The need for self-reflection workshops every few years was premised on a workshop already experienced.

**Question 23: Where - Classroom**
Participants were given a range of five locations: 1. In-house- your place of employment, 2. Alternative educational institution, 3. Education centre, 4. No particular preference, 5. Other, please specify. There were three value options ‘Always’ ‘Sometimes’ ‘Never’ The strongest results were ‘Sometimes’ in an alternative educational institution at 69%. ‘Sometimes’ in-house and education centre were both at 65%. ‘Always’ holding professional development related to the classroom in any of the options scored low, the highest was in-house 12%.
In the section which allowed respondents to make suggestions, 20% opted for this with various suggestions: use locations that academic staff already have experience of using for this purpose such as the Digital Hub, DIT Aungier Street. Other suggestions were: Curriculum Development Unit; in-house subject to sufficient equipment and resources; online; a county hotel for a complete change of scenery; never in a hotel/conference centre; general suggestion that a change of location can improve interest.

**Question 24: Where – Institution**

Fewer respondents completed this question than the previous one, but as above, the strongest option was under ‘Sometimes’ as to location to hold professional development related to the institution. ‘Sometimes’ in an alternative educational institution at 31%; was followed by 28% selection of ‘Sometimes’ for an education centre and 23% selected ‘Sometimes’ for in-house. The strongest figure under ‘Always’ was 19% who opted for in-house. Under ‘Never’ the highest score was 8% against using an education centre.

There were fewer other suggestions in this category than in the previous one for location for professional development for the classroom; just two which suggested a warm hotel/conference centre.

**Question 25: Where – Own Professional Development Plan**

Fewer again respondents completed this question than question 24. There is a slight shift in declared choices; 19% have indicated to ‘Never’ have professional development for one’s personal/development plan in-house. This is the strongest ‘Never’ in any of the options. Another shift is that 25% of respondents want it ‘Always’ in another educational institution. The largest % choice under the ‘Sometimes’ option was 38% for an education centre.

There were other suggestions made as to location which included: for some kinds of work a different kind of environment conducive to relaxation, reflection; somewhere more holistic than any of the specified options; total change of location facilitation; Quaker House...
Rathfarnham; Milltown Institute; one-to-one off-site; space in college; not an educational institution, but a comfortable bright location.

**Question 26: Who-classroom**

In the next set of three questions, the format was the same for each as to which type of facilitators the respondents preferred for each aspect of profession development – classroom, institution, self. There were three options: 1. Colleague/s 2. Outsider with experience in education 3. Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education. For each option, respondents were asked to select a frequency option: ‘Regularly’ ‘Occasionally’ ‘Rarely’.

The highest indicator was an outsider with experience which was the choice of 65% of respondents. In contrast to that 2% would rarely opt for this choice. The next selections were 38% for a colleague occasionally, and 38% for an outsider, not necessarily with experience in education. 33% of respondents opted to rarely have a colleague as facilitator for professional development focused on the classroom.

![Who to deliver professional development for classroom](image-url)
Question 27: Who–Institution

Again the greatest preference was regularly for an outsider with experience in education at 66%. This was followed by 42% recording that they would occasionally like a colleague as facilitator. 31% would occasionally like to have an outsider, not necessarily with experience in education and 31% would rarely like a colleague as facilitator.

![Who to deliver professional development for educational institution](image)

Question 28: Who–Own Professional Development Plan

Similarly to the previous two questions 62% of respondents opted to have an outsider with experience in education. The next highest option was 43% would regularly like an outsider, not necessarily with experience in education. What is worthy of note is that 42% would rarely like a colleague as facilitator of professional development related to respondents' own professional development plan.
Who to deliver professional development for personal development plan

- Occasionally outsider not necessarily with experience in education, 31%
- Rarely a colleague, 5%
- Occasionally colleague, 31%
- Regularly outsider with education experience, 62%

**Figure 8**

**Question 29: Likert Scale Used for Responses to Ten Statements about Continuing Professional Development**

The options to be selected from were ‘Strongly Agree’ ‘Agree’ ‘Disagree’ ‘Strongly Disagree’ ‘Undecided’

The highest rate of response under ‘Strongly Agree’ was 61% to statement no.2 ‘Engagement in continuing professional development activities improves teaching and learning in the classroom’ and 61% to statement no. 5 ‘Funding/Paid leave should be available to teachers who wish to undertake professional development courses’. However, when the ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ results were combined the score for statement no.2 was 98%, while the score for statement no.5 was 88%. The combined score of ‘Strongly Agree’ ‘Agree’ for statement no. 8 ‘Engaging in professional development activities helps to satisfy various personal needs that teachers have in relation to their work’ was also 98%.

It is worthy to note that there was zero response to the ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’ options for both the highest scoring statements.

Only one statement, no. 6, ‘Seeking promotion is one of the main reasons why teachers undertake professional development courses that lead to qualifications’ resulted in a higher
score for ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’ at 42% compared to 31% who responded ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’. Also, 19% were undecided and 8% made no response. 100% of participants made a response to statements 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9. Under the ‘Undecided’ option, the highest score was 21% for the statement ‘It is reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend in-service/professional development courses’ The other scores for this question were ‘Strongly Agree’ 13%, ‘Agree’ 39%, ‘Disagree’ 19%, ‘Strongly Disagree’ 8%.

Interviews

Topic of interview question 1: Dealing with change.

Three of the five interviewees focused on Information Technology (IT) as being not only the greatest area of change, but it is also in a state of continuous change: ‘the way that technology is delivered, the access to technology, the ability of us to be able to use technology’ (Interview 2) ‘there have been HUGE changes in terms of technology. EVERYTHING is now the machine’ (Interview 2). This speed of change has various implications about technological equipment, teaching methods and assessment methods: ‘there was a time when I would only have accepted drawings on paper, now I have to accept them on CD’ (Interview 2). There is a perceived automatic demand that teachers are competent and confident in their application and use of technology; this in turn necessitates constant upskilling: ‘at work, the demands are to be able to use IT,’ (Interview 4) ‘everything is changing ... you have to keep up with the training and the new things that are coming in all the time’ This was not the only stated area of change discussed by the interviewees. For teachers in practical areas, there is also rapid change in materials available ‘the whole range of materials ... change at a constant pace’ (Interview 2) and for all teachers, there is ongoing change in legislation: ‘there’s the legislation which is constantly changing ... national legislation, European legislation’ (Interview 2). Emphasis was placed that in the opinion of the interviewees, it was imperative to keep up with training and to engage in constant upskilling: ‘...especially in the present era of lifelong learning and all of that. You can’t get left behind’ (Interview 4).
At the same time, concern was expressed that even with all the IT available, we are also 'encouraging others to take up pen and paper' (Interview 4). Students are looking for 'How do I improve my skills in writing and reading?' (Interview 4) It was considered that many students availing of learner support services 'very, very seldom will mention computers at all'

With regard to the change brought about by the imminent end to the provision of secondary education, those interviewees who have been staff members for some years, identified that the transition from a school providing secondary education to becoming a further education centre has not been sudden, 'it's very noticeable in the last, I suppose, ten years anyway' (Interview 4), 'changeover from secondary school to further ed ... is going on twenty years' (Interview 3). Two characteristics have been identified as being conducive to this metamorphosis. The first is institutional, namely the fact that historically, 'the school has ALWAYS been at the forefront of curriculum development. Then when it went to further education we just had to keep going and meet the needs of a changing school' (Interview 3). The second is people-based that 'the nature of the teaching staff is to be willing to change and to be innovative and resourceful' (Interview 3). There was also the opinion that with 'the junior school closing down ... people ... are now being forced to change and to diversify' (Interview 1). The current changes were considered to be 'to the benefit of the student' (Interview 4), 'people are becoming aware of the need to look at the whole person' (Interview 4) 'Holistic ...inclusive ... as a learning centre we are beginning to understand what that means' (Interview 4.)

Another aspect commented on was that 'there is more paperwork now in education ... especially now with the whole-school evaluation' (Interview 5).
Topic of interview question 2: Professional Development Needs for Working in the Classroom.

All interviewees expressed surprise that 29% of respondents did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom. Two people thought the figure very high, ‘I’m surprised at that ... I would have thought that kind of area would be very important to keep up to date in and keep developing and be open and flexible to new ways’ (Interview 1), ‘unless people are working in an area in which NO change has taken place over the last ten to fifteen years...’ (Interview 2). It was the opinion of another interviewee that ‘people don’t recognise the fact that there are areas where they need professional development’ (Interview 5). One interviewee said, ‘I think it’s not high on the agenda’ (Interview 3). Another was surprised at how low it was, ‘I would probably say nearer 50%. ...that’s refreshing and interesting that there is only 29’ (Interview 4).

However, all five had consensus on the opinion that continuing professional development for working in the classroom was essential, ‘There’s constant new findings ... You would HAVE to be involved in professional development if you want to deliver a quality course’ (Interview 2), ‘I would have thought teaching in the classroom was quite crucial’, ‘that’s the main bulk of our job’, ‘there’s always something new’, ‘everybody has areas where they can improve, or where they can learn new things’. It was suggested that ‘in any profession there would be 100% who would need continuing professional development and that ‘at any stage of working life, an individual would see a need for professional development, lifelong’ (Interview 4).

Given this response, I pursued a bit further as to why the figure of 29% might have been so. There were varying suggestions as to the reason. One interviewee suggested that ‘people help each other in that area’ (Interview 3). However, it was further stated that the topic of professional development needs for the classroom ‘is something that’s not mentioned at a staff meeting’ (Interview 3).
A further suggested reason for the rate of non-response was that 'we have so many SINGLE areas, we have so many single strands, ... There aren't enough people to come together to say we need this' (Interview 3). The opinion was expressed that 'people might be afraid that people might think they are not capable, confident and competent as a teacher' (Interview 5). A suggestion was proffered that 'people don't always see straight away where those areas are' (Interview 5) and had everyone been able to read each other's questionnaire responses they might say, 'Oh yes, there's something I should have put down' (Interview 5).

In contrast to this, one interviewee felt that often 'teachers think that they have done their training'... (Interview 4) and 'if there's any sort of difficulties as all in the classroom it's the students'... 'rather than looking at what I could do differently' (Interview 4).

**Topic of interview question 3: Lack of information as to courses and funding.**

Four of the interviewees encountered no difficulty in either aspect of pursuing professional development, 'there's absolutely no problem in finding out what's out there' (Interview 2) 'all the information is out there, if people want it,' (Interview 2) 'in the Autumn I'm being bamboozled with books on night classes, what's on in Dublin city,' (interview 2) 'if people are involved in their subject they will find things that are relevant out there ... if you have time to lift your head above your work and find them,' (Interview 3) 'I haven't been refused any professional development that I have applied for,' (Interview 3) 'funding... there's never been a problem with that,' (Interview 2) 'I have absolutely no problem accessing and funding,' (Interview 3) 'I feel I would know exactly where to start looking and where to find out about funding if there was funding available,' (Interview 3). 'In this school if you sincerely want to do a course, Michael King will go out of his way to facilitate funding for whatever course ... that's relevant,' (Interview 2). 'I don't think there's anything wrong with people PARTLY funding a course ... you would probably appreciate it more.' (Interview 5). Expense was not just from a financial perspective and 'some courses can be quite expensive and often in time and money' (Interview 5).
One interviewee suggested that there should be a system which would 'say what courses are available and then where they can lead you,' (Interview 1). 'The information meetings are very helpful and not necessarily specific.' (Interview 1). Another interviewee suggested that 'there are a couple of people, if you talk to them, they have done the research, and they know what’s relevant,' (Interview 3). 'There is somebody on the staff who can supply me with that information ... I don’t know how widely available that is.' (Interview 3). It was proposed that 'some people are better at finding courses than other people are,' (Interview 5) and that 'maybe if a data base was put together of all the possible courses' (Interview 5) it would be of assistance to those 'who are better when others find the courses for them,' (Interview 5). There was the stated acknowledgement that it would be 'very difficult to find every single thing,' (Interview 5) but 'even with limitations it gives people a chance to see what’s out there.' (Interview 5).

**Topic of question 4: Barriers in getting released from class to engage in professional development.**

On one hand there were expressions of there being no barriers in getting released from class to engage in continuing professional development, ‘To be honest ... the school year is very short and we can’t ALWAYS be asking to leave the classroom .... 95% of my professional development has taken place outside the teaching timetable,’ (Interview 3). 'In principle there is a commitment to releasing us to do professional development,' (Interview 3). 'I can’t think of anywhere where I’VE been disgruntled about not being released,' (Interview 3). 'It is relatively easy to be okayed with the leave,' (Interview 1), 'it depends on how people go round it,' (Interview 3), 'the school would go out of their way to facilitate people,' (Interview 2), 'sometimes maybe people hadn’t actually asked for time off, they would get it if they actually asked for it,' (Interview 5).

There was also further development on the issue. 47% of people not finding it easy to get released ‘might not actually be true if you look at the statistics, but I think that is the
perception among people,' (Interview 5). ‘Part of the problem there could be what section in the school people could be working in ... general perception ... if heavily junior school laden, it’s more difficult to get time off’ (Interview 5). ‘I think you would have to look at the statistics ... comparing whether the people are full-time or part-time, or on job-share who are saying this.’ (Interview 5). The subject of the role of contract status was further developed as it was one interviewee’s experience that ‘being a part-time person ... not being full-time in any particular place ... getting released to do courses is a total nightmare. Not only have I to get cover ... but I also have to make sure that that person is looked after financially.’ (Interview 4). It was suggested that sometimes there were probably cases ‘where it just wasn’t practical to facilitate people,’ (Interview 2), ‘often when it comes down to the details it’s just not possible at the time.’ (Interview 3).

Some of the interviewees suggested that barriers encountered could be ascribed to professional conscientiousness as ‘they don’t feel they can go and leave a class, especially if there’s not going to be adequate provision ... it means picking up the pieces later,’ (Interview 4), ‘people are just being overly conscientious about missing the class, (Interview 2). If there was not adequate information to students and appropriate substitution put in place, people were more reluctant to request leave, ‘the management knows you are not going to be there ... other members of staff don’t know ... students don’t know ... then chaos can ensue,’ (Interview 1). It was the opinion of one interviewee that removal of this barrier necessitated there being ‘a competent person to teach a part of the module while you are away and when you come back it’s a seamless situation from then on.’ (Interview 2).

**Topic of question 5: Status and whether there is a perceived difference between permanent wholetime teachers and those on contract as to what can be requested in terms of continuing professional development.**

It was the opinion of all five interviewees that there was a perceived difference between permanent whole-time teachers and those on contract as to what can be requested in terms of continuing professional development. It was considered that ‘people on contract are
ALWAYS going to feel they are on the edge,’ (Interview 2), and that it is ‘in the nature of anybody on contract … never to feel that they have the same rights and entitlements as any other permanent member of staff,’ (Interview 2), ‘Without a doubt … if you are in a permanent position you feel much more secure about asking for things …’ (Interview 1). A part-time contract staff member would feel they ‘are not in a position to complain like a person in a permanent position,’ (Interview 5), should a request for leave for professional development not be granted. ‘When I was … not … a whole-time teacher, I would have been much slower to complain … or ask for something that I thought I might not get …,’ (Interview 5), ‘a permanent teacher … would have much easier access, because their position is not going to be coming up for review …’ (Interview 4), ‘I would assume that if you are a permanent whole-time teacher you would have more advantages and you would be allowed access to courses,’ (Interview 1). ‘A contract person … wouldn’t be as … entitled to go on as many courses,’ (Interview 1), ‘because you are on contract there is a certain timidity about the whole thing,’ (Interview 1), ‘Is it going to affect the way you are treated next year?’ (Interview 2). ‘Someone on contract … if they have been missing doing professional development for most of that time … there is a very great likelihood that their contract in that particular place is not going to be renewed.’ (Interview 4).

**Topic of question 6: Career prior to teaching.**

All five interviewees asserted that there were great advantages associated with having another profession prior to teaching. A previous career ‘opens your eyes to the world.’ (Interview 2). It is a benefit ‘in terms of being able to mix with people and get on with people’ (Interview 2). Such a person already has experience of ‘being part of a team’ (Interview 2). On the other hand ‘teaching itself is all the time perceived as a very lonely occupation,’ (Interview 2). ‘… it is hugely beneficial, I feel, to teachers who are dealing with adults because there is a certain empathy…and … insight…’ (Interview 4), ‘if you are … cocooned within the learning environment, it’s more likely you are going to see things, very much in a more rigid fashion…’ (Interview 4), ‘the person has other experience to draw on when they are teaching students,’ (Interview 5), ‘… you are bringing other skills
into the school... you bring more to the job... especially with the changing needs of the school...’ (Interview 3). Those ‘who have been in training situations... are very good at supplying work preparation or work experience...’ (Interview 5), and anyone with a career prior to teaching ‘especially if it was in a relevant area would have more things to draw on in their teaching.’ (Interview 5). One opinion was expressed that those who had a prior career ‘tend to be better survivors and tend... to be better teachers and better communicators. It was proposed that ‘all teachers should at some time in their career, break their career and... try to do something... to see what’s happening out there and... bring that experience back in.’ (Interview 2). There was the further suggestion that while ‘they are bringing another dimension to teaching it is important that people train to be teachers at the same time.’ (Interview 3).

**Topic of question 7: Integration of staff.**

Integration of staff was seen as a problem by all interviewees. Issues around time-tabling were identified in two areas: time-tabling of courses; time-tabling in buildings. ‘Staff who work in certain areas... meet each other because of the way that their timetables are made up,’ (Interview 5) ‘I work on courses where there is no integration of staff or subjects,’ (Interview 3), ‘...being spread over a wide area... means it is harder to sit down with teachers to plan a month’s work...’ (Interview 3). One interviewee taught on a course where there was just one meeting in September and one in June ‘and I think that is to the detriment of the student’ (Interview 3) On the other hand, ‘there are other courses where there are continuous meetings... you imagine this must be good for the students.’ (Interview 3). Being able to have regular planning meetings on curriculum and delivery was seen as a major enhancement to students as there would be better integration of subjects. It was then also possible to integrate students better when external specialists were invited to deliver on their specialisms. ‘Guest lecturers would actually cross the border from my subject into two or three other subjects... I thought of having people like that in and gathering the classes together more’ (Interview 3)
If working solely in either building 'you are not mixing with the other people ... you only see the other people at staff meetings maybe twice three times a year, you don't really know the people' (Interview 2). In contrast to this, the point was made by the interviewees that when one was timetabled across the three areas of junior school, post-leaving certificate and adult continuing education, it was much easier to get to know a wide range of colleagues and to have a good awareness of many of the courses delivered. 'I know for me teaching in all three areas, I would know most members of staff ... there's very few areas I haven't worked in...' (Interview 5). However, the declared drawback of this was that where people teach on a multiple of programmes it was more difficult to be part of meetings about course planning; the more separate classes one taught on, the more meetings were required. If teachers were to plan three weeks' work 'I suppose if you taught in seven areas that would mean seven meetings every three weeks, so I can see that that's difficult. It's easier for people to sit down where they teach a smaller number of classes and they can plan it' (Interview 3).

It was acknowledged that with regard to time-tableing that 'there may be areas where the professional bodies have laid down where the teachers have to have specific qualifications' (Interview 2). This means that there are some people who have worked exclusively in one programme only and 'have never worked in any of the other areas' (Interview 5). It was expressed that there are people who 'tend to be totally caught up in ... departments to the extent they don't see ... a wider picture within the college' (Interview 2). However 'for other people who want to get total integration ... you can do it on a social level' (Interview 2). Several interviewees expressed the opinion that integration cannot be imposed, 'there has to be the will there for people to get involved...' (Interview 4), 'people have to want to be integrated ... you can't really push people' (Interview 5).

The fact that the college is on two sites impinges on integration of staff and because teachers are moving between both, it means that 'integrating with other teachers is not a priority' (Interview 3), because 'running over and back is taking time out of your life
anyway and taking teaching time.' (Interview 3), 'There are two halves here, definitely. You'll integrate into both halves, but you'll integrate into them separately.' (Interview 4), 'Sometimes I wonder ... is there more at play than just the actual physical fact that there are two buildings' (Interview 4), 'When everybody ... is dealing with F.E maybe that is something that will change' (Interview 4).

On the topic of ideas that might assist in generating such change focus was on how to improve the experience of the student as well as the teacher. 'To talk about how best to meet the needs of the students would be a start. We would have to integrate if we did that' (Interview 3). There were suggestions around timetabling as a possible assistance in improving integration. 'You could re-jig timetables so that somebody ... could be teaching in an area where they wouldn't normally teach' (Interview 5), 'If things weren't as fixed... if a class could be in one building one year and in another building another year ... if there was more fluidity around where classes were fixed ... that it's not written in stone that a certain class is in one building for ever and ever ... if there was more movement between classes and teachers between one building and another ... the more fixed we are in our own little worlds, the less the students get to mix, therefore the less experience of further education they have' (Interview 3).

Apart from timetabling possibilities there was the suggestion of 'social events... social occasions ... when you get to see members of staff on a different level' (Interview 1). In the staff room 'there's not enough time to REALLY get to know other members of staff' (Interview 1). If there were more social occasions, there'd be more of an understanding and possibly a better atmosphere ... with some members of staff, especially to do with the two separate buildings.' (Interview 1), '... more social engagements or something that people can meet up with each other.' (Interview 5). At the same time the opinion was expressed about '... the social end of it, I've seen efforts and I've seen failures, huge ones' (Interview 4), '...as an institution we have tried EVERYTHING to make a premises ... to
create an institution that’s inclusive, where there’s a great sense of collegiality … I don’t honestly believe we could be doing any more’ (Interview 2)

There were some positive comments about the topic of integration. ‘Having the staff meetings over … in the second building, DOES help’ (Interview 3), ‘the staff development days, certainly the workshops on staff development, I think they help’ (Interview 3). ‘Some people work between two buildings so they get to meet … a lot more staff’ (Interview 5). A different atmosphere was identified for each building ‘…in the Bull Alley building there is a greater sense of homeliness about the place … a sense of propriety about it’ (Interview 2) ‘I still think Bull Alley …as my base, even though I get very little time in it at the minute’ (Interview 4), ‘…and within Mark’s Alley, there is quite a good atmosphere I suppose, this year’ (Interview 4). One interviewee spoke of how as a new teacher, integration into the ‘existing body’ of Liberties College was experienced, ‘I found being integrated into Liberties was one of the easiest places for me, anyway, to integrate into. … from management right down, I found that it was a very welcoming environment … there is a kind of holistic feel in Liberties’ (Interview 4).

**Topic of question 8: Age profiles.**

All five interviewees eliminated age, per se, as having any particular bearing on professional development needs. ‘It never occurred to me that there was any difference between a thirty year old and a sixty year old in what they were trying to do in the school … we are all doing the same job and whether you are thirty or sixty you need professional development to keep going’ (Interview 3). It was humorously suggested that it would be wise to follow the dictum of Dame Edna Everage to ‘Pick an age and stick to it’, (Interview 2), so inconsequential was age considered. One interviewee was of the opinion that ‘experience should be respected and honoured’ (Interview 1), and that it made new members of staff feel ‘secure that there was a safety net of experience, rather than you and twenty other new teachers all under thirty’ (Interview 1). Another termed it as ‘a wealth, a treasure to have’ (Interview 2). There was an emphasis from all that it was the needs of the
individual that were important, 'I've heard of teachers very close to retirement, who are still looking at promotional prospects' (Interview 5).

One interviewee felt personally, that more professional development would have been beneficial at a younger age, but 'there didn’t seem to be as many courses available when I was younger' (Interview 5). The general thinking among interviewees was that the emphasis should be on the professional development needs as expressed by the individual and that it cannot be assumed from age profiles that these needs will be the same for all, 'Just because people are over fifty, it doesn’t mean their professional development needs are automatically going to be all the same' (Interview 4). It didn’t matter whether it was for the individual or for the institution, the need ‘still has to come from the individual’ (Interview 4). ‘It depends on the individual’ (Interview 5). It was further suggested that ‘when all this professional development is going on... recognise it... look at the talent and skills within the institution and make best use of them’ (Interview 4). Otherwise ‘there really is no point in all this developing going on and keeping up with it, if the system stays as it was and that these newly acquired skills are not put to best practice’ (Interview 4).
Chapter 6
Discussion of Findings

Overview

Through the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews, I attempted to ascertain what continuing professional development staff felt they wanted and needed. Bubb (2006) confirms that these are the most used methods for assessing the training and development needs of individuals.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire garnered a wide range of information both quantitative and qualitative. Some of the quantitative results I chose not to focus on in this chapter dealing with the discussion of findings as I felt it would broaden the scope of the research into areas which might not have been particularly pertinent to the fulfilment of the aims of the research. However the information is available in Appendix C in the event that the data is important in the future to the continuing professional plan of Liberties College.

Question 1+ 2: Age and Gender

The age profile of the staff in itself was not necessarily an indicator as to a respondent’s stage in teaching career. This was especially true when the responses to the succeeding questions 5-8 were taken into account. Stage in teaching career would probably have been a more pertinent characteristic to research, if Huberman’s (1989, 1993) assertion is accepted that ‘teachers sought different sources of knowledge at different times in their careers’. Grundy and Robinson (2004) claim that for the majority of teachers ‘professional development is an intrinsic part of the growth and development cycle of a professional career’. Where awareness of age might have been relevant was to indicate how many respondents were within a few years of official retirement. It did not however indicate if anyone was considering early retirement. Given the number of respondents who were over the age of fifty and over the age of forty, I decided that this would be an area of focus in the
interviews, to ascertain what were the interviewees' opinions about the relationship between continuing professional needs and different career stages. I did not analyse each set of data by gender for differences in specific professional development data generated, though it could be done at a future stage from the data available.

**Question 3 + 4 Type of Teacher Employment Contract and Posts of Responsibility**
While the majority of respondents were permanent whole-time teachers, a sizeable minority were not. I wanted to find out if this fact was in any way influential to attitudes and perceptions about accessing continuing professional development so it was an area I dealt with in interview. Except to ensure that a representative from this category was included in the selection of interviewees, I decided not to give any particular focus at this to posts of responsibility held; though, as before, the data is available for use in any future professional development plan in the college.

**Questions 5-8: Length of Time Teaching and Career Prior to Teaching**
I have been unable to locate research material on the topic of entering teaching from a prior career and what might be the implications for continuing professional development. Historically, teaching was a career for life, but now 'the safe career is a fantasy for us all' (Rogers, 2001, p.5) which has been somewhat reflected in these research findings with regard to the percentage of respondents who have had prior careers. Given the lack of identified research material, I chose this area as a topic for further development through the interview.

**Questions 9-14: Courses Being Undertaken and Certification**
The fact that there was such a number of respondents doing courses from which they would gain a teaching qualification was an important development as it is possible for further education teachers to not necessarily see themselves as professional educators, but rather as specialist practitioners who happen to teach in the further education sector. Such an approach, Robson (2001) argues, hinders the development of a shared professional identity
and culture. This has also been identified by The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee which in its Quality Assurance Policy re staff recruitment and development, has made a commitment to ‘support for new staff through the provision of an appropriate induction procedure’ (CDVEC, 2005, p.2).

That lack of formal certification has proven not to be a hindrance to so many respondents engaging in continuing professional development is not merely a phenomenon particular to the staff of Liberties College. Some courses might not be able to be positioned within the National Qualifications Framework as identified in the South Africa Department of Education Report (2005) which states that although the National Qualifications Framework is a comprehensive system, the attempt to ‘encompass all learning achievements in any contexts and for any purposes’ (p.8) was over ambitious and a lot of informal and non-formal learning may not necessarily be certifiable. Thus the intrinsic value of undertaking continuing professional development is not necessarily in the certification.

Questions 15-18: Motivators and Inhibitors to engaging in Professional Development Plan in own time and Question 19: Finance

The fact that personal development and interest were such highly scored motivators is a very positive factor. Grundy and Robinson, (2004, p. 154) are of the opinion that despite the importance of policies or systems ‘perhaps of prime importance is the driver of individual motivation – the personal driver’. Also, personal development can have wider benefits

An individual’s personal development may not be used immediately within an institution but often constitutes a resource which can be drawn upon in the future to the benefit of the wider education service.

(Davey, 2000, p.34)

This is reiterated by Cooper (2004) in the assertion that there is not necessarily immediate application from continuing professional development engaged in. Also, the criteria and motivation for some continuing professional development is, in some instances, informed
by institutional requirements. Boud (1998) contends that the more continuing professional development is embedded in the institution, it will become increasingly devolved and diverse. It is his opinion that professional development must be at the core in order to ensure creativity and energy in further education.

Keeping up with change as a key acknowledged motivator had particular resonance in view of the process of change the college was undergoing. Therefore, I included this theme in the interview schedule to ascertain what areas of change had been identified by the respondents.

There were several aspects to this question with regard to finances and funding of courses. Financial costs featured as a barrier to engaging in continuing professional development; at the same time a high number of respondents had totally self-financed courses undertaken. This for me raised the question as to whether there were no actual funds available at all, or whether those respondents who had totally self-financed courses did not know how to access potentially available funds, or had funds been refused. This highlighted a possible key where communication of information might be one way of assisting in maximising continuing professional development in the college. Then in response to question 22, as to what might assist respondents to develop and progress their own personal development plan, the issue of available funding occurred again. So I felt that it was important in the interview to try to ascertain whether financial issues were perceived or actual barriers.

**Questions 20 + 21**

I considered it to be of prime importance to develop the data ensuing from the responses to the correlation between shared time and private time spent on continuing professional development. My aim was to further pursue this issue in the interview to try to discover whether there was a link between these data and the barriers already discussed, and the response to question 29 about the ease with which one got released from class to attend in-service/professional development courses. In order to maximise professional development
opportunities it was essential to identify actual barriers and ascertain whether they could be either reduced or eliminated.

Questions 22-28; Future Planning

This series of questions dealt with what, where and by whom participants felt continuing professional development should be done. Accepting the premise that teachers in further education are central to the quality of education and training, then professional development of teachers has to be considered as a continuous process. Yet it is the contention of Dehmel (2006) that there is very little research in this area of education compared with secondary and tertiary education. He further asserts that given the growing, demanding tasks and challenges confronting teachers in further education, research within this field is particularly relevant. This research study is an attempt to rectify this dearth of research, at least in application to Liberties College.

Question 22 What: Classroom

The fact that the area of IT skills predominated the elective choices for so many respondents for continuing professional development concurs with the opinion that

*Computing ... provides teachers with an opportunity to either support and extend their traditional teaching methods, or alternatively, to question and change some of their existing practices and hence explore the opportunity for different pedagogies provided by the new technology.*

(Grundy et al, 1987 p.43)

However, the reasonably high number of respondents who did not complete this section gave rise to the inclusion of this fact as a topic in the interview schedule. Mindful of Bubb’s (2006) contention that often teachers are unable to identify professional development needs for the classroom, it was essential to identify whether this theory was applicable in this case study, and if so, was it in isolation or were there other factors involved.
What: Institution
Although again a high number of respondents did not complete this section, the responses of those who did, indicated that the areas and topics that would be beneficial within professional development provision in the college fell into three categories: management and leadership, planning – both strategic and tactical, and administration. The fact that the integration of staff also featured I considered a valuable topic for inclusion for further development through the interview as it impinges on the identified topics.

What: Own Personal Development Plan
The emphasis on career planning indicated the level of importance attributed to the need for a personal development plan. It was also reflected in the responses to question 15 dealing with strongest motivators to engage in professional development in one’s own time. Personal development for professional development purposes is identified by Waters (1998) as a key component of teacher development. As well as this, it also complies with Earley and Handscombe’s (2005) recommendations as elaborated in the discussion of interview topic 1.

Question 23-25: Where: Classroom – Institution – Own Personal Development Plan
The responses to this set of questions indicated that it was important to give serious consideration in future planning as to location for continuing professional development dependent on its purpose. These expressed viewpoints reflect the opinions and findings of Day (1997) and of John and Gravani (2005) as discussed in the review of literature (p.24).

Question 26-28: Who: Classroom – Institution – Own Personal Development Plan
Again, as with the responses to the previous questions, respondents’ preferences must be kept in mind and have an influence when deciding on the most appropriate facilitator for each particular aspect of continuing professional development. It would be prudent to be mindful of the advice of Edwards et al (2003, p.81) that ‘bringing in the right external consultants can have distinct advantages’.
Question 29: Likert Scale Responses to Ten Statements about Continuing Professional Development

The response to the question about the facility with which one can be released from the classroom was disappointing in the high number who disagreed that it was reasonably easy to be released. This was an area worth pursuing in the interview, because while slightly over half the respondents felt it was easy to get released for the pursuit of professional development, almost half do not have this positive experience or impression. This in itself could be a considerable barrier to staff pursuing continuing professional development which is not solely in personal time. When this is considered with the strong response to statement no. 5 re funding, and to the high response of those who identified financial costs of courses as a highly significant barrier to engaging in professional courses in their own time, I felt that the topic needed further development in the interview.

Interviews

Emanating from the findings of the questionnaires, there were various and many areas that were interesting and were worthy of further pursuit. However, for the purpose of the interview topics, I selected those areas which seemed to be most pertinent to the respondents and which were also apposite to the institution, which was in the process of major change. I decided to conduct five follow-up interviews and gave considerable thought to deciding on the criteria which would influence the profile of whoever I would ask to take part in this second phase of the research.

In order to try to aim for as relevant a cross-section as possible, I returned to the findings of the questionnaire and applied them in the selection process. As the focus of the questionnaire was holistic, looking at the five career stages, it was therefore important that the selection of interviewees should reflect each of these stages. Tied in with this were the age profiles of respondents. Other key considerations which emanated from the findings of the questionnaire and of which I was previously unaware, were the ratio of the respondents who were permanent whole-time, alongside the ratio who were employed under one or
other form of pro rata contract. When the result of the question regarding how easy it was to get released from teaching to attend continuing professional development courses, indicated the number of respondents who did not find it easy, I decided it was worth investigating whether there was a correlation between these two results: the contract status and the ease of release from class. As explained already, the college was in the middle of major change, approaching the end of provision of secondary education in the Liberties area. It was perhaps then not surprising that keeping up with change was identified as a strong motivation for engaging in professional development in one's own time. However, I wanted to get further clarification as to what 'keeping up with change' meant to people in each of the five career stages.

Another key finding that I felt was worthy of greater in-depth development, was the fact that the majority of respondents had another career prior to teaching. I was interested in what might be the impact or effect that previous careers might have on the current career and on the institution.

The general focus of this study was how to maximise continuing professional development in this college, so when respondents indicated that there was a general lack of information as to what courses and what funding was available, I felt that this was germane to what would be contained in the recommendations. At the same time, giving cognisance to the number of respondents who did not indicate any professional needs at all for working in the classroom, and as working in the classroom was the main basis of our work, no matter what other areas of responsibility we might have been engaged in, I needed to pursue whether this result was reflected in the detail given by interviewees.

Integration of staff was one of the areas mentioned in regard to professional development needs for working in the institution. Again, I felt that this was valuable to pursue because as well as the above characteristics of the numbers of permanent whole-time staff and pro rata contract staff, the student body fell into different categories also. Along with the
diminishing secondary sector, we had a large post-leaving certificate sector, adults returning to education sector and a fast-growing part-time Back to Education Initiative sector. Moreover, we had two buildings, five minutes walking distance apart, which make up the college. Many teachers work between both buildings, but some worked exclusively in one or other building.

Finally, additional to the above characteristics for the profile of prospective interviewees, I wanted to ensure that holders of posts of responsibility were represented as 50% of the respondents were Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals or Special Duties Teachers. As the distribution of the questionnaires was to forty females and twenty males, I decided to have three female and two male interviewees. So in summary, as well as representing the five career phases from commencing a teaching career to approaching retirement, I wanted my sample to include two males, three females, two holders of posts of responsibility, permanent whole time teachers, pro rata contract teachers, at least one person who worked in both buildings, at least one person who worked in one building exclusively, at least one person who had a previous career and at least one person who has had teaching as the sole career. On examining the staff list I identified five colleagues to whom the defined criteria applied and whom I approached with the request that they take part. I explained that the interviews would be recorded, would be based on the findings from the questionnaire and that I would be analysing the findings which emanated from the interviews for inclusion in my thesis. All five agreed without hesitation.

A time and location was arranged which suited each of the interviewees. Immediately prior to commencing the interview and in my presence, each interviewee read the letter explaining the conditions of the interview, and seeking their permission (Appendix D). A consent form (Appendix E) was then completed and signed by the interviewee and by myself.
Interviews topic 1: Dealing with Change

In the expressed opinions of interviewees as to what kind of changes were important as motivators for engaging in continuing professional development in one's own time, there was a direct reflection of the responses to what respondents strongly indicated they required in question 22 of the questionnaire; namely Information Technology. The expressed needs for development of information technology skills were driven by the course on which the interviewees were teaching. The speed of change in the areas of information technology as identified by the interviewees, necessitates prioritising upskilling as a continuous process. Such an approach is supported by Grundy et al (1987) as mentioned on page 81.

While information technology impacts on all areas of educational provision, its importance was focused on with regard to engaging in continuing professional development in that area. However, the point was also made that learners seeking support in developing the key skills for success at Level 5, seldom mention computers at all. Wells (2006) concurs with this observation for it is his assertion that in the case of children who struggle with Information Communication Technology (ICT), they do so because they have difficulty with the other basic skills. It is his contention that it is possible to master the ICT that is necessary for work and life in about twenty hours. However, it can take many hours for an adult to attain the required skills standard for the proficient use of language required for any specific level on the framework. The students' emphasis is to acquire the literacy skills necessary to ensure success at Level 5 on the qualifications framework and which will facilitate progression to Level 6. Many of the submissions for assessment, including the end of year assessments under examination conditions, are hand-written and not computer-generated.

Interviews topic 2: Professional Development Needs for Working in the Classroom

The suggestion from one of the interviewees that people help each other in an informal basis is corroborated by Keevy (2006), who states that continuing professional development for teachers often encompasses informal and non-formal learning. It is also acknowledged
by Bubb (2006) that to some extent, people learn from the job itself and from collaborative work with colleagues. Huberman (1989, 1993) also confirms that 'teachers have a general preference for informal discussions with colleagues.' Notwithstanding these stated benefits, it is important to have a professional learning culture with a range of planned continuing professional development opportunities which includes external expertise. The identification that sometimes people don’t recognise the fact that there are areas where they need professional development and that it is when people see what others are seeking, they then recognise the deficit in themselves. The idea that capability, competence and confidence may be suspected should continuing professional development be sought, is confirmed by Bubb (2003c) who states that effective needs assessment cannot always be derived from interviews and questionnaires as some people do not know what they need as it is often difficult for teachers to think about those areas of their own practice where they feel least knowledgeable, skilled and competent.

**Interview topic 3: Lack of Information as to Courses and Funding**

As a lack of information about both courses and funding had been expressed, I was interested in getting suggestions as to how this might be improved upon. The response that there is a proliferation of courses to choose from is not just an Irish phenomenon. In England, Bentley (2002/2003) asserts that a lot of mail received by educational institutions will be about the provision of courses. Much of it is unsolicited and is not necessarily appropriate to the continuing professional development needs of the institution. It was suggested that a database of relevant courses available could be compiled as a support for those who were not adept or did not have time to do the research required. It is Bentley’s opinion (2002/2003) that while some professional development co-ordinators collate all courses in a bulletin and give it to all staff, it is very time-consuming and may encourage demands for which there are not the resources within the institution to meet.
Interview topic 4: Barriers
The suggestion to check the validity of the perception from the statistics as to whether there was a correlation between the contract status of the respondents and their perceptions about the ease with which they can be released from class to attend continuing professional development courses, was valid. I did not pursue this path at this stage, but the data can be referred to at any time in the progression of the college professional development plan. The fact that all five interviewees considered contract status to have a bearing on these responses meant that it was worthy of further focus, bearing in mind the advice of Clark and Yinger (1997) that 'a lot depends on the culture of the college for opportunities and motivation for professional discourse'.

Interview topic 5: Status and whether there is a perceived difference between permanent wholetime teachers and those on contract as to what can be requested in terms of continuing professional development.
Given the high response to the previous question as to the facility with which people felt they could be released from class for professional development, and the fact that this current question revealed the number of respondents were employed on a contract basis, it seemed possible that there was a connection. Again the fact that all interviewees considered that anyone who was on a contract other than one with permanent whole-time status, was indeed at a disadvantage, indicates that it is an area that requires closer attention in the college continuing professional development plan. It was of interest to find out why they thought this was the case.

Topic of question 6: Career prior to teaching.
That the majority of respondents had a career prior to teaching and that this was considered by all interviewees as being positive in the enrichment it gave the college and the students, must have a bearing on any future college development plan. The concern expressed that people with prior careers should train to be teachers, is addressed to some extent by the CDVEC's (2005) commitment to giving support to new staff through the provision of an appropriate induction procedure. What might be worthy considering, is devising a means to
do an audit of skills acquired from prior experience, so that they can be used to best advantage. Earley (1995) states that the experience and expertise of staff is generally recognised to be an educational institution’s most important resource. A learning community is constantly evolving, making use of the skills and talents of its entire people to greatest benefit.

**Interview Topic 7: Integration of Staff**

As the current situation with regard to the integration of staff was acknowledged by all interviewees as being somewhat less than ideal, some definite attention will need to be focused on how to generate improvement in this area. The suggestions to fulfil this aim fell into two categories, organisational and social. The organisational sphere was very much connected around timetabling with regard to the number of classes any individual would have contact with and the system used for the allocation of class groups to either specific building. This matter would need careful consideration by the college management as part of the general college plan, rather than an ad hoc attempt being applied.

On the other hand it is much easier to instigate efforts at a social level which could be a key to further assisting the development of situations where staff members get opportunities to work together in a collegiate fashion. Although not mentioned by any of the interviewees, there used to be a social committee within the staff, which organised social occasions and the acknowledgement of key events in colleagues’ lives.

**Interview topic 8: Age Profiles**

‘Age makes no difference whatever as long as people are motivated. Motivation is far more important than any other factor (Rogers, 2000, p.15) had resounding echoes in the opinions expressed by the interviewees. It further underscores the importance of facilitating each staff member towards the development of a personal development plan

*Planning of personal professional development and organisational development need to go hand in hand. Records of planning should enable a balance of learning and development opportunities which at any given time might be focused predominantly on personal need (of the
teacher as a human being) and long-term professional need (of the teacher as a member of a learner community of professionals), as well as practitioner needs and the needs of a particular school.

(Day, 1999, p. 112)

The purpose of pursuing this research as a case study was to generate the most accurate information that would be of real and practical value in the assessment of what is required to optimise professional development opportunities for academic staff in Liberties College which is in the further education sector. The best people to consult were the academic staff themselves to seek their opinions as to what were their experiences of, and attitudes about continuing professional development. The approach was holistic, looking at what might be needed for the classroom, the institution and the self. There were many aspects of the findings that were worthy of selection for comment, or for further study. Those aspects selected, were considered to be the most useful for fulfilment of the aims of this research. This consultation engaged in, in tandem with the current literature and thinking on the topic has lead to the conclusions and recommendations of the following chapter.
Chapter 7
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions
The holistic approach to continuing professional development, both from the review of literature and the focus of the questionnaire and interviews, has broadened the researcher's awareness of the potential means by which professional development opportunities for the academic staff in Liberties College, a college in the further education sector, could possibly be maximised. It has been established from the literature that continuing professional development has to be seen as a collective responsibility and the prime responsibility for securing individual professional development of teachers is not the exclusive concern of the employer. Rather, teachers themselves must play a key role, as professional development is an aspect of personal development, and wherever possible the two should interact and complement each other. The data generated from this research which indicated the number of respondents who had engaged in self-funded, uncertified professional development in their own time, prompted the conclusion that to a great extent the academic staff in Liberties College espouse the above philosophy. A further important factor was that the key motivator for so many respondents was their own personal development.

The respondents indicated those continuing professional development topics and locations that had been organised by the college to enhance professional development and which for them had been positive experiences. Yet if continuing professional development is to be done professionally and holistically, each staff member should have an individual professional development plan. This of course depends to a certain extent on the policy of the institution and there should be careful planning to ensure effective professional development and training. It has been established that it is the policy of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee to be committed to the promotion of staff development on a local basis through, among other things, supporting appropriate staff development needs as finances allow.
A discrepancy of opinion existed about the availability of finances as well as about what type of professional development might be accessible and the entitlement to be absent from teaching responsibilities to engage in continuing professional development. All these were revealed to be areas that needed some clarification for staff members. This was especially important for those staff members who did not hold permanent whole-time contracts, as it was the opinion of all interviewees, that there was a culture that holders of any type of part-time contract did not feel as entitled as permanent whole-time contract holders to apply for either time or money as were permanent whole-time teachers. It seemed to me that it was possibly a matter of perception as opposed to fact, because at the same time there was also evidence that there was a culture prevailing in the college, that time and money were both approved on request. Nevertheless, if perception has a negative impact, attempts must be made to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding.

The question of promoting a coherent relationship between continuing professional development, performance management and school improvement has not been addressed in the Irish context. However, whole-school evaluation and fulfilling FETAC requirements with regard to Quality Assurance, are moving further education somewhat in this direction. To date, FETAC guidelines and procedures have been applied in Liberties College. Part of each annual programme plan includes a section for the identification of continuing professional development needs. The academic year report for each programme includes a section on the evaluation of continuing professional development engaged in by the academic staff working on the programme. The literature supports the value of this approach. At the same time, both the literature and the data from the interviews confirm that sometimes people find it difficult to think about those areas of their own practice where they feel least knowledgeable, skilled and competent. Sometimes, becoming aware of what continuing professional development courses other colleagues are doing, or have done, is assistance in the recognition of what might be valuable to engage in.
Applying to engage in continuing professional development is feared by some as admission of lack of competence, capability or confidence as has been shown from the literature and was also proposed in the interviews. The conditions that allow these fears to exist need to be examined and efforts made to improve awareness of continuing professional development as being an intrinsic and continuing aspect of the profession.

A very interesting result was the inclusion into the profession of such a high ratio of staff members who had another career prior to working in Liberties College. The general consensus from the interviews was that this was a valuable asset to the college, which should be maximised to the fullest extent. Again it seemed to come down to devising a system of identifying means of communicating this added value to the continuing progress of the college.

Finally, there was the subject of the integration of staff and the inherent limitations created by the fact that two buildings separated by distance make up the college. The interview responses very clearly designated two areas, organisational and social, that could be worked on to improve the situation and these suggestions seemed to be worthy of considering. Obviously there could not be any quick-fix solutions, but it was possible to put some suggestions in place that would help to improve the situation.

**Recommendations**

None of the following suggested recommendations can be put in place unilaterally. Some are within the remit of the staff development department; some have major implications for the time-tabling process. Either way, all recommendations are subject to the consultative process embedded in the management structure of the college. It is also helpful that just at this time, the plan for 2006-2010 is in an embryonic state which gives scope for the possibility of the inclusion or adaptation of some of the recommendations.
The first recommendation is to build on the experience of what has been identified by staff members, as being successful in the past with regard to the purpose topic, location and facilitation for continuing professional development. Improvements in communications could be afforded some thought and planning so as to reduce the decisions taken by staff members derived from perceptions, rather than from an informed position. Ultimately, as a long-term goal, I think the production of a handbook, dealing specifically with the topic of staff support and continuing professional development would remove a lot of the doubt, fears and mystification identified. As a communication tool, it should be made available to each member of the academic staff. I suggest a loose-leaf model of handbook so that changing information can be included in an ongoing basis to keep staff up to date. It also means that individual pages can be printed for inclusion, rather than producing a completely new edition. This method would be more cost-effective economically would ensure that staff are in possession of correct and valid information.

One section of the handbook could contain definitions and explanations of the following: the characteristics of each type of teaching contract, the category of continuing professional development that a holder of the specific contract can apply for, the method of applying for funding and the procedures in place for applying for leave from institutional responsibilities specific to Liberties College, to attend continuing professional development. As a short-term goal, I suggest more immediately producing a leaflet containing this key information, so that this whole area is demystified as soon as possible. Also, a formally presented input to staff which includes a question and answer session would guarantee that all staff members are made aware of the parameters of continuing professional development in an open and transparent manner.

While I am suggesting the production of a handbook detailing staff support and continuing professional development, I envisage it also being a means of providing some general information about course providers and relevant courses available. Such information cannot be definitive, but can serve as a starting point of enquiry, especially for those whose
preference is to have information made available to them. It could also include information about courses already taken in specific skills areas, by staff members. The value of this experience can then be utilised in teachers’ decision-making on future participation. Such an approach will also assist in tapping into the enrichment that people coming from prior careers bring to Liberties College.

However, in order to make this suggestion feasible and possible, there needs to be a database containing this information. This will provide an audit or inventory detailing the names of the staff and courses taken. Information on the courses taken will include the structure of the course, costs in time and finance, certified or not certified and any other key information the contributor might judge to be relevant. The proposal of a similar project a few years ago, met with the approval of the staff, so hopefully they will engage in it as willingly again. Its lack of implementation previously, was due to the key staff member working on it, leaving the college staff to further her career in another direction.

Another measure that could help the transmission of information is to make the reports of in-service engaged in, available to staff. It is a requirement for anyone engaging in professional development which has been financed by the CDVEC to submit a general report of the event to the principal. This is then filed and perhaps such reports could be made available to anyone contemplating engaging in a similar course. It could also be useful in the decision-making process to read about the experience of a colleague.

Hopefully, if these proposals can be realised there will be an increased awareness for all, which will go some way to improving the situation in relation to the integration of staff and bridging the gaps identified. Perhaps, this is the time to make a definite effort to resurrect the defunct social committee, so as to address the social areas that it is felt will improve matters.
There are some areas that will need consultation and decision-making as part of the development of the 2006-2010 plan, particularly around time-tabling of both people and space. Another topic for further and deeper thinking and consultation is the advice that individual professional development plans for every member of staff, is a basic requirement both for the individual and for the institution as a support for change management.

The final recommendation is that should all or any of these recommendations be accepted and approved for implementation, perhaps the development of Liberties College Plan 2006-2010 would be an appropriate time to consider increasing the number of personnel involved in the Staff Development department, utilising the skills required and which are acquired already by staff members. Of course, opportunities for continuing professional development are as important and necessary for these personnel as for any other section of the college which is continually striving towards excellence.

Perhaps a worthy reminder to end on is that:

*The experience and expertise of staff is generally recognised to be an educational institution's most important resource. A learning community is constantly evolving, making use of the skills and talents of its entire people to greatest benefit.*

(Earley, 1995, p. 27)
Dear Liberties College

Bull Alley Street

Dublin 8

January 2006

As you may know I am working towards an M.A. through the Dublin Institute of Technology Learning and Teaching Centre. I intend that my thesis will focus on how to maximise professional development opportunities for the teaching staff in Liberties College. In order to help build a profile of the staff’s continuing professional needs, it would be most helpful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire. I hope that the questions posed are appropriate to your needs. If not, there are opportunities for you to convey your requirements.

It will take approximately 30 minutes for completion of the questionnaire.

Be assured, I appreciate greatly your time and effort. Please leave your completed questionnaire in my letter slot in either Mark’s Alley or Bull Alley Street. It would be helpful if you were able to return it to me by Friday January 20th.

The questionnaire itself is strictly confidential and anonymous, your name will not appear on the questionnaire, the researcher will not be aware of your identity when analysing the data.

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation

Anne O’Donohue
Thesis Title

What is required to optimise professional development opportunities for academic staff in a specific college in the Further Education Sector?

Objectives of questionnaire

Audit of academic staff in relation to:
Age
Gender
Career path to date
Current professional development pursuits
Identification of professional development requirements/needs/interests for three areas: classroom, institution, self.
Identification of motivators/barriers experienced in the pursuit of involvement in professional development.
Identify teachers’ attitudes about the value of various forms of professional development.
Assess the types, levels, forms of professional development academic staff are interested in for the future.
Appendix B

Please Answer The Following Questions

1. Age: 21-30 □  31-40 □  41-50 □  51-60 □  61-70 □

2. Gender: Male □ Female □

3. Type of teacher employment contract? Tick only one box.

   Permanent Wholetime □

   Pro Rata Part Time (PRPTT) Eligible □

   Pro Rata Part Time (PRPTT) Non eligible □

4. Do you currently hold any of the following positions?
Tick more than one box, if appropriate

   Assistant Principal or more senior position □

   Special Duties Teacher □

   Class Tutor □

   Other □
5. Length of time teaching, including time in other schools, colleges out centres, prison service, community education?

- 1-5 years □
- 6-10 years □
- 11-15 years □
- 16-20 years □
- 20-24 years □
- 25-29 years □
- 30-34 years □
- 35-39 years □

6. Have you been in another career prior to teaching?

- Yes □
- No □

If your answer is ‘No’ please proceed to Question 9

7. If your answer is ‘Yes’ state in general terms the area/s of employment you engaged in e.g. childcare, retail, service industry .........

8. If your answer is ‘Yes’ to question 6, how many years did your previous career/s span?

9. Are you currently undertaking a course of study to gain a teaching qualification?

- Yes □
- No □
10. Are you currently undertaking a course of study which will lead to an additional professional qualification?
   Yes □    No □

11. If your answer is ‘Yes’ to either question 9 or question 10 are you studying for a

   - Primary Degree □
   - Postgraduate Certificate □
   - Postgraduate Diploma □
   - Ph.D, Ed.D □

   Any other category, please specify:

12. Since commencing teaching have you taken professional development course/s in your own time which did not have formal certification?
   Yes □    No □

13. If you answered ‘Yes’ to the last question, would you have preferred that the course/s had formal certification?
   Yes □    No □    Sometimes □

14. If you answered ‘No’ to question 12, did the lack of certification prevent you from taking a course?
   Yes □    No □    Sometimes □
15. What do you think are YOUR strongest motivators to engage in professional development in your own time?

*Please put in rank order 1-10 with 1 as the strongest motivator*

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<td>a.</td>
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<td>Change of career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Promotional prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>New curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Keeping up with change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Supporting teaching and learning in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Gaining a qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Meeting and networking with other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Any other areas not mentioned that you think are important, please specify and put in rank order.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
16. What do you think are YOUR strongest barriers/inhibitors to engage in professional development in your own time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Barriers</th>
<th>Tick ✓ if a barrier has been experienced</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Somewhat Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Financial cost of course</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Family commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Time commitments for attendance at classes / study / research</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Distance/time spent travelling to/from course</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Cost/difficulty around childcare/babysitting</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Difficulty with transport</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Inconvenient course times/days</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Inconvenient location of course</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Course content not meeting your Requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Assessment techniques not your preferred method</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. If you have undertaken professional development course/s in your own time, in your teaching career, Tick ✓ the option/s which best describe what motivated you to do the course/s?

If you have not undertaken a professional development course/s in your own time, please proceed to question 19

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>You engaged in the course for a specific reason with clear objectives such as obtaining a qualification, completing a task/project, or solving an immediate problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>You took the course because you enjoy the social engagement that learning offers, as well as enjoying the course content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>You enjoy learning for its own sake and you attended the course out of interest in the subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. If you have undertaken professional development course/s in your own time, was the decision to do so spontaneous or part of your own professional development plan or for some other reason?

Please Tick ✓ the option/s appropriate to you

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Part of your own professional plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Other. Please specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
19. If you have undertaken professional development course/s in your own time, have the course/s been?

*Insert the appropriate number in each box that is applicable to you*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Totally self-financed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Partly self-financed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Totally financed from another source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. No course fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Have you undertaken professional development course/s that were partly in your own time and partly in work time?

Yes  No

21. If you answered ‘yes’ to the last question, what percentage of the course attendance was in work time?

% of course attendance in own time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Course 1</th>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Where relevant please indicate workshop or short course areas / topics to be organised within professional development provision in your college, that you feel you currently need or would benefit from in relation to the areas listed below.

*Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS.*

Working in the classroom.

*Prioritise a maximum of three*

1

2

3
Working in your educational institution.

Prioritise a maximum of three

1

2

3

Development and Progression of your own personal development plan.

Prioritise a maximum of three

1

2

3

23. Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to the classroom.

Please indicate your preference of location

Circle only one on each line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house – your place of employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An alternative educational institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Teacher Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Particular Preference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, Please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to working in your educational institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate your preferences of location</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 In-house, your place of employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 An alternative educational institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Education/Teacher Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No Particular Preference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Other, please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to your own personal development plan.

Please indicate your preferences of location

*Circle only one on each line*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 In-house, your place of employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 An alternative educational institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Education /Teacher Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No Particular Preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Other, please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your work in the classroom.

Please indicate your preferences

*Circle only one on each line*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Colleague/s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Outsider with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your work in the educational institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate your preferences</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Colleague/s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Outsider with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your own personal development plan.

Please indicate your preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle only one on each line</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Colleague/s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Outsider with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses leading to professional qualifications are more valuable than uncertified courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in continuing professional development activities improves teaching and learning in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend inservice/professional development courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation by teachers in professional development courses should be on a voluntary basis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/Paid leave should be available to teachers who wish to undertake professional development courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking promotion is one of the main reasons why teachers undertake professional development courses that lead to qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who engages in continuing professional development enhances his/her chances of promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engaging in professional development activities helps to satisfy various personal needs that teachers have in relation to their work.

An increase in salary motivates teachers to undertake Post-graduate Degrees.

Changes to curriculum or the development of new courses are strong motivators for teachers to engage in professional development.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Your support is valuable and appreciated.

Anne.
### Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Age</th>
<th>Male 21-30</th>
<th>Male 31-40</th>
<th>Male 41-50</th>
<th>Male 51-60</th>
<th>Male 61-70</th>
<th>Female 21-30</th>
<th>Female 31-40</th>
<th>Female 41-50</th>
<th>Female 51-60</th>
<th>Female 61-70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male 21-30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 31-40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 41-50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 51-60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 61-70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 21-30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 31-40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 41-50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 51-60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 61-70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Wholtime</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Rata Part Time (PRPTT) Eligible</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Rata Part Time (PRPTT) Non Eligible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Do you currently hold any of the following positions?</th>
<th>Assistant Principal or more senior position</th>
<th>Special Duties Teacher/Class Tutor</th>
<th>Special Duties Teacher</th>
<th>Class Tutor</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal or more senior position</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Duties Teacher/Class Tutor</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Duties Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Tutor</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Length of time(years) teaching including time in other schools, colleges, out centres, prison service, community education</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>35-39</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Have you been in another career prior to teaching?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. If answer is 'Yes' state in general terms area/s of employment you engaged in e.g.</th>
<th>Childcare</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Service Industry</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. If answer is 'Yes' to question 6, how many years did your previous career/s span?</th>
<th>Total Years for 32 people</th>
<th>240 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Are you currently undertaking a course of study to gain a teaching qualification</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Are you currently undertaking a course of study which will lead to an additional prof. qualification</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. If your answer is 'Yes' are you studying for a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Degree (MA)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.Ed.D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other category:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT Trainer of Trainers in High/Scope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Certificate Diploma in Adult Literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralegal course in New Discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Society Entrance Exams</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Since commencing teaching have you taken professional development courses in your own time which did not have formal training:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. If you answered 'Yes' to the last question, would you prefer that the course/s had formal certification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. If you answered 'No' to question 11, did the lack of certification prevent you from taking a course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. What do you think are YOUR strongest motivators to engage in professional development in your own time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank 1-10. 1 being the strongest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Personal Development and Interests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. 8. 10. 3. 3. 0. 1. 1. 1. 0. 2. 0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b. Change of Career</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 1. 3. 5. 5. 3. 2. 8. 3. 2. 0. 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. Promotional prospects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 3. 6. 2. 1. 5. 8. 8. 8. 1. 0. 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d. New Curriculum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. 2. 4. 5. 11. 6. 5. 5. 4. 2. 1. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e. Keeping up with change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 8. 6. 9. 5. 4. 2. 0. 1. 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>f. Supporting teaching and learning in the classroom</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 9. 6. 7. 5. 5. 2. 3. 2. 2. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>g. Gaining a qualification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 6. 3. 2. 6. 6. 7. 7. 7. 2. 0. 1. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>h. Meeting and networking with other teachers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. 1. 1. 7. 7. 3. 12. 7. 6. 0. 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>i. Enjoyment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Ticked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 6. 6. 3. 4. 11. 4. 4. 3. 0. 1. 0. 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>j. Any other areas not mentioned that you think are important, please specify and put in rank order</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unranked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Networking with relevant agencies and professionals
- Legislative developments in my area.
- Broadening horizons, experiencing other areas/domains of knowledge e.g. spirituality / counselling
- Computer skills relevant to all areas
- Personal Expression
- To get a permanent post
- Returning to previous career
- Learning new skills to (e) above, but more proactive, e.g. facilitation skills rating
- Earning potential
- Having a range of subjects to offer
- Keeping your job in the same school
- Creativity
16. **What do you think are YOUR strongest barriers/inhibitors to engage in professional development in your own time?**

Tick if a barriers exists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Degree of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Financial cost of course</td>
<td>12 6 5 3 2 12 12 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Family commitments</td>
<td>6 5 6 6 11 3 5 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Time commitments or attendance at classes/study/research</td>
<td>14 7 11 7 2 2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Distance/time spent travelling to/from course</td>
<td>6 2 6 2 11 11 11 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cost/difficulty around childcare/babysitting</td>
<td>10 19 10 19 10 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Difficulty with transport</td>
<td>6 29 6 29 6 29 6 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inconvenient course times/days</td>
<td>2 1 4 2 12 26 12 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Inconvenient location of course</td>
<td>5 5 5 3 8 5 17 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Course content not meeting your requirements</td>
<td>2 3 5 5 7 23 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Assessment techniques not your preferred method</td>
<td>5 2 4 9 6 4 18 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have undertaken professional development course/s in your own time, in your teaching career, Tick the option which best describes what motivated you to do the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A/B/C</th>
<th>A/C</th>
<th>B/C</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a. You engaged in the course for a specific reason with clear objectives such as obtaining a qualification, completing a task/project, or solving an immediate problem.
- b. You took the course because you enjoy the social engagement that learning offers, as well as enjoying the course content.
- c. You enjoy learning for its own sake and you attended the course out of interest in the subject.

If you have undertaken professional development course/s in your own time, was the decision to do so spontaneous or part of your own professional development plan or for some other reason?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A/B/C</th>
<th>A/C</th>
<th>B/C</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a. Spontaneous
- b. Part of your own professional plan
- c. Other. Please specify (see comments below)

Comments re: C
- Timing of course was fixed, it fit some of my own time.
- Helped facilitate some release from school that I was willing to do in own time.
- Update Skills.
- Not planned, but in response to perceived need (e.g. school development planning) i.e. not spontaneous.
- 1. seemed to be required by job (AV). 2. Conned, then bloodymindedness.
- Personal challenge.
- I attended a counselling course as part of personal development and acquired a new skill with student counselling.
- I was asked to engage in community development.
- Necessary to keep up with changing technology
- Solving a problem
- Request by college to staff new course
- Always alert to pick up on a course that "fits"

Comments re: B
- Financial in case of Med.

Comments re: A
- Local History
If you have undertaken professional development courses in your own time, have the courses been?

- a. Totally self-financed
- b. Partly self-financed
- c. Totally financed from another source
- d. No course fee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you undertaken professional development course/s that were partly in your own time and partly in work time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered ‘yes’ to the last question, what percentage of the course attendance was in own time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>% of course in your own time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>95% (5 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 2</td>
<td>60% (2 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 3</td>
<td>97% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>90% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 2</td>
<td>50% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 3</td>
<td>75% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>80% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 2</td>
<td>15% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 3</td>
<td>20% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>50% (4 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>28% (1 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>10% (2 people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where relevant please indicate workshop or short course areas/topics to be organized within professional development provision in your college, that you feel you currently need or would benefit from in relation to the areas listed below?

**Working in the classroom / Prioritize a maximum of three**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short course areas/topics 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT skills x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White board skills x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update in subject/module area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adult learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning &amp; structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course on use of technology (overhead projector etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating classroom management skills, appropriate to times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of team work/group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education needs-How to cater for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior school discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer editing-Adobe Audition&gt;Digital Hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How adults learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students with dyslexia &amp; other learning disabilities in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical support in CISCO networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ability teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology-like interactive White Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skill reviewed and improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshers course on lathe techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on educational needs of PLC students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Psychology - Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Short course areas/topics 2**

<p>| Interactive white board. Computer edition- PRO Tools |
| Developing creativity |
| Use of Audio Visual Aids |
| Teaching methodology-update |
| Dealing with students with learning difficulties |
| Use of role play for classroom relationships |
| New and &quot;cutting edge&quot; teaching methods |
| Anti-bias equality workshop |
| Technology in the classroom |
| Student motivation especially Junior school |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short course areas / topics 2 cont.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New ways of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation-self evaluation &amp; evaluating course given - course on how to write up evaluation forms and conduct evaluation interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service courses in CISCO networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.N.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of creative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on drop out level of PLC's. Not to be given by 'expert' but expertise of staff to be shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update on learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course areas / topics 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using computers in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More facilitation (Group work skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good student/teacher communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information technology current updating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various teaching approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with &quot;disadvantaged&quot; kids-new teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT software for the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio producers course-RTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality &amp; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT usefulness / or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not listed =14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A=1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Working in your educational institution / Prioritize a maximum of three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short course areas / topics 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development within CDVEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Professional Development and enhancing management capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of registers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamworking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working effectively as part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills Additional Computer Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology-computer / internet etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating training techniques for different sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course areas / topics 1 cont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti bullying strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial related / career guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses related to overseeing a department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combining outdoor/out of house education with In-house learning / teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All courses explained and revealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to integrate staff together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on current educational questions, philosophy - training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further computer courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic - Course/College planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course areas / topics 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing project and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New techniques-educational use (presentation, administration, communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic/Tactical Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying in school strategies especially for VTOS students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun / Social interaction with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to do requisitions (not just beginners, but with a view to improving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to be a more efficient organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education - meeting educational needs as well as market needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership without power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course areas / topics 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Work Experience / Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Procedures / Computer Applications for Heads of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New developments in FETAC internal verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff morale related workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDVEC revealed-opportunities and structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Red Tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Listed = 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Progression of your own personal development plan. Prioritize a maximum of three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course areas / topics 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self reflection (like digital hub every few years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of classroom equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A framework-how to create and maintain a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsc guidance counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further computer training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management skills x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill development - technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping up to date with subjects and areas I teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian spirituality in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible to have one in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education Mas, Meds, Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters - Communication or Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with 'Non National' students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An opportunity to use and develop work completed in MA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal career review and plan (1 to 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information on what &quot;out there&quot; i.e. workshops, courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driving licence for bus</td>
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<td>Computer courses</td>
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<td>Coaching in making the Personal Development Plan</td>
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<td>Peer-mentoring programmes</td>
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<td>Short course areas / topics 2</td>
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<td>Group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing modules (FE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for courses to be available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing the guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More familiarity with curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with interview preparation for Assistant Principalship etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings and organizational skills (related to tutor role)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A look at further educational opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What courses would benefit the college-are they relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space to work in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing a mentor</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Short course areas / topics 3**

- Course planning
- Teaching research skills
- College assistance - back up
- Flower arranging
- Advice on assessment and grading procedures
- Stress management
- Planning for retirement/alternative career
- Personal finances
- Personal Development self - audit

**Not Listed =21**

---

23 Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to the classroom

Indicate your preference of location - *Circle only one on each line*

### 1 In-house - your place of employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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### 2 Alternative educational institution

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### 3 Education Centre

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### 4 No Particular Preference

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<td>9</td>
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</table>

### 5 Other, please specify

- Variety of location can improve interest
- Hotel / Conference Centre -Never
- Would suggest CDU
- Digital Hub. Production Company
- Online
- Centres used in the past, like DIT, Aungier St. have worked very well. Good location & services
- If our own equipment/resources will suffice - the in-house.
- Sometimes a complete change of scenery is appropriate i.e. a country hotel
- Education / Teacher Centre - food atrocious
24 Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to working in your educational institution

Please indicate your preference of location - Circle only one on each line

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<th>1 In-house, your place of employment</th>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

5 Other, please specify
- Always = Professional Trainer provider
- Always = Hotel Conference centre
- Outdoor Education
- Nice warm hotel

25 Please indicate which location you prefer for professional development related to your own personal development plan

Please indicate your preference of location - Circle only one on each line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 In-house, your place of employment</th>
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<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
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</table>

5 Other, please specify
- Some online work possibly
- For some kinds of work - a different kind of environment, conducive to relaxation, reflection.
- Always = a more holistic than above
- Always = Home
- Quaker House, Rathfarnham. Milltown Institute
- Not an ED institution. A comfortable bright location
- One to one off site
- Space in school
- Total change of location facilitation
## Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your work in the classroom

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<th>Occasionally</th>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>2 Outsider with experience in education</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
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## Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your work in the educational institution

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<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>3 Outsider, not necessarily with experience in education</td>
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<td>15</td>
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## Please indicate the type of facilitator you prefer for professional development related to your own personal development plan

<table>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>SA (Strongly agree)</td>
<td>A (Agree)</td>
<td>D (Disagree)</td>
<td>SD (Strongly disagree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Courses leading to professional qualifications are more valuable than uncertified courses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Engagement in continuing professional development activities improves teaching and learning in the classroom</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 It is reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend in-service/professional development courses</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Participation by teachers in professional development courses should be on a voluntary basis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Funding/Paid leave should be available to teachers who wish to undertake professional development courses</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Seeking promotion is one of the main reasons why teachers undertake professional development courses that lead to qualifications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 A person who engages in continuing professional development enhances his/her chances of promotion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Satisfy various personal needs that teachers have in relation to their work</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 An increase in salary motivates teachers to undertake Postgraduate Degrees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Seek professional development as strong motivators for teachers to engage in professional development</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Liberties College
Bull Alley Street
Dublin 8

April 28 2006

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking an M.A. in the Dublin Institute of Technology. As part of this I am carrying out a research project on Continuing Professional Development in Liberties College and I wish to do some interviews as a follow-up to the questionnaire which I issued in January. Some of the questions have revealed interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome of some of them which I feel will be extremely valuable in informing the research project.

I am seeking your permission to use and analyse the transcript of the interview. I can assure you that all information will be treated confidentially and that anonymity is guaranteed. I would be grateful if you agree to participate in this research activity associated with this project.

I attach a statement of informed consent which I would ask you to sign and return to me.

Thank you,

Anne O’Donohue
Appendix E

Title of Project: Continuing Professional Development in Liberties College

Name of Researcher: Anne O'Donohue

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the letter dated April 28 2006 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

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

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymous in the analysis.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant ______________________ Date ______________________ Signature ______________________

Researcher ______________________ Date ______________________ Signature ______________________

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant
Appendix F
Interview Questions

Thank you very much xxxxx for agreeing to do this interview. Some of the questions in the questionnaire have revealed interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome of some of them.

Keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. What kind of changes is most important in this respect?

29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom. Do you have any views on why that might be so?

A lack of information as to what courses are available 'out there' and about funding to do courses has been expressed. How might this situation be improved?

One result which I would like your opinion about is that while 53% of people said that they found it reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, it means that 47% do not find it easy. What would you identify as possible barriers that might be experienced either by yourself or from you have heard from others?

You are probably aware that the old general category of part-time teacher has been changed and that now all part-timers have a contract, either part-time eligible or part-time non-eligible. Eligibility is dependent on having the required qualifications. Almost a third of the staff is employed under a contract basis. Do you think that there is a difference for people on contract, compared to permanent whole-time teachers as to what they think they can request in terms of continuing professional development? (b) What might be the nature of the difference?
When I qualified as a teacher, it was considered to be a career for life, as indeed were most jobs at the time. On our staff however, 67% have had another career prior to being employed in Liberties College. What are the benefits of such experience?

When it came to the professional development needs for working in the institution, the topic of integration of staff was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved, or even just improved upon?

We all like to think that we are still young, but 29% of us are over 50 years of age and 71% of us are over 40. What can we do in terms of continuing professional development in view of different career stages?

Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview. I appreciate your instant agreement to my request and it will help to develop the findings from the questionnaire.
Appendix G

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1

R = Researcher. I = Interviewee  
Capitalised words = stress put on the word by interviewee.

R: Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to do this interview or it is a huge help to me when people are so willing. Now, I issued this questionnaire back in January and some of the questions in the questionnaire have revealed interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome of some of them.

I: Okay

R: So I won’t be dealing with all of the questions, just some of the things that came to the forefront.

I: Okay.

R: In question 15, if you want to take a look at it there as to the wording of the question.

I: Okay

R: Keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. What kind of changes is most important in this respect, from your own opinion?

I: Em... okay, well I think there’s changes in methods of teaching. I think there’s changes in .... am... the type of student and the change they are going to be faced with, so that you’re not stuck as you were ten, fifteen, twenty years ago with certain students and
really keeping up with the curriculum as well, because new courses are coming about and because Irish society is changing so much. Like... ah... new employment prospects are becoming available, like health care, care of the elderly, that sort of thing. Ah... people are more wanting to keep up with the changes that are happening in society. Because there has been a lot of changes, more so in the last ten years.

R: In your own personal work in the college are there changes that have implications?

I: Well I think the junior school closing down has made everyone more aware that things can change. I think for a lot of people the job for life scenario and I think with the junior school closing down, people who were here twenty years, who thought they would retire here, are now being forced to change and to diversify in the different courses. Me personally, I never thought I was going to last longer than the six months so I'm willing to change and bounce along with whatever I have to do. I think I would find it harder if I was teaching the one subject for say ten years, and then I was asked to change. But because for the last five years, almost every year has been a total different change for me, I don't find change too hard.

R: Good, thank you very much. Now, question 22, if you look at that. Now 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom.

I: Oh.

R: Do you have any views as to why that might be so?

I: ... God! I'm surprised at that to be honest. I would have thought teaching in the classroom was quite crucial. That's the main bulk of our job, kind of thing and it's our line of contact with the students, so I would have thought that kind of area would have been very important to keep up to date in and keep developing and be open and flexible to
new ways. Maybe ... maybe people kind of feel that they’ve been in the classroom for years and what kind of things can really change. Maybe the subject will change or the courses are changing, maybe they might think they don’t have to change teaching methods that I wouldn’t be one hundred per cent in agreement with.

R: Okay, thank you very much. And again question 22.

I: Okay:

R: A lack of information as to what courses are available out there and about funding to do courses has been expressed.

I; Yeah

R: People seem to have a lack of knowledge or a lack of background knowledge. How might this situation be improved?

I: Em ... well like making information, the information meetings are very helpful and not necessarily specific. Like am... it doesn’t have to be necessarily you are teaching on a course so come along to a certain meeting. But then it doesn’t have to be too vague either. Like I found that we had a little bit like ‘There’s training out there so just let us know what course you are interested in teaching,’ Whereas, maybe it should work the other way: these are the courses which are available and this course can lead you to teaching on certain courses. More like you would do to a Leaving Cert student or someone who’s leaving a Post Leaving Cert course here, kind of offer the information more like that. Maybe offer not like a guidance counsellor, but someone who could lay out all the courses. Say what courses are available and then where they can lead you. Maybe that would be helpful.
R: Okay, thank you very much. Question 29. One result that I would like your opinion about is that while 53% of people said that they found it reasonable easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, that means that 47% do not find it easy.

I: Okay

R: So how do you experience barriers? Or what would you say are possible barriers that might be experienced either yourself or from what you have heard from others?

I: I think it is relatively easy to be okayed with the leave by certain members of the management. But communication from management to other teachers is where you get let down. So what happens is, other teachers, or other members of staff don’t know that you are not going to be there and students don’t know you are not going to be there. The management does but they have not passed that knowledge on and then chaos can ensue.

R: Okay, thank you.

I: Is that all right?

R: Yes, yes. Thank you very much. Now, question 3, we are way back to the beginning. It’s on the first page there.

I: Oh, thank you.

R: Right, question 3. You are probably aware that the old category of part-time teacher has been changed.

I: Yes.
R: And that all part-timers have a contract, either part-time eligible or part-time non-eligible. And you know eligibility is dependent on having

I: Qualifications

R: the required qualifications.

I: Yes

R: The return of the total questionnaire that I got back was 80%.

I: Okay

R: Okay. And 31% of those people who returned the questionnaire are employed under a contract. Do you think that there is a difference for people on contract, compared to permanent whole-time teachers as to what they think they can request in terms of continuing professional development?

I: I'm very ignorant in this area to be quite honest. It was only asking recently how you actually qualify for a contract. I thought it had something to do with the hours.

R: Not that end of things, but to get release to go; what you can ask for to be covered.

I: I think I would assume that if you are a permanent wholetime teacher you would have more advantages and you would be allowed access to courses. I feel that's what people would think, that's what I would think.

R: Okay so you think that as a contract person.
I: Yeah.

R: As a contract person you are not as free to ...

I: I feel you wouldn't be as ... am... entitled to go on as many courses for example.

R: Okay.

I: That's what I would feel personally.

R: Yes, thank you. Now, question 6. When I qualified as a teacher it was considered to be a career for life, the very thing you mentioned.

I: Yes

R: As indeed were most jobs at the time

I: Yes, definitely.

R: On our staff however, 67% have had another career prior to being a teacher in Liberties College.

I: Okay.

R: What are the benefits of such experience?

I: Okay, me personally, I think the benefits are that ... okay, this might sound strange. I think the teaching profession, as stressful as it is and as much hard work as it is, quite a
rewarding profession. Some people who wouldn't have other professions, wouldn't be aware always of the advantages and the joy that comes with teaching. If you've had another job or another career you can compare the two and kind of realise how lucky you are to have the job that you have with teaching. That's what I think anyway.

R: Question 22 again which obviously has aroused a lot of specific responses. When it came to the professional development needs for working in the institution, the topic of integration of staff was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved or even just improved upon?

I: I think perhaps more social events, not necessarily drinking, or not necessarily going out to a restaurant but maybe, am not necessarily just staff meetings, maybe social occasions where we all go out and do, like, not rock climbing, but those kinds of social activities, where you get to see members of staff on a different level, a totally different level. Like I'm sure the people who went skiing, they saw each other on a totally different way to every day here in the staffroom. Every day at lunch break everyone is getting ready for class and bustling in and out; you don't really know what is going on in other teachers' lives unless you make the effort to sit down with them. There's not enough time to get to know ... to REALLY get to know other members of staff. And I think if we did have more social occasions, there'd be more of an understanding and possibly a better atmosphere ... with some members of staff, especially to do with the two separate buildings. More so.

R: Yes. Now, question 1. We all like to think we are young, but 29% of us are over fifty years of age

I: Wow!

R: And 71% of the staff are over forty.
I: Wow!

R: What can we do in terms of continuing professional development in view of the different career stages?

I: .... God, I don’t know. That’s a tough one! ... Am ... Well I don’t know if age should come in to it too much, to be honest. I think, I think experience should be respected and honoured ... and should be taken into consideration, but not necessarily the belief that you can’t teach an old dog new tricks and that younger members of staff would automatically be up-to-date with the new and hip ideas for example. I don’t think there should be any discrimination. I think that’s very good actually, to be quite honest. That’s a good thing

R: Which is very good?

I: That … That the majority of staff are over forty and over fifty. Because their experience, whether it’s … it’s outdated or not is still a valuable asset to a college. And it makes any new members of staff come along and feel … well, for me definitely, secure that there was a safety net of experience there, rather than you and twenty other new teachers all under thirty at the time.

R: Okay. Thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview.

I: Thank you, thank you Anne.

R: And I do appreciate your instant response to my request and how willingly you took part in it.
I: No problem at all, no problem.

Interview 2

R= Researcher  I = Interviewee

Capitalised words = stress put on word by interviewee

R: I’ll give you the questionnaire, if you need to look up any of the questions as I refer to them.
I: Can I just say I'd prefer not to. *Laughter*

R: That's fine. First of all thank you very much for agreeing to do this. I appreciate it. It makes a huge difference to my research and to the quality of what I can put in at the end of it all. Some of the questions from the whole questionnaire have revealed quite interesting details, and what I am looking for and would appreciate is your opinion on the outcome of some of them, some of the results. Now, question 15, keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. What kind of changes is most important in this respect?

I: There's the change first of all in the technology that's available out there, the way that technology is delivered, the access to the technology, the ability of us to be able to use the technology so that we can actually access the information that's out there, to disseminate the information that's out there, because that is important to all of us. There's the ... ah ... there's the delivery part BECAUSE new technology is involved there's our methods of delivery. Chalk's a thing of the past. I was down in the store room there and there's chalk boxes with dust on them, like you know. And our whole delivery has changed. Like you know if you look at the new boards that have been brought in, the interactive boards and all, all of these things are a new phenomenon and we need to be able to learn them as soon as possible; that means people have been putting off learning how to use them, how to be involved with them, how to source materials, how to download stuff from the internet, to burn cd's to use on these things. So people need to be involved in that all of the time. So that's one area. The other area is the constant growth in, say I'm a practical teacher, say I'm teaching on the interior design course, the whole range of materials that change at a constant pace, that's being marketed out there, I have to be able to know what's available out there. There's the legislation which is constantly changing, that has to be ... I have to keep myself abreast of that because you've got national legislation, European legislation. There's the ...am... the new ah... you know the computer being
used for drawings and my ability to be able to read the drawings. And then the other thing
is, what has changed as well, say in my area is there was a time when I would only have
accepted the drawings on paper, now I have to accept them on cd. So I have to think of a
new way of marking is another thing as well. So that’s just some of the areas like you
know. Is that okay?

R: Yes, absolutely. In question 22 in the questionnaire, 29% of people did not indicate any
professional needs for working in the classroom. Do you have any views on why this
might be so?

I: Unless people are working in an area in which NO change has taken place over the last
ten to fifteen years, they are extremely lucky teachers. And I don’t believe that there’s
ANY. There’s constant new findings. I mean if you look at the books on education, in
the way we should be teaching, the whole format. All the areas in the school that I know
of, there has been change. I mean, there’s NOTHING that hasn’t, even in terms of the
module descriptors that have been presented to teachers from say FETAC, you know, I
mean, they are constantly changing, people expect the reading lists that go with these
modules are constantly changing. You would HAVE to be involved in some sort of
professional development IF you want to deliver a quality course, there’s absolutely no
way you could hide your head in the sand and not be ... ah ... you really couldn’t. I
honestly don’t believe that ANY teacher could go into the classroom and NOT say that
well there’s something new out there. There’s all the time something new.

R: Okay, thank you. Now following on that kind of is, a lack of information as to what
courses are available ‘out there’ and about funding to do courses has been expressed.
How might this situation be improved?

I: I have a difficulty with that. If I’m going down Aungier Street, there’s a bus stop there
with a list of courses. In the Autumn I’m being bamboozled with books, night classes in
Dublin city. Again on the local radio stations, on television there’s night courses, what night courses are available. Every institution is out there to sell a course or qualification to teach, or someone who wants to buy their course or qualification. That’s out there, that’s available. There’s also information, you know, the Open University. There’s absolutely no problem in finding out what’s out there. All of the information is out there if people want it, like you know. If you know exactly what you want, I mean, I’m in Superquinn the other day, I get my till receipt and on the back of it there’s an advertisement for DIT and a list of courses, so I don’t have to go very far to be told that the information is there. Everything is out there for people, it’s just a question of finding out. The other thing of funding … there’s never been a problem with funding. In this school if you sincerely want to do a course, Michael King (The Principal, my explanation) will go out of his way to facilitate people getting funding for whatever course that it is … that’s relevant now, that they want to do. I mean as for information, I mean it’s just … I mean you come September, early October, you are going to be bamboozled. I mean, RTE, 98 fm, you name it, you know, that’s the way it’s gone. So there’s no excuse for saying that people don’t know, because you are just closing your eyes to the fact that it is out there.

R: Thank you. One result that I would like your opinion about is that while 53% of people said they found it reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, that means that 47% do not find it easy. What would you identify as possible barriers that might be experienced either by yourself or that you have heard expressed by others?

I: I think in SOME cases it’s that people put up barriers to themselves, they are very conscientious, they don’t feel they can go and leave a class, especially if there’s not going to be adequate provision provided if that person is away on a course, because it means picking up the pieces later. And unless the school can give a commitment to say “Right, we will put a competent person in to teach a part of the module while you are away and
when you come back it’s continuation, it’s a seamless situation from then on.” I’d say in some cases, people are being conscientious about that. In terms of people coming and asking for time off whenever I can, people are facilitated with this. I mean, I’ve never come across a case ... well, have I? ... maybe I have come across a case, but generally, there probably has been cases where it just wasn’t practical to facilitate people, but by and large the school would go out of their way to facilitate people who want to go on a course. But again I’d say, people are just being overly conscientious about missing the class.

R: Thank you. You are probably aware that the old category of part-time teacher is gone and now there are contracts and there is part-time eligible and part-time non-eligible and eligibility depends on qualifications for the categorisation. Now, the return on the questionnaire that I issued was 80% and 31% of that are employed under a contract basis. Do you think that there is a difference for people on contract compared to permanent whole-time teachers as to what they think they can request in terms of continuing professional development and what do you think might be the nature of the difference?

I: I think people on contract are ALWAYS going to feel that they are on the edge. I don’t feel that anybody who is on contract ever feels that they have the same rights and entitlements as any other permanent member of the staff and I think, you know that’s in the nature of anybody on contract, that they never feel, you know, that they feel they are part of the full body of the school. So I’d say that’s part of the problem there. The other thing is that ... em ... if you are on contract, are you going to lose pay, are you going to lose hours? People are trying to work out mathematically, they have to live, if they do this course or do something else, is it going to mean they are down on wages. Whereas, as a full-time teacher you are going to get paid while you are doing the course, you know, whereas if you are on contract, is it going in some way to affect your remuneration. And then you know, because you are on contract ... there’s certain timidity about the whole thing. Do you want to go and ask the people in charge, can you go on a course, is it going
to affect the way you are treated next year, like you know. So you know the way people will think, like you know. So I definitely do think that if you are on contract there is going to be that, you know. Now in some cases it’s probably unnecessary, you know, but I do think that that’s there and that’s the nature of people being on contract and it’s always going to be like that.

R: When I qualified as a teacher, it was considered to be a carer for life

I: Mm Mm

R: as indeed were most jobs at the time. On our staff however 67% have had another career prior to teaching and being employed in Liberties College, what do you think are the benefits of such experience?

I: Well I also have had the benefit of another career. I think it opens your eyes to the world and what is going on out there. I think in terms of being able to mix with people, to get on with people, to see another side of life before you actually go in to teaching, because I think teaching itself it’s … it’s all the time perceived as a very lonely occupation. You’re in the classroom, you’re there on your own. Whereas if you’re out in industry, you’re out in commerce, you’re part of a team, you’re mixing with people all the time, whereas with teaching, that doesn’t happen, you know to a great extent, unless you are involved with team teaching or something like that. So I’d think being out in the wide world, seeing things from a different perspective, mixing with people … ah … and I think all teachers should at some time in their career, break their career and go back in to industry or commerce, or try to do SOMETHING you know to get back in to see what’s happening out there and then be able to bring that experience back in. But I think anybody, and I look at the people, you know, who have had previous experience, they tend in terms of, in relationship to people who have just come out of college, the people who have been in other positions, prior to being teachers, tend to be better survivors and tend I think to be
better teachers and better communicators, because they have had to. You know, through the school of hard knocks, being thrown in there, you know, they’re in a company, they have to make money, they have to make themselves available and useful, whereas in teaching it’s a completely different situation, you know. And then as well as with teaching, nobody can prepare you for any particular class. Whereas in an office in commerce and trade, you can be trained to do a particular job, whereas if you go into your class and you’ve got twenty five or twenty six students, nobody prepares you for what’s going on, nobody can prepare you, like you know. So I think that’s a big difference there.

R: Thank you. When it came to the professional development needs for working in the institution, the topic of integration of staff was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved, or even just improved upon?

I: The integration of staff?

R: The integration of staff.

I: From the various disciplines within the college?

R: The integration of staff from whatever perspective you see it yourself.

I: ... Em... I wouldn’t have thought there was any great DISINTEGRATION of staff. I think as a staff we work extremely well together. I think by and large there are people with different roles within the college and you know, they work in different departments and they tend to be totally caught up in those departments, to the extent that they don’t see, you know, a wider picture within the college. And I think that’s acceptable as well, But for other people who want to get, you know, get total integration, I think you can do it on a social level; you can do it on many levels, but ...em... and there has to be the will there for people to be involved as well, at all levels of this. How do you see it happening?
I see it panning out, I mean, first of all information as to what’s available on the different courses. Now, that information is readily available in, you know, it was presented to us again this week. It’s not a big secret. So if people want to know about anything, it’s like the people that there’s no courses out there that’s suitable, whereas, there’s a multiplicity of courses out there ... So it’s the same thing, if people want to be involved, I mean, there’s nothing stopping anybody from being involved. I mean, we are not that sort of a school; we are not that sort of an institution. People are always encouraged, like you know and I don’t know of any case where people, you know, unless people feel that way and you know, it’s probably the same individuals all the time, who tend to feel like this, that in some way, they are cornered or excluded from certain things, whereas, you know, if you WANT to be included in anything, people I feel are always ... ah ... welcoming, like you know. I don’t think there’s any area in the college where you would say, ‘Right, you can’t be involved in this.’ Now, there may be areas where, say, the professional bodies have laid down where the teachers have to have specific qualifications, and that’s understandable. It’s not that it becomes exclusive. If you want to become involved in that area, you CAN go and get the qualification. Qualifications are available in Portobello or wherever, so it’s not a thing... So, I would say that, you know, there’s nobody ... nobody ... being stopped from being involved in anything else.

R: And do the two buildings make a difference to integration?

I: They - make - a - huge - difference - to integration. Am ... and I mean you can see in the Bull Alley building there is a greater sense of homeliness about the place. Now, maybe it’s a comfort zone, because I’ve been here this last ... maybe I’ve been here too long. There’s a comfort about it, sense of propriety about it. Yeah, it does make a difference, because if you are in one building or the other and you are not mixing with the other people, or you only see them for the odd staff meeting, maybe twice, three times a year, you don’t really know the people, like you know, I mean they are just passengers on a bus with you, like you know. Whereas that tends to be a problem and it is ALWAYS
going to be a problem, you know. It’s not a problem, it’s just that we have to acknowledge it for what it is, that it’s a fact of life, and that’s the way people are always going to be.

R: Is there any way that you think we might improve upon it?

I: Improve? ... I think as a school, as an institution, that we have gone, we have tried EVERYTHING to make a premises, you know to create an institution that’s inclusive, where there’s a great sense of collegiality. I think it works. I think ... am ... we are not doing anything to inhibit it. Whatever we are doing, we are doing to encourage it and I honestly don’t believe we could be doing any more. Now that’s my honest opinion of the thing. That’s it.

R: Okay. We all like to think that we are still young,

I: Mn, Mn

R: But 29% of us are over 50.

I: Mn Mn

R: and 71% of us are over 40.

I: Mn Mn.

R: What can we do in terms of continuing professional development in view of different career stages?
I: ... Ah... first of all, don’t mention the age. Right! Laughter As Dame Edna Everedge always says, “Pick an age and stick to it” That was her advice to all women. Laughter So ... ahhm... I just think, you know, when you are working with young people, there’s a sense that you are ALWAYS going to be young. Like you know, that has a huge effect on people, people’s perception, because it is the nature of your work, you know you are hearing the language, you are mixing with the people, that has a huge effect on you. And I think there is you know a ... a ... it’s not a bad thing actually, it’s a good thing, I mean to have that, the experience. You know like in some organisations where they have got the immediate past president, the president, the in-coming president that you’ve got that continuity that’s built up, like you know. And all institutions need that continuity, so I think that, I mean, you know, it’s a wealth, it’s a treasure that you have. And I think trying to make a ... trying to ... you know people reach certain stages, like the seven stages of man, that’s all part of life. You know, you acknowledge it, you know, but don’t try to change it or do anything different with it, like you know. And people go through different stages, the emotional stage, the physical stage and all that and that’s all part of the enjoyment like you know. So doing anything ... no, just enjoy it, you know.

R: Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to do the interview. I do appreciate it and it is a huge help.

I: I hope it’s a help. Laughter.

Interview 3

R = Researcher  I = Interviewee

Capitalised words = stress put on word by interviewee
R: Thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview. Some of the questions in the questionnaire have revealed interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome some of them. Okay. Now, question 15.

I: Right, I see it.

R: Keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. What kind of changes is most important in this respect?

I: What kind of changes?

R: Yes.

I: Well changes in the nature of the school, I mean, the school has ALWAYS been at the forefront of curriculum development, even when we only had second level. And then when it went to further education, we just had to keep going and meet the needs of a changing school. Is that what you mean?

R: From your own experience or from what you have heard other people talking about, is there anything else in the element of change that might pertain as to why that rose so highly in the responses?

I: ... Sorry, say that again.

R: In your own experience

I: Yeah
R: Or from what is happening around or from what you are hearing other people say, are there any particular elements of change that would be pertaining to this particularly high response?

I: Mn ... I just see it as the nature of the school, the fact that people are willing to change and be innovative and resourceful.

R: Okay ... and the fact that ... you had mentioned secondary school, when we were only secondary school, now we are not going to have secondary school, might that have been be a reason why change, adjusting to change was recorded by so many people?

I: But I mean, the changeover from secondary level to further ed. or to PLC, I mean is going on twenty years. Yeah, it is going on twenty years, so I mean people have been making the change for twenty years, I think.

R: Okay, that’s fine, thank you. Now question 22.

I: Yeah.

R: 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom. Do you have any views on why that might be so?

I: .................

R: So 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom.

I: Am ... I think ... I think it’s not high on the agenda. It’s something that’s never mentioned at a staff meeting, how we do things. I think people help each other in that
area. But I also think that because we have so many SINGLE areas, we have so many single strands that there aren’t four people with the same needs. You know, there are so many people working on one third year class, one Leaving Cert geography class, you know all that changes, so there aren’t enough people, I think, to come together to say “We need this” because there are so many single things happening. But I also think ... it’s something I said to YOU... that when I went to Birmingham about fifteen years ago, it was very exciting to be part of a group that were discussing ‘How are we going to do this in the classroom?’ And that was the most exciting part of it, and it was something that didn’t happen in school.

R: What was happening in Birmingham? Why were you in Birmingham? You weren’t there teaching.

I: No. It was a course organised about presenting development studies to students and how best it could be done. And it was with Trocaire, and the CDU, (Curriculum Development Unit, my explanation) and a group in Birmingham and a group in Belfast. Teachers of different areas coming together, and I suppose that made it exciting.

R: Okay, thank you. and question 22 again. A lack of information as to what courses are ‘out there’ and about funding to do courses has been expressed. How might this situation be improved?

I: ........

R: So, a lack of information as to what courses are available ‘out there’ and about funding to do courses.

I: And is this about ‘in the classroom’?
R: This is in general.

I: This is in general. I think if people are involved in their subject that they will find things that are relevant out there. There are things out there if you have time to lift your head above your work and find them, there ARE things out there. Am ... and I suppose the more coming together of people, to share their needs, you know the more coming together of people saying ‘We need this’ the more could be identified.

R: Okay. Do you think there would be a greater sharing of the research to find out what is available?

I: I think there IS and there’s a couple of people if you talk to them, they have done research and they know what’s relevant. I mean, I have asked somebody in the last week to pinpoint literature on whether you concentrate on a wide area or whether you build on stuff and there is somebody in the staff who can supply me with that information. But I mean I don’t know how widely available that is.

R: When you say you have asked someone do you mean a colleague?

I: Yes, a colleague. There are people with the information, you know.

R: Among our colleagues?

I: Absolutely among our colleagues. So I think that sharing our needs and sharing expertise, or people with a certain amount of expertise could direct us to the next place.

R: That’s the courses end of things, what about the funding end?

I: Like who’ll pay for it?
R: Where people say that there’s a lack of information about funding to do courses.

I: Am ... Well I mean nobody ... A lack of information ... I actually don’t know that much about funding for courses, except you fill in the form and if the principal signs it to say you can do it, that’s it. But I mean, there are very few things I have been refused. There might have been things I didn’t ask for, but I haven’t been refused any professional development that I’ve applied for, as far as I can think.

R: Okay, thank you. Now, question 29.

I: Right

R: One result that I would like your opinion about is that while 53% of people said that they found it reasonable easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, that means that 47% do not find it easy. What would you identify as possible barriers that might be experienced either by yourself or from what you have heard from others?

I: To be honest I think ... I think the school year is very short and we can’t ALWAYS be asking to leave the classroom. In anything I would choose, I would choose the least disruption to the classroom activity. So in fact I would say that 90% ... 95% of my professional development has taken place outside the teaching timetable. ... Let me just go back to the question again. Is it easy to get released?

R: Yes
I: I think it depends on how people go around it. I think, in principle, there is a commitment to releasing us to do professional development. But often when it comes down to the details it’s not possible at the time, you know.

R: And what might make it not possible?

I: ..... 

R: You know when you say it comes down to the details you say ‘it’s not possible’, what might make it not possible to get released? Have you experience of anything that has made it not possible for you or that you have heard anybody else say ‘I wasn’t able to do it because ...’?

I: I’ve heard ... I mean I can’t be specific, but I certainly heard disgruntlement around the timetable ... around not being able to do something because the timetable didn’t allow it. I mean there has been certain bits of disgruntlement. I actually can’t think of anywhere where I’VE been disgruntled about not being released. I mean, there are difficulties around the timetable in general, not just around professional development.

R: Okay. You are probably aware that the old general category of part-time teacher has now been changed.

I: Yes.

R: And all part-timers have a contract, either part-time eligible or part-time non-eligible and eligibility is dependent on having the required qualifications. The return of my questionnaire was 80% of what I had handed out and 31% of the people who returned it are employed under a contract basis. Do you think that there’s a difference for people on contract compared to permanent whole-time teachers as to what they think they can
request in terms of continuing professional development and what might be the nature of the difference?

I: I've no idea .... am... let me think ... I'm only recently becoming aware of this new contract and I suppose the first thing I would have asked people was... not your question ... do they pay a pension and, you know, more information on their financial status than on their professional development. ... Am... it wouldn't ... actually. Sorry Anne, I'm trying to think round this. ... Am...

R: It's more...

I: No no, hold on. I'll think about one person in particular.

R: Yes.

I: I'll think about a couple of people.

R: Yes.

I: I wouldn't hesitate in saying to somebody on a part-time, have you heard about such and such, you know. And often I suppose, I would have in my head, you MIGHT get paid to do this, or it would be worthwhile, even if you had to pay yourself, check it out. And certainly, in my experience, there's one person on that kind of contract doing a very interesting course and I do believe that it is being paid for and I don't think she hesitated about asking for funding.

R: So, in general do you think part-time contract people would, or would not be hesitant about asking for funding.
I: Well, you see if you come in very unqualified, how much can you ask the school to pay to qualify you, you know. So I think the school has an obligation not to be taking on unqualified people. ... Am ... I mean, I don't know what the policy is on taking in unqualified people and then trying to pay to qualify them up to the mark. I don't know if there is a policy on that. But in general, if somebody is there and they are meeting the needs, and they need another course and they ARE qualified, I think there would be goodwill towards them and their professional development.

R: Okay, thank you. Now, when I qualified as a teacher, it was considered to be a career for life, as indeed were most jobs at the time. On our staff however, 67% of people have had another career prior to being employed in Liberties College. What are the benefits of such experience?

I: The benefits of experience? Of bringing...

R: Of having a prior career to teaching.

I: Oh yes, I just think you are bringing other skills into the school. You’re ... well you’re just bringing more to the job. I mean, people I can think of, especially with the changing needs of the school, they have more to offer. They also have more contacts outside the school, if they are people who have been in training situations and they are very good at supplying work preparation or work experience for people. They are just bringing another dimension to their teaching. But I do think it is important that people train to be teachers at the same time.

R: Thank you. This is question 22 again; a lot came up in question 22. When it came to professional development needs or working in the institution, the topic of integration of staff was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved, or even just improved upon?
I: How do you mean to integrate the staff?

R: Well, I will leave that to your interpretation. That is what came up when people were free to make suggestions as opposed to responding to one of the items I might have put in a selection, 'integration of staff' was a topic that came up.

I: Where's that question? Question 22?

R: Professional development needs for working in the institution.

I: Okay.

R: What I am looking for really is to get a little bit of development as to what is meant by 'integration of staff' from your perception.

I: Well I can certainly think that ... I mean, I certainly work on courses where there is absolutely no integration of staff or subjects. And I think it is to the detriment of the students. There are other courses where there are continuous meetings and I'm not sure if the course works better, but when you look at the group teachers meeting, you imagine this must be good for the students. I mean, I think it's all a matter of time and putting time in to sit down with seven teachers to plan a month's work, or to plan three weeks' work for the class, but I suppose if you taught in seven areas that would mean seven meetings every three weeks, so I can see that that's difficult. It's easier for people to sit down where they teach a smaller number of classes and they can plan it. But one of the difficulties I see is being spread over a wide area and making it harder to make a case, which I think should be made and which would benefit the students, where you sit down every three weeks and you say 'This is what I'm doing for the three weeks, how can I integrate with you and how can you integrate with me?' It certainly doesn't happen. One
of the courses I teach on, there is a meeting in September and there’s a meeting in June, there’s nothing in between for teachers and I think that is to the detriment of the student. It’s the students who are suffering.

R: One thing I wanted to ask you, was the fact that we have two buildings that make up the college, does that make a difference to integration and if it does what can we do to improve upon it?

I: Well it makes a huge difference because if I had known you were going to ask me that question I would have calculated the number of hours of teaching that the students lost and the number of free hours that I lost for myself in one year. If you multiply that, you know that’s a lot of time, personal time and class contact time. That wasn’t the question though?

R: The question was based around integration of staff.

I: Well I suppose the running over and back is taking time out of your life anyway and taking teaching time. So a priority then is not integrating with other teachers. It does militate against it, of course it does.

R: In view of the difficulties around feeling integrated, or getting staff integration because of the travelling over and back, is there anything that can be done to help to improve integration? Would you have any ideas?

I: Even coming together to talk about our classes to try to meet the needs of the students would be useful. To talk about how best to meet the needs of the students would be a start. We would have to integrate if we did that. I don’t think we are doing that. How best to integrate the two staffs? People have to want to be integrated as well. You can’t really push people .... Let me think... The atmosphere in both buildings is a bit different.
People in one building have much more autonomy than in the other building so I’m not sure they would want to be brought in to line with the strictures of the bell. It’s very interesting – one school has a bell so we work to time and the other school doesn’t. So how to integrate? I think having the staff meetings over in the other building, the second building, DOES help. I think that helps. I think all the sitting around at those days, the staff development days, certainly the workshops on staff development, I think they help. But I think when the second level is gone there might be more moving backwards and forwards. I suppose if things weren’t as fixed, if it was deemed that well some people might have to move backwards and forwards, and if it was taken that that was part of our contract and that a class could be in one building one year and in another building another year. The other thing I think is that ... I mean I’ve had this thought during the year, why is it always the teachers who are running backwards and forwards? You know, I think there’s a case to be made sometimes for the class moving instead of the teacher always moving. I don’t know whether that’s answering the question or not.

R: Yes it is.

I: I thought move the class instead of the teacher.

R: How would that help integration?

I: How would it help integration? Well, it would mean that maybe teachers have to move a bit as well. You know, move the class as well as moving teachers.

R: At the moment some teachers do move, do work between both buildings.

I: Laughter Sure I know, I told you how many hours I’ve spent running!
R: Is it your suggestion that maybe in future years teachers who at present are based in one building only would have a timetable that necessitated that they also move.

I: It’s hard to build a timetable around insisting that teachers move. But maybe if there was more fluidity round where classes are fixed, you know. That it’s not written in stone that this certain class is in one building for ever and ever and that the other class is in the other building for ever and ever. So if there was a bit more movement between classes and teachers from one building to another … and the other thing is that maybe … I mean I’ve had this idea and I’ve spoken to one or two people about it. There’s a few people I didn’t invite in this year and I should have and maybe working with others …

R: What do you mean by ‘invite in’?

I: Guest lecturers, but they would actually cross the border from my subject into two or three other subjects. I thought of working with a couple of teachers and having people like that in and gathering the classes together more. Apart from teacher integration, there’s very little student integration. I know that’s another subject altogether, but the more fixed we are in our own little worlds, the less the students get to mix, therefore the less experience of further education they have.

R: Thank you. We all like to think we are still young,

I: No we don’t! Laughter.

R: 29% of us are over fifty years of age and 71% of us are over 40. What can we do in terms of continuing professional development in view of the different stages?

I: What can we do about continuing … ?
R: Professional development in view of the different career stages. There’s people coming in at the start of their career. You have people building it up, building up their reputation, maybe going for promotion. You’ve people reaching their peak and then you’ve people going towards retirement.

I: Well it never occurred to me that there was any difference between a thirty year old and a sixty year old in what they were trying to do in the school. I suppose you have to think that maybe there are some people maybe in their thirties who are maybe ... very eager for promotion. And I’m not sure maybe they’ve to go about things very differently. If I think about it, I think we are all doing the same job and whether you are thirty or sixty you need professional development to keep going. I wouldn’t see it as ... you know I don’t see it as being any different really.

R: Okay. Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview. I appreciate your instant agreement to my request and it will help to develop the findings of the questionnaire.

Interview 4

R = Researcher  I = Interviewee
Capitalised words = stress put on word by interviewee

R: Thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview with me. Some of the questions in the questionnaire have revealed quite interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome of some of them. And you have the questionnaire there if you
wish to or need to go back to refer to a question. Now I am going to start with question 15. Keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in continuing professional development in their own time, what kind of changes is most important in this respect? I’m talking about from your own experience or from what you have heard around.

I: Just read the question again, will you Anne?

R: I will indeed. Keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. This is one that was indicated very highly.

I: Mm.

R: What kind of changes would you think is most important in this respect? What I am looking for is a little bit of development on what people might mean by change.

I: Okay. Well I suppose the one thing that would strike me about the … the…area that has changed most, I suppose is IT. That would be my kind of initial response to that. Em, there have been HUGE changes in terms of technology. EVERYTHING now is the machine. And it’s the area that I think that an awful lot of people, myself included would have a lot of difficulty with. Because when you’ve spent, you know, all those years, working with pen and paper, and when it’s your business, it’s very, very difficult, to make the kind of, the, the leap, because not only do you have no grounding in it, you also have the barriers of pressing a button and annihilating, you know, not only your own computer, but the whole system. You still have to get over that. And also, also in your everyday work you are encouraging others to take up pen and paper and the people coming to you, that’s what they are looking for. They are looking for “How do I improve my skills in writing and reading?” and they very, very seldom will mention computers for
example. Also the demands when you are at work, the demands are to be able to use IT. So that would be one of the areas, you know, where there is huge change, and the only way is to get stuck in and join it and get on with it and learn the basics of it. And I suppose you know, upskilling, it’s necessary all the time to keep up, keep on top of things, especially in the present era of lifelong learning and all of that. You CAN’T get left behind.

R: Okay, thank you. And are there any other areas of change within your life in the college, this is quite an holistic approach, that would impinge on why so many people have scored that so highly?

I: Change. Within the college structure?

R: Within the college structure.

I: Yeah, okay, it’s very noticeable in the last, I suppose, ten years anyway, the amount of change in terms of the college becoming very clearly, a further education centre. And... am ... thankfully in the last few years, not only is it aspirational, but you can actually see it beginning to take shape. And for me it’s brilliant, because, it’s making a huge difference to me. Now, the teething problems I could do without, but they are mostly everybody else’s teething problems because I suppose I would feel it’s kind of ‘old hat’. An awful lot of the way everybody else is beginning to operate now, I would say is, they are doing ‘catch up’ you know. Am ... but ... a ... it will take a while. The changes are necessary and it will be to the benefit of the student which is what it is all about at the end of the day.

R: In what sense is it brilliant for you?
I: Ah ... because other people are becoming aware of the need to look at the whole person. I’m not saying that there weren’t individuals doing it all the time, but as an INSTITUTION we are starting to do it. And really it’s only in the last couple of years that people are beginning to internalise what that means. ‘Holistic’ has been around for a long time, but it’s a word. ‘Inclusive’ has been around for a long time, and it’s a word, but I think people are beginning to understand what exactly that means. Not just individuals, but as a learning centre we’re beginning to understand what that means and you know that needs to start to happen within the classroom setting and it’s only now that it is being taken on from the top right down or the bottom up, or whatever way you want to look at it, that that’s possibly going to happen now.

R: Okay, thank you. Now, question 22, which is quite a long question. 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom.

I: 29% did not.

R: Did not indicate any professional development needs, in other words they left it blank.

I: Mm Mm.

R: Do you have any views as to why that might be so?

I: Because teachers are, naturally, very arrogant people and feel they actually don’t need to develop professionally because they have done their training and they are good teachers.

Phone rings. Sorry. Answers phone.

R: Okay the question was why do you think 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom.
I: Yes, it doesn’t surprise me. As a matter of fact it is probably low compared, you know, if I was to think about it I would probably say nearer 50%. So that’s, that’s refreshing and interesting that there is only 29. But I do feel that a lot of the time teachers do feel they’ve done their training, they’ve done their degree, they’ve done their college and they’ve done whatever they’ve done and that’s it, then they get on with it. And... a... and I suppose that says more about the actual training. I’m not sure now what the training is like, but talking to young people going to St. Pat’s at the moment, and talking to people who are planning on going into teaching young people you kind of despair sometimes that they would ever stand in front of either children or adults to teach them at any level. But, but, I do think there is an arrogance, I find an arrogance among teachers that they know EXACTLY how to do it and that that you know, like I say, they have done their training and now it’s up to the students. If there’s any sort of difficulties at all in the classroom well it’s the students. You know, ‘They are not up to scratch,’ ‘How did they get past interview? They shouldn’t be here at all.’ That’s kind of the approach rather than what’s it about my way, or what is it about my (Door opens)

R: Okay?

I: What was I saying?

R: You had said about ‘How did they pass the interview? How did they...

I: Yes that’s right, Rather than looking at what am I doing? What could I do? And what could I do differently? And even individuals will come to me and ask what can I do in particular situations, but... am...

R: Individual teachers?
I: Individual teachers, yeah. But I always feel I am preaching to the converted, you know. There are lots of teachers who have never, ever asked me anything. And I would have a lot of their students coming in here. So, you know, that's the reason, I suppose. You would imagine in any profession that there would be 100%, I would feel that at any stage of working life, that an individual would see a need for professional development, lifelong.

R: Thank you. Now, a lack of information as to what courses are available 'out there' has been expressed, and about funding to do courses. How might this situation be improved?

I: Mm ... a lack of information about courses and funding. Advertising courses and making information freely available out there, it's a difficulty that's right across the board. And not just you know in this college ... ah ... and I'm, I'm really not sure, to be honest what the answer is. Em ... people are inclined to ignore paper, I know that much. ...Am... and even when it comes in a glossy booklet, it can still be ignored unless people are focused themselves. Unless someone is looking for information, it's very, very difficult to get to people, 'the hard-to-reach', if you like, because they will always remain 'the hard-to-reach'. And making programmes and making courses attractive, I suppose, that's the question ... really, rather than making it common knowledge. The knowledge is out there. There's phone numbers, there are notices, and there are brochures ... am ... but where, where do they go? An awful lot are printed, but a lot stay behind the desk in places as well. An awful lot of them do. And ... a ... where do you bring them? A glossy brochure in the local labour exchange can be off-putting.

R: I think this was where teachers were saying that for them to access continuing professional development...

I: Ah!
R: That there's

I: Yes.

R: There's not enough information out there, there's a lack of information...

I: Okay, okay.

R: As to what there is out there that they can avail of in terms of continuing professional development. Also that they don't have enough information as to the funding available.

I: Ah, okay, okay. Am ... well, I could only say for myself, I have absolutely no problem accessing and funding, when I went to investigate. So I really can't comment on that I really can't say if I was to do something else right now, I feel I would know exactly where to start looking and where to find out about funding, if there was funding available. So I'm not sure where the teachers are looking.

R: Okay, that's fine, thank you. Now, one result I would like your opinion about, which is that while 53% of people said they found it reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, that means that 47% of people do not find it easy. What would you identify as possible barriers that might be experienced, either by yourself, or what you have heard from others?

I: Well I'd say getting released to do courses is a total nightmare. And I don't have to go through the usual kind of, mainstream way of getting released, but I DO know that, when I have to attend, and if it is during my working day, I have to get cover. And because of MY situation, not only have I get cover, a physical presence, but I also have to make sure that that person is looked after financially. So I LOSE money in order to go and study
and for me that has been a real sort of, that has been a real problem and a difficulty.
Now, that’s my own situation and there really isn’t anything that anybody wants to do
about that, because I have brought it up and nobody really wants to know.

R: What do you mean by your situation?

I: My situation being a part-time person, not on a full-time salary and not being full-time
in any particular place. Nobody owns me in that sense, you know. I am not … the Town
Hall is my employer and the Town Hall doesn’t want to know about me.

R: And by ‘The Town Hall’ you mean Head Office?

I: Head Office, yes. And they don’t want to know about me at all. The quieter and the
more silent I am the better as far as Ballsbridge, CDVEC Head Office is concerned. I do
sense from mainstream teachers that they have difficulty as well, getting released.

R: And do you have a sense what that difficulty is?

I: Again, my sense would be that there is a lack of will, really, would be one thing. As far
as management, I suppose would be concerned. And the other thing, maybe that’s a little
bit of the arrogance, ‘Sure, you don’t need it’ business, maybe. ‘Sure you’re doing the job
grand’. And the other thing is that it’s so inconvenient. It is VERY inconvenient when a
teacher needs to go away, because of having to get cover and I’m not sure how the
finances work there, but I’m sure money comes in to it as well. It’s certainly not
convenient for the running of the institution if somebody looks to be absent for a few
days, or a few weeks.

R: Okay, thank you. Now, question 3, you are probably well aware that the old category of
part-time teacher has been changed.
I: Yes.

R: And now part-timers have a contract, either part-time eligible or part-time non-eligible and eligibility is dependent on having the required qualification

I: Mm Mm.

R: The return on the questionnaire that I issued was 80% and 31% of those who returned the questionnaire to me are employed under a contract basis. Do you think there is a difference for people on contract compared to permanent whole-time teachers as to what they think they can request in terms of continuing professional development? And what might be the nature of the difference if you think there is one?

I: Ah, yes of course there is. Full-time teachers are a lot harder to get rid of than somebody on a contract, I would imagine. Somebody on a contract, an annual or a three-year, when the contract is up, if they have been missing doing professional development for most of that time, well, you know, there is a very great likelihood that their contract in that particular place is not going to be renewed. Am ... a permanent teacher ... am ... would have much easier access, because their position is not going to be coming up for review in that sense and it would be kind of logical to me that if a full-time teacher decided to go off and pursue another course, well apart from saying ‘No, you cannot’ if they are released, well then, they could in fact, have one course of professional development running in to another, and there would be very little really that anyone could do about that. Whereas, somebody on contract, there is a lot can be done.

R: Thank you. Now, when I qualified as a teacher, it was considered to be a career for life, as indeed were most jobs at the time. On our staff however, 67% of people have had
another career prior to teaching in Liberties College. What are the benefits of such experience?

I: Ah... am ... the benefits I suppose are that people come in with ...am ...a range of experience, in terms of, well, life experience and if the they have had other positions, or other jobs, or other careers, they are going to bring that with them and that is hugely beneficial I feel, to teachers who are dealing with adults because there is a certain empathy ... and a ... just insight, that teachers who come straight from college really have to learn, or would have less, ... be less comfortable with. And that would be the main, the, main advantage of having been out there and having had different .... different jobs. Am ... it’s like any profession, if you’re cushioned, or cocooned within the learning environment, well then, it’s more likely you are going to see things, very much in a more rigid fashion, than if you’ve had to look at life and work, sort of from a few angles. Students benefit, I think, from it.

R: Thank you. Again, question 22. When it came to the professional development needs for working in the institution, the topic of integration of staff was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved or even just improved upon?

I: Can I just clarify ....

R: You can indeed.

I: What you mean there, Anne, by integration of staff... integrated?

R: It was mentioned in terms of working in the institution and what I am looking for is how would you interpret ‘integration of staff”, you know that whole idea, how would you develop that whole idea of integration of staff from your perspective, or from what you have heard?
I: Okay. Into the learning institution of Liberties College?

R: It came up in the area of what continuing professional development needs would be needed for working in the institution as opposed to for the self or for the classroom.

I: Okay, right, okay.

R: So the topic of integration of staff came up. That was in the suggestions.

I: Okay. I'm still not sure now whether I'm sort of clear on it.

R: Well it's whatever you interpret it as, whatever it means to you.

I: Yeah, yeah. The integration of staff within the institution, well I suppose that would be from the day somebody walks in to Liberties College as a new teacher, how they’re integrated into the existing body, I suppose. It sounds to me to be more of a kind of a professional, stroke social, kind of a thing. Ah ... from my own sort of experience, I suppose, I found being integrated into Liberties was one of the easiest places, for me anyway to integrate into. Right from management, right down, I found that it was a very, sort of, it was a very welcoming environment. And I was in it a good while really before I realised there were all sorts of little sort of subs here and there, and all sorts of little political little thingies going on all over the place. But I have to say, that in general, they don't really impinge at all compared to other institutions that I would work in and would be in almost as long as I am in Liberties and have never really integrated, because there would be a huge kind of hierarchical structure and system within the institution that would make sure that it really wouldn’t happen. So in that sense there is very kind of holistic feel in Liberties.
R: Might the fact that we are working between two buildings have an influence on that topic coming up as important? Knock on door.

I: Of course the fact that I went off now and said what I said, shows that when I think Liberties College. I'm thinking Liberties College, well one half of Liberties College, really. Laughs. Am ... yeah I would work out of, I suppose out of both buildings, but recently I have worked more out of Mark's Alley than I would out of Bull Alley. But when somebody says to me 'Liberties College' I still think Bull Alley. I still think of it as my base, even though I get very little time in it at the minute. Am ... and within Mark's Alley, there is quite a good atmosphere. I suppose this year, because I am based here more often, I feel much more integrated into this. But ... there are two halves here, definitely. You can integrate into both halves, but you'll integrate into them separately. And that is, I suppose, you know that is ... ah ... a pity. Like I say there's definitely two halves and the fact there are two buildings has to be a huge factor in it. But sometimes I wonder even if we were all in one building, is there more at play than just the actual physical fact that there are two buildings. I think ...ah ... I think there may be more than that. But it'll be interesting to see now when everybody is kind of dealing with ... ah ...maybe F.E. maybe that could be something that will change. It would definitely be worth a big effort and a big push to get it to change.

R: Have you any ideas on anything that could be done to help to make that change?

I: Well, no not really. I mean the social end of it, I've seen efforts and I've seen failures, huge ones. Am ... I'm not sure, maybe if Mohammed won't come to the mountain, then maybe Mohammed is going to have to just ... or the mountain is going to have to do a bit of shifting maybe.

R: Okay. We'll have to define which is the mountain and which is Mohammed. Laughter
I: *Laughing* That would make it too easy for you!

R: We all like to think we are still young, but 29% of us are over fifty, and 71% of us are over forty, what can we do in terms of continuing professional development in view of the different stages?

I: Aw ... am .... well, I suppose the only thing that can be done really, is looking at the needs of the individual. I mean there's the need for the individual to develop, and then there's the need for the institution, I suppose, for the individual working in the institution, but ... ah ... it still has to come from the individual. Am...and just because people are over fifty, it doesn't mean their professional needs are going to automatically be all the same. Or just because they are over forty. Okay, maybe for some individuals it will have been a long time maybe since they have done professional development, but for others, it could be yesterday, it could be still ongoing. So I don't think we can split it into young, middle-aged and old when we are looking at the development. It ...ah... we have to look at the individual and the individual has to look to themselves. And the only thing that can be done really is to respond, as best as is possible to the requests from the individuals. And the other thing then is to look at when all this professional development is going on, to then recognise it, to look at the talent and the skills that are within the institution and to make best use of them, because there really is no point in all this developing going on and keeping up with it, if the system stays as was, and that these newly acquired skills are not put to best practice.

R: Okay, thank you very much. That's it. Thank you very much for doing the interview.

I: You're welcome!

R: I do appreciate it, it will be a big help in developing the findings from the questionnaire
R: Thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview with me. Some of the questions in the questionnaire have revealed very interesting details and I would appreciate your opinion on the outcome of some of them. Now, you have the questionnaire there, the blank one if you wish to refer back to it. The first question I am going to deal with is question 15 and keeping up with change has been identified as a very strong motivation for people to engage in professional development in their own time. What kind of changes is most important in this respect?

I: I would think that as education is evolving all the time... am... everything is changing. Because, I am a teacher in IT and IT is changing ALL the time, so you have to keep up with the training and the new things that are coming in all the time. ...Am... in the case of say teaching in the junior school, things like discipline, you hear a lot at the moment about discipline getting worse in school so you have to keep up to date with new ways of dealing with problems, say, such as discipline.

R: Okay, and are there any other kind of changes that are happening, or that you would be aware other people being aware of in their lives that would mean that keeping up with change was a very high result?
I: Oh I think so and I think also there is more paperwork now in education as well, especially now with the whole-school evaluation and things like that. A lot of people are worried about they are going to nowadays are they going to have their notes looked at in a whole school evaluation situation. So people I think are making sure that they are keeping better sets of notes than they would have in the past. So all these sort of things are changing.

R: Okay, thank you. Now question 22. 29% of people did not indicate any professional development needs for working in the classroom, left it blank. Do you have any views as to why that might be so?

I: Oh I think ... am ... I think there's a case that people don’t recognize the fact that there are areas where they need professional development. I think everybody probably needs professional development in some areas, but people don’t always see straight away where those areas are. And that would be I think that might be one of the main reasons why people might not have put anything down there.

R: Okay, so they just haven’t identified it for themselves?

I: They haven’t seen it for themselves. I think if everybody was able to read everybody else’s questionnaire they would say “Oh yes, there’s something I should have put down”.

R: Okay, all right. Do you think there might be any reason for any other sort of reticence, when so many didn’t put in that they needed any sort of professional development.

I: Well, another thing could be that some people might be afraid that people might think that they are not capable, confident and competent as a teacher. But I think everybody has areas where they can improve, or where they can learn new things. Because I think education is a two-way process. As educators we are also learning as we teach.
R: Yes ... yes indeed. In question 22, a lack of information as to what courses are ‘out there’ and about funding to do courses has been expressed. How might this situation be improved?

I: Maybe if a data base was put together of all the possible courses and I think even then, there’s still courses that are difficult to find out there. I think some people are better at finding courses than other people are. And I think some people are better when others actually find the courses for them. If there’s a list of courses there most people could say, “Ah, yes, here’s a course that I could do.’ you know.

R: Would such a system put a heavy responsibility on the person creating and maintaining the data base?

I: Well it would certainly put more responsibility, than they probably have at the moment. And I think that it would put a responsibility as well, for they would probably get a lot of flack from people if they made poor representations of courses that are out there, left things out. I think it is very difficult to find every single thing because there’s so many providers offering different things in different places, between ... ah ... state colleges and state-run organisations and private organisations running courses.

R: So you think the data base is the best, even if it has limitations?

I: Even with limitations, at least it gives people a chance to see what’s out there. You can look the internet for things, there are so many out there. There’s so many organisations offering things, between things offered during the day, things offered at night, things offered during the Summer, things that you have to pay for, things that are free, you know. I think people also have to be aware about how they can fund it. I think a lot of people could be worried about funding it themselves.
R: Yes, because one aspect was the information about courses themselves and the other aspect was about funding.

I: Yes. I don't think there's anything wrong with people PARTLY funding a course, because you could partly fund it yourself and you would probably appreciate it more. But some courses can be quite expensive and often more so, in time and money.

R: Yes. Okay, question 29. One result which I would like your opinion about is that while 53% of people said that they found it reasonably easy to get released from teaching to attend professional development courses, that means that 47% of people did not find it easy. What would you identify as possible barriers that might be experienced either by yourself or from what you have heard from others?

I: I think that part of the problem there could be what section in the school people could be working in. I think there's a general perception amongst teachers that if you're teaching timetable is heavily junior school laden, it's more difficult to get time off. Now that might not actually be true if you look at the statistics, but I think that is the perception amongst people. Also it could be due to the fact that some people are not full-time, so I think you would have to look at the statistics, you know, comparing whether the people are full-time or part-time, or on job-share who are saying this. But I think anybody who is full-time and who has maybe a large percentage of their time-table is junior school related, it's more difficult to get the time off. That's the way it's perceived anyway, but it may not actually be the case if you actually look at the statistics. Sometimes maybe people hadn't actually asked for the time off, they would get it if they actually asked for it.

R: Indeed. You have lead a little bit in to the next question which is question 3, on the front page. You are probably aware that the old category of part-time teacher has been changed
and that now all part-timers have a contract. That contract is either part-time eligible or part-time non-eligible. Eligibility is dependent on having the required qualifications. The return on the questionnaire that I gave out was 80% and 31% of those are employed under a contract basis. Do you think there’s a difference for people on contract compared to whole-time teachers as to what they think they can request in terms of continuing professional development and what might be the nature of the difference?

I: Oh without a doubt, I think if you are in a permanent position you feel much more secure about asking for things than if you are in a part-time position, or the new positions there now, the eligible positions, even though there might be stronger connotations if you are in a position where you could get a full-time job, when one becomes available. But I think a person feels in a stronger position to ask for things, if they are in a whole-time position. If you ask for something and you didn’t get it, you know, you are not in a position to complain like a person in a permanent position, so without a doubt.

R: And do you think these are perceived barriers or real barriers?

I: That’s a good question. I’m not sure of the answer to that. ... am ...there are certainly perceived barriers. I mean there might be a grain of truth in them. Often there is if something is perceived. But then again, there mightn’t be. Certainly when I was in a position of not being a whole-time teacher, I would have been MUCH slower to complain about positions that I found myself in. Or ask for something that I thought I might not get, you know.

R: Right, okay. Now, when I qualified as a teacher, and this comes into question 6, it was considered to be a career for life, as indeed were most jobs at the time. On our staff however, 67% had another career prior to being employed in Liberties College. What are the benefits of such experience?
I: I think if you work in something else, especially if you can make it relevant to what you are doing. For example, somebody who was say, a business teacher, who worked in a business environment before they became a business teacher in a situation like that, obviously the person has other experience to draw on when they are teaching students. Actually for giving students advice for what they could do in the particular subject when they leave school. And I think you could look at all teaching subjects in that light. ...Am...a metalwork teacher or a woodwork teacher who had a career prior to teaching, especially if it was relevant to area would have more things to draw on in their teaching. And certainly, I didn’t have another career prior to teaching, but I did work in jobs in a part-time capacity before I got a full-time job, and I can certainly draw on experiences from there, so I think it would be true too if I had another career that I could draw on the experience.

R: And, in your opinion, the skills developed in other work, are they transferable to teaching?

I: I think in some cases they are. They mightn’t ALWAYS be, but certainly in some cases they would be.

R: Okay. Question 22. When it came to the professional development needs for working in the institution, the topic of ‘integration of staff’ was mentioned. What ideas do you have as to how this might be achieved, or even just improved upon?

I: When you say ‘integration of staff’ I’m not clear.

R: Interpret integration of staff whatever way YOU see it, whatever meaning you would put on it.
I: Okay, I think there are a lot of staff who work in certain areas who meet each other frequently, because of the way that their teaching timetables are made up. I think teachers, particularly I suppose in the PLC areas, and certainly in SOME PLC areas, are just in those areas and they are not in any other areas, so they don't get to meet other staff and see what THEY are doing and in that way I wouldn't see a lot of integration, in some of those areas. Am... there are a number of ways that you could integrate staff more. You could re-jig timetables, so that somebody say, who teaches communications, could be teaching communications in an area where they wouldn't normally teach it. Or... try and bring people out of areas that they are in into other areas... that might meet some resistance because people might be very happy in the areas they are and they mightn't want to work outside their little departments, that they've sort of encapsulated in over a period of time. The other way is... through sort of social activities I suppose. Am...

R: In your opinion would the fact that we work between two buildings have a bearing on why that has been mentioned?

I: Oh that would be another reason, I think. Some people work between two buildings, so they get to meet obviously a lot more staff. I mean, I've heard cases of where people see somebody's name on the timetable and they don't know who that person is. Or somebody might take a phone call in the staffroom and not know who the person was. And that person might be somebody who was actually a full-time teacher, but they might never have met except at the meeting at the end of the year.

R: Have any ideas on how it could be improved upon?

I: Ah... that's a tricky one. I think at this stage, it's nearly gone too far to make changes. Timetable might help, for I don't think people want to move.
R: When you say ‘to move’?

I: Say to teach in other areas. There are some people who teach in the same areas all the time and I’d say they wouldn’t want to teach in other areas. I would imagine if you looked at the timetables over the last number of years, certain timetables have changed little over the years, whereas other people’s timetables could have changed drastically. I know for me teaching in all three areas, I would know most members of the staff and I would have worked with a lot of people. There’s very few areas I haven’t worked in. But there’s some people and they’ve never worked outside, say, Childcare, or Montessori, or Performance or Media. So they have NEVER worked in any of the other areas at all. So, I mean, that would obviously contribute to the poor integration of staff. And people not knowing what’s going on in other departments.

R: And how might all that be improved upon? Would you have any ideas on that?

I: The only way I can think of is have .... ah .... more social engagements or something that people can meet up with each other.

R: Thank you. Now question 1, on the front page. We all like to think we are still young, but 29% of us are over fifty and 71% of us are over forty. What can we do in terms of professional development in view of the different career stages?

I: Mm .... I’m not sure how to answer that question ... am ... I think people’s needs obviously change as they get older. .... Am ... I think I would have preferred to do more professional development when I was younger, but there didn’t seem to be as many courses available when I was younger. .... Ah ... I think you really have to ask the people themselves what they are looking for, and what they want, before you can probably answer that question properly. I’m not really sure what ... ah... I’m not really sure what difference it would be to someone over fifty or over forty and what they want to do with
their life. I mean, obviously somebody over fifty is closer to retirement than somebody over forty. So ... somebody over fifty would probably be looking at more ... ah... say, courses in things that they could do after they retire. Looking at things about maybe taking early retirement, somebody in their early forties is still looking at things to further develop their teaching.

R: And is there anywhere around promotional possibilities, things like that, if you are looking at the different stages in a career. There’s generally accepted to be five career stages, from the starting teacher and as you say to the person coming towards retirement. So, you have the starting teacher, and then people building up their skills and their reputation. At a certain point a lot of people would be thinking towards promotion; and then you come to a point when they have stopped looking towards promotion, and sort of consolidate or embed in what they are doing.

I: Well I think somebody in their 40’s is probably looking at promotion, but I think somebody who hasn’t got promotion yet, in their 50’s could still be looking at promotion because obviously it has implications for your pension, as well. So I think people might still be looking at it. I’ve heard of teachers very close to retirement, who are still looking at promotional prospects. So I think it holds true for both sections, at that stage, if you haven’t got the promotion. ... Am...in the case of professional development, I’m not sure how you could treat the two areas separately, because I think it depends on the individual as well.

R: That’s it. Were there any other areas in the questionnaire that caught your attention when you were filling it in, or that you felt you wanted to say more on?

I: It’s some time since I filled it out now, so I can’t REALLY remember. I’ll give a quick flick through it to see if there is anything.
R: That's fine.

I: No, I think the only thing was something we touched on there earlier now, just being aware of what courses and what things are available. So if there was a data base, or a list of courses that were available, that would be a great thing. That's the only thing I can think of.

R: So just to go back on that again, you feel that for some people they could access and source courses for themselves but other people work better by having someone do it and they can access a data base to find out what's available

I: Oh, without a doubt, yes, some people are great at getting on to the internet, or doing a search, or looking through the different organisations that offer courses. And I think some people like other people to do things for them. I think that's the way it is and that's the way it will always be.

R: So, it's down to personality more than skills at IT, or skills at internet search?

I: I think it's a personality thing. I think some people are better at networking than others. Some people will either find the courses themselves or they'll hear of the courses through others. Other people just like to see a list in their pigeonhole, or up on the board or something.

R: Okay. Thank you very much for agreeing to do the interview. I appreciate your agreement and it will help to develop the findings that came up from the questionnaire.

I: That's okay, you are very welcome.
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