

Stories from School
A Narrative Inquiry Exploring Primary Teachers'
Experiences of School-based Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

Stories from School!

A narrative inquiry exploring primary teachers' experiences of school-based teacher education.

'Stories from School!' is a personal, philosophical, and educational endeavour which applies narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000; Clandinin 2006, 2013, 2020, Speedy, 2001, 2008; Kim 2016; Craig 2011, 2017) and Arts-based inquiry methods (de Mello 2006; Leitch, 2003 2006; Estrella and Forinash 2007; Barone and Eisner 2012; Kim 2016; Leavy 2013, 2015, 2018; McGarrigle 2018) to explore teachers' ways of knowing, doing and being (Craig 2018) as they navigate the shifting educational policy landscape in Ireland. (Conway and Murphy 2013, Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, Coolahan 2017; O'Donohue, Hartford and O'Doherty 2017). The core theme is teacher education (TE) and the school as a site for teacher education in an era of globalised educational policy and change which is heavily influenced by neoliberal elitist discourse (Sant 2019) is the setting. Neoliberal ideals and values now underpin the education policy field and teachers are negotiating increased levels of accountability and a culture of performativity (Allias 2012; Ball 2013, 2016; Apple 2013; Mooney Simmie, 2012; Conway and Murphy 2013; Connell 2013). This narrative inquiry interrogates practising teachers' experiences of the policy shift which took place within the 2008-2018 timeframe. Heavily influenced by the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) (Sahlberg 2007) the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Commission, (Grek 2009; O' Doherty 2014; Coolahan 2017, 2013, 2007; Sellar and Lingard; 2013; O'Donoghue, Hartford and O'Doherty 2017; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020) this policy shift has been largely driven by the Department of Education and Skills through the agency of the Teaching Council of Ireland. My extensive professional experience leads me to conclude that neither the voices and/or experience of teachers have been considered in this regard. (Ball 2003, 2013; Biesta 2012, 2013; Biesta et al 2015; Santoro 2017). My story, the narrative of teacher, school leader, policy maker, teacher educator and researcher are the multiple 'I's which provide the autobiographical lens through which we discover and know teachers' stories. This experience and thinking with theory provide the interpretative bricolage (Kim 2016; Denzin and Lincoln 2011) through which the stories have been retold. Asking, "Who is the self that teaches?" (Palmer 2007), I understand that teachers lead "storied lives on storied landscapes" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). On these landscapes teachers encounter sacred stories and create secret and cover stories which are seated in their 'Professional knowledge landscapes' (Clandinin and Connelly 1995).

Attempting to "escape the tentacles of the grand narrative of formalistic research" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), I explore ways of 'speaking personally, academically', using creative approaches to compile this final research text. Thinking with theory and using writing as a method of inquiry I engage in 'a dynamic creative process' where writing is a method of discovery (Richardson 1994, 2018). Believing that 'writing is validated as a method of knowing' (Richardson 1994) and "a well written "story" has the potential to be long remembered" (Leavy 2013), I present the narrative in both poetic form as performance scripts (Pelias 2005; Denzin 2018) and as prose, using creative non-fiction (Leavy 2010; Sinner 2010; Sinner *et al.*, 2018).

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted in whole or in part by me or another for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed:

Derbhite de Paor

Dated: 14/01/2021

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It has been a privilege to share this research journey with the teacher storytellers who took time out of their busy personal and professional lives to share their stories with sincerity and honesty.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate 'Stories from School!' to the teaching profession in Ireland.

This inquiry honours the 'stories from school' of every teacher who struggles every day to give their best to the children of Ireland... 'against all odds'.

This thesis is my tribute to them.

*Teachers help to create the generations of the future.
Their work, as such, cannot and must not be reduced to skill and technique alone.
Teaching that is worthy of the name is visionary work, imbued with moral purpose
that ultimately develops the citizens of tomorrow. Teaching is therefore profoundly
intellectual in its underpinning purposes as well as its complexity.*

*Preface to The Sharp Edge of Educational Reform
(Nina Bascia and Andy Hargreaves 2000, p. 8)*

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Autobiographical Triangulation	33
Figure 2: Theoretical Brocolage	130
Figure 3: Personal Autobiographical Interpretative Framework: Dorothy.....	131

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Pause for thought: Teacher Education Policy in 2019

Appendix 2: Signposts for the Future

Appendix 3: The Stories in the Triple Tale

Appendix 4: Participant Information

Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form

Appendix 6: Mind Maps - Narrative Conversations

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ABNI:** Arts-based Narrative Inquiry
- ABR:** Arts-based Research
- CEPP:** Career Entry Professional Programme
- CSL:** Centre for School Leadership
- CPD:** Continuing Professional Development
- DES:** Department of Education and Skills
- DEIS:** Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools
- EBD:** Emotional Behavioural Disability
- ERC:** Educational Research Centre
- GERM:** Global Education Reform Movement
- HEIs** Higher Education Institutions
- HSCL:** Home, School, Community Liaison
- IMT:** Initial Mentor Training
- INTO:** Irish National Teachers Organisation
- ITE:** Initial Teacher Education
- NEIG:** Narrative Inquiry Engagement Group
- NIPT:** National Induction Programme for Teachers
- NPPTI:** National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction
- NQT:** Newly Qualified Teacher
- OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- PAIF:** Personal Autobiographical Interpretative Framework
- PDST:** Development Service for Teachers
- PISA:** Programme for International Student Assessment
- PLCs:** Professional Learning Communities
- PME:** Professional Masters in Education
- PST:** Professional Support Team
- SDPS:** School Development Planning Service
- SEN:** Special Education Needs
- SESS:** Special Education Support Service
- SSE:** School Self Evaluation
- TL:** Teacher Learning
- WSE:** Whole School Evaluation

Table of Contents



Abstract	2
Declaration	3
Acknowledgements	4
List of Figures	6
List of Appendices	7
List of Abbreviations	8
Prologue: Introducing Derbhile	21
	21
Slaying the Dragon: A Crisis of Identity	21
January 7 th 2017	21
The Brightest Star in the Sky: Autobiographical Extract	22
	22
Part 1: Building the Bricolage	23
Chapter 1: What's the story?	24
1.1 Introduction:	24
1.2 The Research Object: Teachers' Stories from School	24
1.3 Educator/ Researcher as Narrator	26
1.3.1 Research Participants: Entering in the Midst of Stories Lived and Told	28
1.4 The Theme: Teacher Education	29
1.5 The Setting	30
1.5.1 Accountability and Performativity	31
1.6 The Problem	32
1.7 Situating the Problem: Thinking with Theory	34
1.7.1 Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscape	34
	9

1.7.2 Theory/Practice Relationship: The Professional Knowledge Landscape	35
1.8 The Quest	37
1.8.1 The Power of Story	37
1.8.2 Narrative Inquiry: Journeying to Escape the Tentacles of the Grand Narrative of Formalistic Research - <i>'I just want to tell the story!'</i>	37
1.8.3 The Multiple 'I's	38
1.8.4 Personal Autobiographical Interpretative Framework	39
1.8.5 Thinking with Theory: Theoretical Bricolage	40
1.9 Character Revisited: Derbhile becomes <i>Dorothy</i> and Uncovers the 'Triple Tale'	41
1.10 Resolution: The Research Text	43
1.10.1 Part 1: Building the Bricolage	44
1.10.2 Part 2: Stories from School	46
1.11 Conclusion	48
Chapter 2: Personal Narrative	49
2.1 Introduction	49
2.2 The 'self' that teaches?	53
2.2.2 On Becoming a Teacher	56
2.2.3 The Turning Point	58
2.2.4 Flourishing	59
2.2.5 Leaning towards Leadership	60
2.3 The 'Self who Leads: Turning a School around	61
2.3.1 My Story from School: as Narrated by a Colleague	61
2.3.2 Inspiring with Passion: Living through Loving	62
2.3.3 Leading an improvement -oriented School community	68
• 2.3.4 Handing on the Torch	68
2.4 On Leaving Camelot: Journeying Toward the 'Triple Tale'	69
	10

2.5 The Self as Researcher	71
2.6.1 School Culture	72
2.6.2 Teacher Learning	72
2.6.3 Mentoring	73
2.6.4 Professional Learning Communities	73
2.6.5 Reflective Practice: What <i>is</i> it?	75
2.6.6 Personal Reflection: Masters Research Journey	77
2.7 Conclusion	79
Chapter 3: Exploring the landscape:	81
The self as policy-maker	81
3.1 Introduction	81
3.3 The Background	82
3.3.1 The Policy Landscape	82
3.3.2 Teacher Education	83
3.4 The Perfect Storm	85
3.4.1 PISA (2009)	85
3.4.2 Austerity Ireland	86
3.5 My Story: Teaching Council Election - Spring 2012	88
3.6 A Rapid and Unprecedented Policy Ensemble in Teacher Education	90
3.6.1 Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education	90
3.6.2. Initial Teacher Education	92
3.6.3 My Story: Rhetoric and Reality	93
3.6.4 School Placement	94
3.6.5 My Story: School Placement	95
3.6.6 Induction	96
3.6.7 My Story: Induction - From CEPP to Droichead	98
	11







3.6.8 In-career Professional Learning	99
3.6.9 My Story: <i>Cosán</i>	102
3.7 Poacher Turned Gatekeeper?	103
3.8 Conclusion	103
Chapter 4: Journeying to the triple tale: The self as teacher educator	105
4.1 Introduction	105
4.2 Weaving the Narrative Threads: Artefacts	105
4.3 The Talisman	109
4.4 The self as teacher educator: A reflective moment...	110
Bringing it all together -31 st March 2017	110
4.5 Derbhile becomes <i>Dorothy</i> and uncovers the ‘Triple Tale’	112
Chapter 5: Thinking with theory	115
5.1 Introduction	115
5.1.1 The Journey thus Far	115
5.2 Power and its Relationship to Knowledge and Truth	116
5.3 Foucault: Key Concepts	117
5.3.1 Disciplinary Power	117
5.3.2 Panoptic Surveillance	118
5.3.3. Pastoral Power	118
5.3.4 False Freedoms	118
5.4 Knowledge and Truth: An Effect of Power	119
5.5 Care, Dialogue and Relationships	120
5.5.1 Relationships	121
5.5.2 Dialogue	123
5.5 Developing Critical Insight through Imagination and Creativity	123
5.5.1 Being wide awake in the world	123
	12

5.5.2 Imagination and Creativity	124
5.6 The Power of Story to Create New Knowledge and Understanding	125
5.6 Thinking Tools	127
5.6.1 Field Theory	127
5.6.2 Doxa	128
5.6.2 Codification	128
5.6.3 Capital	129
5.6.4 Habitus	129
5.6.5 Strategy	130
5.8 Theoretical Bricolage	130
5.9 Interpretative Bricolage	132
5.10 Conclusion	133
Chapter 6: The methodological Maze	134
6.1 Introduction	134
6.1.1 The Narrative Threads	134
6.2 Identifying as a Narrative Bricoleur Theorist	135
6.3 Puzzling Paradigms	137
6.4 The Qualitative Quest	138
6.4.1 Philosophical Assumptions	139
6.5 Journeying to Narrative	140
6.5.1 The First Whispers	140
6.5.2 Building Understanding	140
6.5.3 So.... to Narrative Inquiry	142
6.6 Narrative Interlude 1: A small story	146
6.7 'There's no place like home...'	146
6.7.2 Arts-Based Narrative Inquiry	147

6.8 Narrative Interlude 2: Home to rest	148
6.9 Conclusion	149
6.10 Moving On	149
Part 2	150
Stories From School	150
Chapter Seven: The gift of Stories	151
7.3 Thinking with Theory: Invitational Leadership	152
7.4 The Gift of Stories	152
7.4.1 Interviews	153
7.4.2 Journeying to Narrative Interviews and Beyond	154
7.4.3 Narrative Conversations	156
7.5 Telling and Retelling Stories	156
7.6 Standing Back	157
7.6.1 From Novellas to Vignettes	158
7.7 Building the Research Text	159
7.7.1 Fiction as Research	160
7.7.2 Creative Non-fiction	161
7.7.3 Poetry and Performance as a Way of Knowing	162
7.8 Continuing the Journey	163
7.9 Invitation	165
Chapter 8: The Self who teaches	166
Dorothy speaks:	166
	166
The kids - it's all about the kids...	166
	167
The Self who Teaches: “Where is the real me?”	167

The ‘Self who Teaches’: A Monologue	168
❧	169
What’s Next?	169
❧	171
The early years	172
Dorothy Speaks:	172
❧	173
Beginning to Teach: Colm’s Story	173
❧	174
The Self who Teaches - the Early Years: Siobhán’s Story	174
❧	175
The Magpie Instinct - Beginning to Teach: Kitty’s Story	175
❧	176
Beginning to Teach: Sharon’s Story	176
Chapter 9: The courage to care	177
Dorothy speaks:	177
❧	178
Relationships: Care, Energy and Exhaustion	178
❧	179
❧	180
Culture of Assessment: “I’m a Smart Child”	180
❧	180
Fiona’s Story: Knowing, Teaching and Learning Who You Are	180
❧	181
A Facilitator of Learning: Supporting Pupil Learning	181
❧	182
	15

Time for Stories: The courage to Care!	182
❧	183
The Question of Parents	183
❧	183
The Same Side of the Fence! - A Monologue	184
Chapter 10: School Leadership	185
Dorothy speaks:	185
❧	185
Sineád’s Story: Against all odds! Making School a Better Place...Everyday	185
❧	186
Every day is a good day!	186
❧	187
Orla’s Story: Leadership	187
❧	187
A Complete Shift in Perspective	187
❧	188
Instructional Leadership	188
❧	188
Surviving the Leadership Years	188
❧	189
Kathleen’s Story: Teacher Learning and Planning -“taking the person out of teaching”	189
❧	190
Leadership: A Secret Story	190
❧❧❧	191
Chapter 11: School-based Teacher education	192
Dorothy speaks:	192
	16

	192
School Placement: Anne’s Story -Time for the Conversation to Happen	192
	193
School Placement: Deirdre’s Story	193
Theory, Policy and Practice: Learning in the Landscape of Practice	193
	194
School Placement: Ciarán’s Story: Relationships and the Matter of Consistency	194
	194
School Placement: Michaels Story: a Safe Space for Teacher Learning	194
	195
Patrick’s Story: Shifting Attention from Teaching to Learning	195
Shane’s Story: Induction - A Deer in the Headlights!	196
Anita’s Story: <i>Droichead</i> :	198
It Could and Should be a Great Thing - “Free <i>Gratis</i> and For Nothing!”	198
Helen’s Story: Droichead - Magic Wand or Lightning Rod?	198
Amanda’s Story: The Birth of <i>Droichead</i> has been Torturous	200
Niamh’s Story: A Shared Learning Experience?	200
Niamh’s Story: From Teacher to Mentor Teacher - Questioning Yourself!	201
Seamus’ Story: A Professional Conversation: Thoughts of an NIPT Associate	202
Dorothy Speaks...again:	203
Chapter 12: Teacher learning	204
Dorothy Speaks:	204
Margaret’s Story: Teacher Learning and Curriculum Change	204
Michael’s Story: Distributed Leadership/Leading Learning	205
	206
Sheila’s Story: Learning in the landscape of practice	206

Catherine’s Story: Teaching - An Organic Endeavour	207
Máire’s Story: Practical Experience and a Working Lunch	208
Chapter 13: Sacred, Secret, and cover stories	210
Dorothy Speaks:	210
Policy in the Landscape of Practice: Sacred, Secret, or Cover Stories?	211
Cora’s Story: Teacher Learning and System Change	211
Sarah’s Secret Story: The Magic of ‘Flow’	212
	212
‘ <i>La Jument</i> ’ by Jean Guichard	212
Sarah’s Story: Time to Breathe	214
“Go Away and Let Me Just Breathe for a Minute!”	214
Presenting Policy-makers’ Sacred Stories:	215
<i>All Change Please!</i>	215
Kelly’s Story: The Hamster Wheel	216
“The Bucket is Full!...That Magic Moment?”	216
Jean’s Story: Panoptic surveillance- ‘the Drive by!’	217
Conor’s Story: Joining the Dots of Reflective Practice	217
“ <i>Taisce?</i>Too Woolly!”	217
Jane’s Story: Joining the Dots - Stories from School for Policy-makers!	218
Chapter 14: Reminding; Telling; Selling; Leaving	219
REMINDING	219
14.0 Introduction	219
14.1 Narrative Inquiry	220
14.2 Arts-Based Research Methods	220
14.3 The ‘Triple Tale’: Derbhile becomes <i>Dorothy</i>	221
Telling	222

14.4 Dorothy's Last Word	222
14.5 Stories from School	223
14.5.1 Not Ghetto, but a Fort - The Last Manned Lighthouse in the World?	224
14.5.2 School Placement	226
14.5.3 <i>Droichead</i>	227
Magic Wand	227
Selling (Significance)	229
14.6 <i>Dorothy</i> becomes <i>Derbhile</i> (personal significance)	229
14.7 Research Journey: Significance and Originality	230
14.8 Teacher Education (Significance)	232
14.8.1 Policy Progress	233
14.8.2 Research Significance	234
Leaving	234
14.9 Wonderings: A conversation with distant friends	234
14.10 Endings and Beginnings	239
14.12 Epilogue: Maybe Now They Will Listen	242
References	243
Appendix 1: PAUSE for thought	257
Teacher Education Policy in 2019: The here and now	257
Initial Teacher Education	257
School Placement	258
Induction	260
Teacher Professional Learning	261
A Research Informed Profession	261
Appendix 2: Signposts for the future	263
Teaching Council Strategic Plan	263

School Placement in Initial Teacher Education	264
The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform (Sahlberg 2)	265
Appendix 3: The Stories in the Triple Tale	267
The Legend of the Pied Piper	267
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz	267
The Emperor's New Clothes	268
Appendix 4: Participant Information	272
Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form	274
Appendix 6: Mind Maps: Narrative Conversations	275
	275

PROLOGUE: INTRODUCING DERBHILE



Slaying the Dragon: A Crisis of Identity

January 7th 2017

This is a significant day in the school calendar; particularly so for me.

Not only because this day, sixteen years ago, I first took on my leadership role in school, but because I have now retired from that role.

Today I am not going to school. Today I am struggling with my developing self-image as an aspiring teacher, educator, and academic.

But...I am not an academic. I am a *teacher*. I am a *school leader*...

In my heart, that is.

In reality, physically, at least, I have left these roles behind.

But, in my heart of hearts, I'll always be a teacher.

At the risk of sounding dramatic, or of copying Ruth Leitch (2003), the story wouldn't be complete without admitting to the tears streaming down my face as I type this.

It is very early in the morning and the household sleeps overhead.

This is the story of the middle-aged woman whose heart is breaking with the loss of identity; a loss of self. But the position I find myself in this morning has been brought about by the deliberate conscious choices I've taken.

Choices that I do not regret!

I chose to relinquish my much loved, though sometimes stressful and draining, role as a school leader to make space and time for my own studies. Having completed a Master's in Education over three years while working fulltime, I felt that this was the time in my life, both personally and professionally, when I could afford to be a little selfish and focus on myself.

Let's face it: I wanted the floppy hat and hankered for the time and space to wallow in research.

So, I chose to follow the bright star in the night sky on which my mother placed my name.

Like all good stories, this one has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Though the real end is as yet un-lived, un-written, and therefore, un-told...

The Brightest Star in the Sky: Autobiographical Extract



Just before I enrolled on my first postgraduate course, a Higher Diploma in Educational Management, my mother died. Although she had kindly agreed to fund the first semester of these studies, early in her illness she gave me another gift which I consider far more precious than anything material.

Scene: hospital ward

Context: my mother undergoing initial treatment for lung cancer

Characters: my mother and I

Day after day, I sat by her bedside waiting; needing something, but not knowing what. Finally, on the last day, just before the end of the Christmas holidays, when I was bemoaning the fact that I had been overlooked for a school leadership position as principal of a local school, my mother assured me, “Derbhile, there is a school out there for you”. She went on to say ...

“In ten years’ time when I am dead and gone, I want you to look up at the stars in the sky, choose the brightest star, and know *that* is the star your mother said you were.”

Bingo...! This was the affirmation I had been needing and wanting for the entire week; the knowledge that she believed in me before she evaporated from my life.

Even though she died eight months later, before my first appointment as a school leader, this treasured moment with my mother has sustained me throughout my time as Principal Teacher.

In fact, writing about it now reminds me that I should take heed of her unfailing belief in me as I navigate what are for me the uncharted waters of this doctoral journey and my maiden voyage in Academia.

PART 1: BUILDING THE BRICOLAGE

**in which Derbhile becomes *Dorothy*
and
we encounter the ‘Triple Tale’**

CHAPTER 1: WHAT'S THE STORY?

1.1 Introduction:

The presentation of this inquiry, entitled 'Stories from School!' in this final public research text rests on an understanding that in mediating, interpreting, and enacting the policy shift towards acknowledging the school as a site for teacher education teachers lead "storied lives on storied landscapes" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.24; Schaefer and Clandinin 2019). The Inquiry focuses on the experiences of teachers in the Primary Sector in Ireland. With the exception of some special school settings these teachers work with pupils between the ages of four and twelve years of age. In eliciting teachers' experiences of policy enactment at the site of practice, this inquiry explores teachers' stories as they negotiate their changed positioning as stipulated in Teacher Education policy in Ireland during the targeted timeframe (Teaching Council of Ireland 2008-2018). Throughout this inquiry, I privilege the power of story (Kearney 2002; Bruner 2004) to generate new knowledge and expand understandings of teachers' everyday experiences at the site of their professional practice: the school. In doing so, I understand that "stories are the truths that won't stand still" (Pelias, 2003 p.171) and that they are "the most accessible, the most readily understood, and the most flexible vernacular method of conducting and circulating research" (Sinner et al 2018, p.167).

My approach is determined by two overarching considerations: firstly, to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the open, and in so doing, "open up new and undiscovered avenues of understanding"(Estrealla and Forinash 2007, p. 381) of experiences in relation to school-based teacher education rooted in the site of policy enactment; and secondly, to present teachers' school stories in a manner which honours their veracity while simultaneously identifying new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. The overall aim is to illuminate teachers " experience and find a means for empowerment and change" (ibid p. 382), to create a space for the voices and stories of teachers who have all too often been the objects of others stories (Denzin 2018, p. 681) and in so doing interrupt and disrupt the current discourse in the policy space in order to ensure that teachers' personal and professional stories of practice are heard and influence future stories of Teacher Education policy in Ireland.

1.2The Research Object: Teachers' Stories from School

Since teachers' 'stories from school' is the research object of this inquiry, it is predicated on

the assumption of narrative as both research methodology and phenomenon of inquiry. (Clandinin and Connelly 2000).

For the purposes of this study then, narrative describes both “the structured quality of experience to be studied” and “names the patterns of inquiry for its study” (Clandinin and Connelly 1990, p.2). Narrative inquiry is the chosen method of the inquiry, since, as all human experience occurs ‘narratively’, it follows that educational experience should be studied in the same way (Clandinin and Connolly 2000, p.19). Privileging the power of story to access “teachers’ embedded, embodied knowledge of experience” (Craig 2018, p.309) creates new knowledge and understandings about teachers’ everyday experiences at the site of their professional practice. This means that the concept of ‘story’ is core to this phenomenological inquiry and fundamental to this research. Since privileging the place of story arguably supports reader engagement and understanding of any inquiry (Sinner, 2010; Sinner et al 2018), the main elements of the present narrative text structure adhere to that devised by Fountas and Pinnell (2012, p. 67) as follows:

- Characters:** Derbhile Educator/Researcher as Narrator
Derbhile’s research companions as Participants
- Theme:** Teacher Education
- Setting:** Schools as sites for Teacher Education, seated in the landscape of a global recession and unprecedented policy change which are influenced by the Global Education Reform Movement and neoliberal discourse, values and ideals
- Problem:** The disparities between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice as perceived through the narrative of the ‘multiple ‘I’s throughout the inquiry
- Aim:** To bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the light
- Resolution:** The articulation of teacher stories in order that they may be heard, understood valued and impact in the policy space
- Character Revisited:** The quest of this inquiry has led me to create the composite character of Dorothy (of *The Wizard of Oz*) and a triple tale paradigm
- Uncovering the Triple Tale:** *The Pied Piper; The Wizard of Oz, and The Emperor’s New Clothes*

This chapter therefore elucidates each of the above elements to ensure readers may enter the ‘story’ of this narrative inquiry with complete clarity and understanding.

1.3 Educator/ Researcher as Narrator

I have been a teacher for over thirty years: My friends are teachers. My daughters are teachers. Unsurprisingly then, the quest, theme, and problem in this narrative inquiry are borne of my lived experience as an educator, including that of teacher, school leader, policy-maker, teacher educator, and researcher. I hold teachers in the highest esteem. Based on the immeasurable commitment, enthusiasm, and emotional toil they demonstrate every day, I feel compelled to harness the ‘stories’ which have arguably been absent from or silenced within the policy discourse (Biesta, 2013; Biesta et al, 2015; Ball 2016; Santoro 2017, Sant 2019) and illuminate the stories teachers weave (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, 1996; Craig 2011, 2017, 2018). Indeed, during a time of great economic uncertainty and global recession, it became evident that teachers were obliged to negotiate a landscape of rapid and unprecedented policy ensemble in teacher education (Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, p. 3) considered by some to be “fast top-down reform” (Sellar and Lingard 2013, p. 721).

Over the timeframe of this inquiry, I have garnered considerable experience in facilitating teacher learning across their careers including initial teacher education (ITE), and induction and continuing professional development (CPD) at postgraduate level. I have worked as a school placement tutor in ITE , as an associate with the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and as tutor and lecturer in undergraduate and post graduate courses including the Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership which is a national programme overseen by the Centre for School Leadership (CSL). While I currently identify as a teacher educator then, my previous experience as a teacher and school leader alerted me to the incongruities or ‘fault line’(Craig 2018) between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers in the classroom. Moreover, concomitantly with my tenure as school leader, and motivated by a desire to ensure the voices and experiences of practicing teachers were heard at policy level, I was elected as teacher representative to the Teaching Council of Ireland. This statutory body was instantiated in the spring of 2005, following The Teaching Council Act (Government of Ireland 2001). I served on the third council from March 2012 to March 2016.

My prior M.Ed. in Educational Mentoring research, entitled, *An Exploration of School-based Mentoring as a Framework to Build Professional Learning Communities* (de Paor, 2011) had

equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of school-based mentoring and induction. This project examined the role of mentoring as an agent of change in the professional growth of teachers, and was the culmination of a three-year cycle of reflection, action, and research, which analysed the key themes of school culture and change; mentoring as a partnership in learning; school management and leadership; and the teacher as a professional: learning in community.

During analysis of the data an additional theme of the extended professionalism of teachers also emerged. The wider debate in education regarding the function of schooling as transmissive or transformative (Biesta 2002; Freire 1970) afforded the philosophical framework for consideration of the transformational nature of mentoring in education. As a result of the growing awareness of extended professionalism suggested by this research, I saw the opportunity to raise more challenging questions in relation to TE at national policy level. The M.Ed. thesis recommended that policy-makers promote the creation of Professional Learning Communities in schools by supporting the growth of ‘collective professional confidence’ among the teaching profession by implementing the policy changes of the time through integrating initial teacher education, mentoring and induction, and continuing professional development.

This stance informed much of my input at policy level as a member of the Teaching Council. When elected, I was acutely aware of teachers’ growing frustration and disenchantment with the Council (de Paor 2011). Indeed, I joined the chorus of voices calling for greater communication and consultation. Yet despite the focused and persistent efforts of teacher representatives on the Council, the Council’s insistence on prioritising issues of professional governance left teachers struggling under the weight of increased professional regulation in what many deemed a “pedagogy of oppression...enacted through increased state regulation and policy enforcement” (Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, p.14). In recognising the need to ensure teachers’ voices and stories of experience were heard I was concerned that communication in relation to the policy shift identified by this inquiry was not reaching experienced practising teachers. I repeatedly sought clarification regarding the communication and negotiation of policy changes at school level: yet my questions remained unanswered. My growing sense that a greater power than the Council members or staff were pushing this agenda merely intensified my consciousness of the fractures between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice. This ongoing unease and concern is the driving force behind this inquiry and, as such, this thesis invites the reader to join me as I ‘live and

relive' my own story and 'tell and retell' the stories of the teachers who joined me in my journey.

1.3.1 Research Participants: Entering in the Midst of Stories Lived and Told

As my research journey progressed, I felt ready to invite other teachers to become storytellers and to share a situation, place, and time with me (Clandinin and Connolly 2000).

- **The Plan**

My purposeful selection process comprised inviting six teachers to be my fellow research companions. The intention was to hold an initial meeting with the group to build an understanding of the inquiry. Thereafter I would interview each teacher three times: once during each term of the academic year. Finally, we would meet again at the end of the year to complete our shared research journey.

- **The Story-tellers**

Since "central to the creation of field texts is the relationship of the researcher to participant" (Clandinin and Connelly 1994, p 419), the utility of harnessing pre-existing relationships had a clear and direct bearing on the quality of the inquiry. In fact, my carefully chosen companions were all well known to me as I had interacted with them all in various professional capacities: two through my initial teacher education; two through my involvement with The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT); and the remaining two as immediate school colleagues. Comprising five females and one male, all the teacher story-tellers had at least ten years' teaching experience, while three had more than thirty years' experience. The teachers worked in a range of primary school settings including urban, rural, and special education settings, in schools which varied from small (5 teachers) to very large (in excess of 30 teachers) schools. Three of the teachers had additional experience working with the National Induction Programme for teachers (NIPT), while two held middle leadership roles in their schools.

- **The Unfolding Story**

In order to encourage teachers to become storytellers I held an initial meeting to share my engagement with theory and outline explorations of my personal narrative as an educator. I also detailed the theme, problem, and aim, of the inquiry. I drew on my engagement with literature to structure the discussion and presented my personal history as a means of exploring the concept of the 'self who teaches' (Palmer 1998). Subsequent to this meeting I met with each teacher on three further occasions: once per term across one academic year.

While the initial interviews which took place in the autumn [1st] term of the 2017 academic

year began with a ‘generative narrative question’ (Flick 2009, p.178), the subsequent interviews in the spring [2nd] and summer (3rd) terms were ‘narrative conversations’ (Leitch 2006, p. 555; Speedy 2008, p. 61). Chapter 7 gives a detailed account of my developing understanding of the use of interview and conversation in qualitative inquiry.

The final element of the proposed plan was the end-of-year group meeting. In the event, this did not take place, as the stories lived and revealed in the course of the year proved so unique and sensitive that I felt a summative group session would compromise the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the participants. My journey with the participants and the developments in relation to this are further explored in section 7.6

1.4 The Theme: Teacher Education

As previously outlined, the overall aim of ‘Stories from School!’ is to interrupt the current policy space in order to ensure that teachers’ personal and professional stories of practice are heard and have an impact on the future stories of Teacher Education (TE) policy in Ireland. Working with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), The Teaching Council of Ireland is a key player in this policy space. Influenced by the OECD and the European commission and following a decade of debate in relation to Education in Ireland, the work of the Teaching Council is guided by the Teaching Council Act (2001) and various amendments which occurred up to 2015. The Teaching Council’s statutory responsibility is to regulate and promote the teaching profession. Therefore, the Teaching Council Act places responsibility for the quality and regulation of Teacher Education across teachers careers as the remit of the Teaching Council. (3.3.1/3.3.2)

The first meeting of the Teaching Council of Ireland took place in the spring of 2005, some 10 years after the establishment of the council was outlined in the White paper: *Charting our Education Future* (Government of Ireland 1995). This heralded the numerous strategic plans and several policy documents which were launched into the system at a time of global and national recession. Published in 2011, *The Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (Teaching Council 2011) supported the international trend towards conceptualising TE as a continuum composed of three stages. Commonly referred to as the three ‘I’s’, these are initial teacher education (ITE), induction, and in-career professional learning (OECD, 1991, 2005). The continuum document synthesises international influences on TE into a coherent roadmap for future policy development. Subsequent Teaching Council policy documents offering

further elucidation of each stage of the continuum of teacher education are:

2011: Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers

2013: Guidelines on School Placement

2016: Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning

2017: Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework

The concepts and regulations outlined in these policy documents significantly extend the professional responsibilities of teachers who are now enjoined to be reflective practitioner and lifelong learners, while models of collegial school-based inquiry to establish more collaborative school cultures are also frequently advocated.

More specifically, changes in policy mean that teachers' professional responsibilities now encompass the role of the co-operating teacher in ITE (Teaching Council 2013), and inductive phase mentoring to support school-based learning for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Teachers must now take part in Professional Support Teams (PSTs) and undergo formal observation and feedback as a tool for school-based teacher learning framed by the concept of reflective practice (Teaching Council 2016, 2017). Chapter 3, 'Exploring the landscape' delves more deeply into the background to the current policy landscape and further discussion and analysis of the above policies. Because I was at the policy table during the development of these policies my personal narrative is threaded through this.

1.5 The Setting

The 2008 global recession, property crash, and near bank collapse meant Ireland was plunged into economic chaos. Ireland's sovereignty was threatened when the European Monetary Fund assumed management of the country's finances and imposed severe austerity measures on all areas of government funding. This inquiry explores teachers' stories played out in schools as sites for teacher education in the landscape of 'austerity Ireland' and unprecedented policy change.

To reiterate: Education policy in Ireland has been greatly influenced by the hegemonic discourse (Biesta 2013; Sant 2019) perpetuated through the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), through the agencies of the OECD and the European Commission. (Grek 2009; O' Doherty 2014; Coolahan 2017, 2013, 2007; Sellar| and Lingard, 2013; O'Donoghue, Hartford and O'Doherty 2017; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2019). These organisations favour standardisation, with a narrow focus on literacy and numeracy, and higher stakes accountability (Sahlberg 2007). Conway and Murphy (2013) claim that the international popularity of GERM

has given rise to “a significant systemic change comprising a focus on amplification and expansion of compliance-oriented accountability” (p. 14). Neoliberal ideals and values now underpin the education policy field with increased levels of accountability and a culture of performativity (Allias 2012; Ball 2016, 2013; Apple 2013; Mooney Simmie, 2012; Conway *and* Murphy 2013; Connell 2013). Michael Apple describes neoliberalism as “a vision that sees every sector of society as subject to the logics of commodification, marketisation, competition and cost benefit analysis” (Apple 2013, p.6), while Ball (2016) identifies three technologies, the market, management and performance as multifaceted mechanisms of change which have redefined “ what it means to be educated, what it means to teach and learn, what it means to be a teacher”(Ball 2016, p.1050) As such, neoliberal discourse is underpinned by the principles of freedom of choice, competition, individualism, privatisation, deregulation, and the power of the free market (Conway and Murphy 2013, p.17). In imposing consumerist principles on education policy “neoliberalism seeks to close down arenas for debate and create a monopoly for the market perspective” (Connell 2013, p. 279). Indeed, it has been argued that neoliberal discourse and practices “undermines the possibility of democratic educational policies and practices” (Sant 2019, p667) and “de -or re -professionalises educationists through an acculturation process” having the effect of changing teachers “interpersonal relations, identity and subjectivity”, changing “how we value ourselves and others, how we think about what we do and how we do it” (Ball, 2016, pp1046-1047). The growing tendency to recast the role of teacher as “a functionary and technician within a top-down hierarchical system of compliance, surveillance and legal edict” (Mooney Simmie 2012, p.485) is a hallmark of the Global Education Eeform Movement, and by no means unique to the Irish educational landscape.

1.5.1 Accountability and Performativity

Neoliberal values and ideals are the key drivers of the accountability systems negotiated by teachers in their work as they live and tell their stories from school. Since the development and enactment of education policy is now underpinned by such principles, all Irish teachers and teacher educators are required to ‘perform’ and achieve clearly defined inputs, outcomes, and process targets (Apple 2013; Connell 2013; Moonie Simmie 2012; Conway *and* Murphy 2013). Ball defines performativity as:

... a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of incentive, control, attrition and change, based on rewards and sanctions.
(Ball 2003, p. 216)

Ball further purports that performativity, managerialism, and market values are applied to align

the public sector with the culture and ethical systems of the private sector and argues that this has undermined the professionalism of teachers. (Ball 2016, p. 1046) Plainly put: all education policy, including teacher education policy, is now driven by a desire to increase productivity and provide value for money. The fact that teachers now routinely adhere to ‘targets, indicators, and evaluations’ merely underscores the pervasive nature of performativity in the current policy context. ‘Stories from School!’ seeks to educe the emotional impact of such accountability and performativity on teachers (Perryman 2007) as they negotiate their changed positioning in relation to school-based teacher education in both the initial and the induction phase of the continuum. This inquiry will consider Ball’s assertion that the culture of performativity “doesn’t just change what teachers do but it changes who they are” (Ball 2003, p. 215) and “how we think about what we do, how we relate to one another and how we decide what is important” (Ball 2016, p. 1050). This is the overarching context of ‘Stories from School!’ which explores teachers’ experiences of policy enactment at the site of practice.

The core aim of this inquiry is to shed much needed light on teachers’ ‘stories to live by’ their ‘personal practical knowledge’ (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000; Craig 2011; Schaefer and Clandinin 2019) understood as their embedded, embodied experience (Craig 2018) as they negotiate the changing role laid down in Irish TE policy during the specified timeframe (Teaching Council 2008-2018). It is my contention that placing the concept of ‘story’ both at the epicentre of this inquiry and physical research text, will foster an enhanced understanding of experiences in relation to school-based teacher education rooted at the site of policy enactment.

1.6 The Problem

The problem at the heart of the story of this inquiry is my perception of the serious disconnect between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice. This perception is no fleeting whim; it has been reinforced throughout my lived experience as teacher, school leader, policy-maker, teacher educator, and researcher. Methodologically, the problem has been identified through the triangulation of my lived experience, wherein each element concatenates and supports the identification of the problem in an ‘autobiographical triangulation’. As illustrated in Figure 1 the problem has therefore been ‘triangulated’ through three distinct lenses: firstly, my lived experience as a teacher, school leader and teacher educator; secondly, my understanding of current teacher education policy through my lived experience as a policy-maker as a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland;

and thirdly, my engagement with the literature and my previous research:

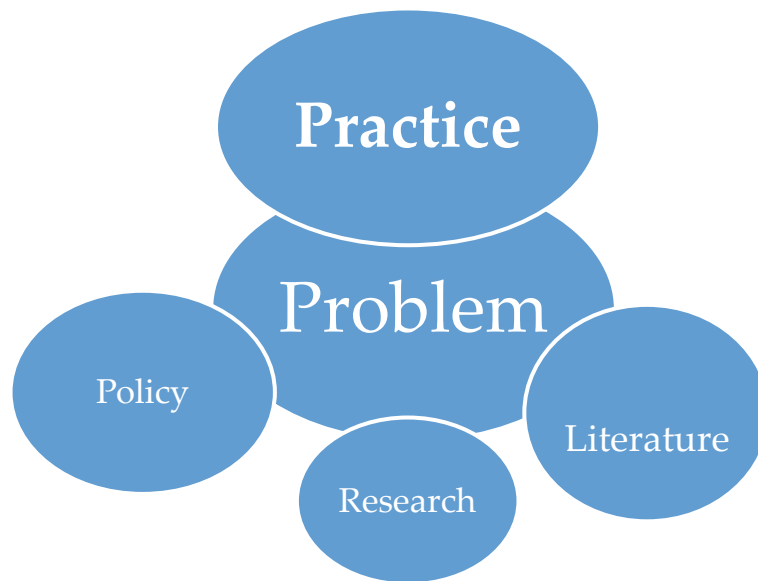


Figure 1: Autobiographical Triangulation

The process of autobiographical triangulation has led me to identify key concepts in teacher education policy documents obtaining to the various expectations for teachers to negotiate, understand, enact, and implement the policy shifts which form the focus of this inquiry. These include mentoring to facilitate school-based teacher learning at all stages of teachers' professional learning journey; the centrality of reflective practice for teacher learning; and the development of schools with collaborative cultures operating as professional learning communities (PLCs). My research and engagement with the literature throughout the 2008-2018 decade has equipped me with a lived understanding of the depth and complexity of these key concepts. My professional practice both as a school leader and as a teacher educator facilitating teacher learning at all stages of the TE continuum has also honed my understanding of teachers' awareness, perceptions, and understandings of these concepts.

The 'problem' driving this inquiry is threefold: firstly, an absence of shared understanding or consensus among policy-makers, teacher educators, and teachers themselves of the concepts described in the policy documents; secondly, a lack of 'theoretical sophistication' underpinning the use of these concepts (Thompson *and* Pascal 2012, p.311); and thirdly, a communication gap between policy and practice, policy-makers, and practitioners. This has led me to question whether in formulating concepts which extend the traditional professional responsibilities of teachers, policy-makers unwittingly serve the aforementioned neoliberal agenda: in other words, whether this is an instance of "dominant groups speaking the language of transformation

at the same time as power shifts even more radically into their hands” (Apple 2013, p.8) or if teachers have experienced an ‘act of moral violence’(Santoro 2017) as a result of an “illusion that the voices of teachers have been included in decision making” (Santoro 2017 p.57).

1.7 Situating the Problem: Thinking with Theory

1.7.1 Teachers’ Professional Knowledge Landscape

As outlined above, the problem at the heart of the narrative of this inquiry is my perception of a serious rupture or mismatch between the rhetoric of TE policy and the understanding and experiences of teachers at the site of practice. As such, this inquiry seeks to explore the relationship between theory and practice as negotiated and experienced by teachers at school level. In order to do so, I have applied the concept of the ‘teacher’s professional knowledge landscape’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, 1996; Craig 2011, 2018) as an exploratory element of the theoretical framework.

Teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes are “composed of relationships among people, places and things” (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.5). For individual teachers this is a synthesis of “individual teacher knowledge, the working landscape and the ways this landscape relates to public policy and theory” (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p.24) and may be understood on the three levels of the self, the school, and public policy.

Teachers’ stories from school, their personal ‘stories to live by’ (Schaefer and Clandinin 2019) which “merge personal practical knowledge, life on the professional knowledge landscape and teacher identity” (Craig 2011, p.25) do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are couched in ‘school stories’ and nested in the broader cultural contexts in which teachers live and tell their stories. (Leitch 2006; Biesta et al 2015). These broader cultural stories are stories of teachers and schools articulated by society in general (Clandinin and Connelly 1996). While the latter stories of teachers and stories of school are not told by individual teachers, but by governments, policy-makers, parents, and the media, they nonetheless provide the “narrative context for the ongoing development and expressions of teacher knowledge in schools” (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p. 24). Using the metaphor of a landscape affords an opportunity to develop new insights and understandings of the theory-practice relationship at the site of practice. Following Clandinin and Connelly, I maintain that teachers live out their stories on ‘teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1995).

1.7.2 Theory/Practice Relationship: The Professional Knowledge Landscape

Clandinin and Connelly also provide imagery to elucidate the impact of policy on teacher's professional knowledge landscapes. For instance, they use the idea of a conduit and a funnel to describe the communication and dissemination of policy into schools. These metaphors educe a clearer understanding of the theory/practice relationship, since when policy is poured or funnelled into schools it inevitably impacts teachers' professional knowledge landscapes:

The theoretical knowledge and policy directive that pass for theory and are fed into a landscape via the funnel are, for the most part epistemologically inadequate.

(Clandinin *and* Connelly 1995, p.8)

The conduit as a metaphor for communication (Reddy 1979) assists an understanding of how policy is funnelled into schools as the 'sacred stories' in which teachers' professional knowledge landscape is embedded. Basically, in order to communicate thoughts and ideas, we use words. In effect then, words contain our thoughts and ideas. These containers travel along the conduit to the hearers of the words, who must then build their understanding of the thoughts and ideas.

Prior to the funnelling of theoretical knowledge into schools a level of translation takes place. This so-called 'readying process' is where 'theoretical knowledge is made practical' (Schwab 1971, 1973 cited in Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p. 9). Travelling through the conduit and reaching schools by means of a 'funnel', such policy statements and documents arrive in schools stripped of their theoretical depth and are communicated to teachers as a 'rhetoric of conclusions' (ibid)

- **Sacred Stories: A Rhetoric of Conclusions**

These stories seem to be elusive expressions of stories that cannot be fully and directly told because they live...in the arms and bellies of the celebrants. These stories lie too deeply in the consciousness of people to be directly told.

(Crites 1971 cited in Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.8)

'Sacred stories' are made manifest in the relationship between theory and practice. These narratives are the policy stories which are 'dripped down the conduit' as a 'moral, abstract rhetoric of conclusions' (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.10) as "theory driven views of practice shared by practitioners, policy-makers and theoreticians" (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p.25). They are characterized by entrenched ascriptions regarding the hierarchical relationship between theory and practice, wherein theory always reigns supreme (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.8). In deploying the 'language of abstraction' as opposed to the language

of story, such policies are funnelled “into schools and inhabit the communal professional space in schools as a ‘rhetoric of conclusions’” (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.14).

This creates moral dilemmas for teachers based on the epistemological gaps between teachers’ personal practical knowledge and the hypothetical abstractions of policy-makers. Indeed, Clandinin and Connelly contend that:

Nothing comes through the conduit as merely theoretical knowledge to be known and understood: it always comes as an implied prescription for teachers’ actions.

(Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.14)

- **Secret Stories**

To reiterate: this inquiry covers a time of the development of “a rapid and unprecedented policy ensemble in teacher education in ‘austerity Ireland’” (Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, p. 3). As a result, teachers in Ireland were subjected to an inordinate amount of policy change. Passing through ‘the funnel’ as a ‘rhetoric of conclusions’ this has had a major effect on the interface between theory and practice on teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes. While such landscapes explicate teacher knowledge in terms of space, time, and place, teachers’ stories are played out in two distinct arenas: namely, their classrooms; and ‘other professional communal places’ on the landscape’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.25). Secret stories of teaching then are the narratives of practice which take place inside the perceived safe space of individual teacher classrooms (ibid).

- **Cover Stories**

Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and sustain their teacher stories.

(Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p. 25)

Teachers regularly ‘cross the boundaries’ from their classrooms to other communal professional spaces. Understood as “a place of moral persuasion and of abstract knowledge” (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p. 14), these spaces are “littered with prescriptions” and “filled with ‘other peoples’ visions of what is right” (Clandinin *and* Connelly 1996, p.25). It is here, in these communal professional spaces, that teachers learn and use the ‘language of the conduit’: which is to say, *plans, results, evaluation, learning outcomes, and goals*. And it is in communal spaces, outside their personal classrooms that teachers confront the epistemological lacunae between their practical expertise and the conjectural knowledge of policy-makers. In consequence, teachers resort to constructing personal ‘cover stories’ which dovetail with ‘school stories’. Thus, cover stories are narratives teachers construct in order to reconcile the moral and epistemological dilemmas created between policy and practice.

1.8 The Quest

The quest of this inquiry to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers to light in order to advance understanding of issues related to school-based teacher education was my overriding consideration as I evaluated suitable research paradigms and methodologies. I largely use the notion of a journey to convey this exploration since as an educator/researcher I have undergone ‘puzzled paradigms’ and journeyed through the ‘methodological maze’ (Chapter 6). My narrative of experience (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) and thinking with theory through my engagement with relevant philosophers (Chapter 5) have supported the identification of the narrative threads in the inquiry which, in turn, influenced choices and decisions in relation to research methodology. (Chapters 6 and 7) This has led me to privilege the concept of ‘story’ as the golden thread guiding the inquiry.

1.8.1 The Power of Story

This inquiry foregrounds the importance and the power of story to create new knowledge and elucidate our everyday experiences.

Guided by Kearney, it is clear that storytelling opens up a “shareable world” that enables us to become “full agents of our own history” (Kearney 2002, p 3). I maintain that stories are “indispensable ingredients of any meaningful society” (ibid p.4). I further assert that “teachers and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, p.2). Moreover, I argue that application of a narrative approach widens the scope of this research and enables it to delve into teachers’ stories to live by far more insightfully than more traditional research methods. (Leitch, 2006, p. 550). It also affords an opportunity to challenge the current policy status quo by evoking emotional responses in the reader through verisimilitude (Denzin 2018, p.678). This, I argue will go some way towards ensuring that teachers’ personal and professional stories of practice may be heard and influence the future stories of TE policy in Ireland. The power of story to create new knowledge and understanding is further developed in section 5.6.

1.8.2 Narrative Inquiry: Journeying to Escape the Tentacles of the Grand

Narrative of Formalistic Research - ‘*I just want to tell the story!*’

Guided once again by my quest to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into

the open, I journeyed toward narrative. Since I hold that life “is filled with narrative fragments enacted in storied moments of time and space” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.17), in committing to ‘tell the story’ of teachers’ experiences as they find themselves in the midst of the policy shift towards acknowledging and developing the school as a site for teacher education, I was drawn to narrative inquiry. Like Clandinin and Connelly, I take narrative inquiry to be “a dynamic process of living, and telling stories, and reliving and retelling stories, not only those of participants but those of researchers as well” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. xiv). I further concur that “the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, p.10). In addition, I trust that this approach will honour the voices which have been absent from the policy discourse and interrupt the contemporary policy landscape, thereby meeting the aim of this inquiry. In opting for a narrative methodology, I seek to present teachers’ stories from school in a manner which legitimates their authenticity while simultaneously identifying emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. My journey to narrative and my exploration of narrative inquiry is further outlined in section 6.5.

1.8.3 The Multiple ‘I’s

Researcher!

Teacher educator▲

Policy-maker▲

School leader▲

Teacher▲

Since narrative inquiry is a ‘personal experience method’, my experience as a educator/researcher is deemed legitimate to the inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 1994, p.418 Carey 2014, McGarrigle 2018). It “characteristically begins with the researchers’ autobiographically-oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.4). Hence, the starting point of this inquiry is my own personal narrative of experience elaborated in terms of the multiple ‘I’s. These ‘I’s comprise my personal narratives of experience as teacher, school leader, and policy-maker, and are further overlaid with my lived narrative during the inquiry itself and the narrative I constructed of these experiences. These narratives of the multiple ‘I’s are further developed in part 1 of this research text. Chapter two explores my narrative as teacher, school leader and researcher which chapter 4 outlines my

experiences as a policy maker in the policy landscape. The development of these narratives of experience included the story of my changing identity from school leader to teacher educator. These multi-layered narratives are key to the research story. Each one provides a unique and nuanced lens to explore the ‘sacred, secret and cover stories’ played out on teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes and is filtered through engagement with theory over the course of the research journey. Through the application of relevant theory and ‘multiple I’s’, these multi-layered narratives formulated the personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF) through which the ‘stories from school’ were analysed, interpreted, and retold. This final research text represents the culmination of the voices and embodied narrative of experiences of practising teachers elicited by the PAIF understood as the multiple ‘I’s in this inquiry.

1.8.4 Personal Autobiographical Interpretative Framework

Engagement with philosophers } *The self as multiple ‘I’s framed by thinking with*
 Navigating the methodological maze } *theory*

The self as teacher researcher: research journey ▲

The self as teacher educator ▲

The self as policy maker ▲

The self who leads ▲

The self who teaches ▲

Guided by my growing self-identification of researcher as bricoleur theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) and the advice that a researchers epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises guide the research paradigm (ibid), I wanted to ensure that my experience, values and subjectivity were central to the interpretative framework. As a result, the PAIF is a concept which I developed over the course of the inquiry. This enabled me to ensure that my practitioner/researcher positionality was clearly articulated and fore fronted in the interpretative framework used in the analysis and construction of the stories of experiences which are re told in part two of this research text. The graphic representation of this presented in Chapter 5 (fig.3 59) draws together the exploration of my personal narrative and my engagement with key theorists. Beginning with question ‘who is the self that teaches?’ (Palmer 1998) and ending with the Triple Tale, this graphic is the synthesis oof the first section of the thesis and is the interpretative framework which I have named Dorothy as the composite

character who engages with teachers' Stories from school'. The exploration of the multiple 'I's led to the explicit articulation of the narrative threads which are the values and beliefs which I hold as an educator. These then influenced my reading and exploration of key theorists named in the graphic.

1.8.5 Thinking with Theory: Theoretical Bricolage

'Thinking with theory' is axiomatic to all aspects of the inquiry, and as such, permeates all aspects of my personal narrative, my journey through the methodological maze, and the crafting of the novellas. The overarching macro-level theories through which we come to know teachers' 'stories from school' are interdisciplinary and obtain to Foucault's theory of power relations and Bourdieu's social field theory.

Foucault's theory of power relations offers a number of key ideas to consider the 'sacred, secret and cover stories' played out on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, including his primary concepts of disciplinary power, panoptic surveillance, pastoral power, and false freedoms. Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes are influenced by various societal institutions such as the DES, the Inspectorate and the Teaching Council, therefore they experience all of the above concepts in their daily experiences in school. For example, the tools of disciplinary power, hierarchical observation; normalizing judgment; and examination are used by the Inspectorate to control and assess what teachers do. In addition, the unannounced inspection visits to schools, which have become a regular occurrence, ensure that teachers experience a high level of panoptic surveillance where the possibility of observation is ever present. Finally, the Teaching Council exercises pastoral power over teachers through the self-regulation and may lead teacher to experience false freedoms where they felt they are active agents in their professional lives and this may not necessarily be the case. These concepts are further elucidated in Chapter 5 'Thinking with theory' section 5.3

Bourdieu's social theory also provides useful 'thinking tools' (Lingard *et al.* 2003, p.61) with which to contemplate the macro influences on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, such as the concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus*; an understanding of which supports an exploration of the stories situated on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes.

For the purposes of this inquiry, the multiple relevant fields arranged in a hierarchical manner

comprise the economic field, the political field, and, of course, the educational policy field. All of which influence teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. This is the habitus in which teachers experiences of practice are played out. Habitus' describes the way people habitually behave social arenas in particular fields of practice. Capital is the means by which a person can progress in any particular field. Capital may be considered to be economic, cultural, social or symbolic. A more in-depth exploration of the key thinking tools of Bourdieu's social theory is included in Chapter 5, section 5.6

Building and exploring the multiple 'I's enabled me to identify the key themes and narrative threads (4.2.8) central to the interpretative bricolage I devised as my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF). This guided my navigation through the methodological maze, leading me to oppose and resist the grand narrative of formalistic research, (Clandinin and Connelly 200) and identify as a narrative bricoleur theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Through thinking with theory then, I developed a multidisciplinary theoretical bricolage based on the concept of teachers' stories enacted on their professional knowledge landscapes as illustrated in Figure 2 (5.8)

1.9 Character Revisited: Derbhile becomes *Dorothy* and Uncovers the 'Triple Tale'

Having explored and filtered the multiple I's through engagement with theory I discerned certain narrative threads (5.1.1) which articulate the core values and beliefs I have always tacitly held, but which were brought into sharp relief though my research journey. These threads are reflected in my personal autobiographical interpretative framework. I have chosen to denominate this interpretative framework as a composite character: namely, *Dorothy* from *The Wizard of Oz*. The transformation from Derbhile to *Dorothy* bespeaks the journey undertaken in the course of the inquiry during which *Dorothy* journeys forth to listen to and tell the stories which are the phenomenon of this inquiry. The 'triple tale'* consists of:

{ *The Wizard of Oz*
The Tale of the Pied Piper
The Emperor's New Clothes! }

* Story synopses are available in Appendix 3

My understanding of neoliberalism as the overarching system of power in which policy-makers

operate has led me to uncovering the ‘triple tale’:

- *The Pied Piper* of neoliberalism (Mooney Simmie 2012) was the first step in this journey. Neoliberalism is the global ‘sacred story’ of neoliberal values, accountability, and performativity, in which all sacred stories are couched. This is the outer element of the theoretical bricolage (Figure 2, (5.8)) and a working metaphor for the socio-political context of ‘Stories from School’.
- *The Wizard of Oz* is the metaphor for the sacred stories of policy-makers whose work is also influenced by the global sacred story, since, like Foucault, I have come to view policy-makers as controlled by macro systems of power, namely the OECD, GERM and the European Union (Sellar and Lingard 2013; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020). This stance leads me to question the acceptance of the wisdom, knowledge, and power of policy-makers.

To pursue the metaphor still further, I denote ‘the yellow brick road’ as ‘the grand narrative of formalistic research’ (Clandinin *and* Connolly 2000). Again, in line with Foucault, I consider this ‘grand narrative’ to be a system of power in which researchers are expected to abide by prescribed codes, obscure subjectivity, and carry out research which rests in more positivistic paradigms in order to derive transferrable findings.

For the purposes of this research journey Derbhile assumes the personae of *Dorothy* when all elements of the interpretative bricolage have been uncovered. She is the composite avatar representing the various elements of the interpretive bricolage through which these stories are crafted. As *Dorothy*, I both hear and feel the advice to ‘follow the yellow brick road’ of formalistic research but choose a different path in order to explore the power and knowledge of the *Wizard of Oz*. Journeying as *Dorothy* I meet my companion story-tellers and join them on their professional knowledge landscape and explore their ‘stories to live by’ (Schaefer and Clandinin 2019). I do so in a bid to understand their cover stories and identify and give utterance to their secret stories so that the tellers of sacred stories may come to know teachers’ stories which articulate teachers embedded embodied knowledge of practice in a meaningful subjective manner.

- This brings us to the third and final tale: *The Emperor’s New Clothes!* I maintain peddlers of the sacred stories of policy-makers to be stripped of theoretical basis and understanding; while those who lack sufficient critical insight to recognise this as the characters who flatter the emperor, eschew the truth, and persuade him to parade naked

around the streets of his kingdom. The parade then equates to the policy parade, and the emperor to Teacher Education policy in Ireland.

The ‘triple tale’ comes together when I question whether this research will enable me to be the child in the story, who on seeing the policy parade shouts...‘The king is in the altogether’! Engaging with the teachers’ stories as *Dorothy* I was licensed to see ‘the world as otherwise’ (Greene 1995), question the power of the *Wizard of Oz*, and critique the ‘yellow brick road’ of formalistic research. This leads *Dorothy* to have the courage to ask whether she should or could proclaim that ‘the king is in the altogether’ in the teacher education policy parade.

1.10 Resolution: The Research Text

This research text is divided into two sections. Part 1: ‘Building the Bricolage’ and Part Two: ‘Stories from School’. While the thesis is divided into two parts which are presented in a very different manner in terms of format and writing style each part depends on the other for completeness in the inquiry. Both are necessary to ensure that the inquiry is presented with scholarship, rigour, verisimilitude and veracity thus creating new knowledge and ensuring a significant contribution to the field of research in Teacher Education.

In Part one of this research text, the theme, setting, problem, and quest in the narrative of this inquiry are identified and explored through a process of autobiographical triangulation. This is supported by the PAIF developed in the course of the research journey. As a result, this section of the thesis represents the living and reliving, and telling and retelling, of my own story in a multi-layered way. In the course of my research journey, I came to understand that I have been working like a bricoleur: a researcher who has learnt to borrow from many different disciplines and assemble images and ideas into a montage (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) and understand that this inquiry is situated “within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5). This, in turn, has led me to regard myself as the main character in the narrative of this inquiry: as a teacher/ researcher acting as a narrative bricoleur-theorist (ibid). My personal narrative also uses photographs and artefacts. This is supported by the following pertinent quotation which provided a signpost for me in the ‘methodological maze’:

The product of the interpretive bricoleur’s labor is a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.

(Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.6)

The ‘interpretative bricolage’ (ibid) is composed of my personal autobiographical framework (PIAF) while the narrative threads identified through the exploration of my personal narrative is the loom on which the fabric of this inquiry is woven. This interpretative bricolage is nested in the theoretical bricolage (theoretical framework) which has placed the concept of teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes within the macro level theories of Foucault and Bourdieu. Working “between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5), as a narrative bricoleur-theorist, I present the research text in the form of an assemblage (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.1) which:

...isn’t a thing: it is the *process* of making and unmaking the thing. It is the process of arranging, organising and fitting together. (ibid)

Part two of the research text is the retelling of teachers stories to live by illuminated in the inquiry as ‘Stories from School’. I have used the tools of fiction, building this section of the thesis in both prose and poetic form;(Richardson 1994 ;Leavy 2013, 2015) some of which I present as poetic performance scripts (Pelias, 2005; Denzin 2006; Kim 2016; McGarrigle, 2018; Denzin 2018).This term describes poetry which is written for performance rather than for print distribution and therefore is “not a retelling of experience” rather “ the telling creates the experience”(Denzin 2018, p.678). The layout I have chosen for these texts carries an element of an aural performance to the written text: this was not planned. These texts are the result of engagement in evocative representations’ and of ‘experimental writing, as a way of knowing’ (Richardson 1994, p.520).

1.10.1 Part 1: Building the Bricolage

Part 1 outlines the key elements of the inquiry, explores the context of the inquiry, my personal narrative and my engagement with theory. It articulates how the PAIF was developed and elucidates the theoretical bricolage. In addition, Part 1 details my journey through the methodological maze and provides justification for the choices which I made in terms of research approach and methodology and how this aligns with the interpretative and theoretical bricolage. This section of the research text should be understood as the product of my research journey as a narrative bricoleur-theorist. As such, it is presented as an assemblage which includes photographs, artefacts, prose, poetry, and performance scripts. I present this exploration of the multiple ‘I’s as a ‘reflexive collage’. Thinking with theory and using writing

as a method of inquiry I engaged in “a dynamic creative process” using writing as a method of discovery (Richardson 1994, p.517).

Chapter 1: *‘What’s the Story’*, has outlined teachers’ stories from school as the research object of the inquiry and has developed key elements of the narrative. Namely, the character, the theme, the setting, the problem and the quest. The concept of Teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes has been outlined and the concept and content of both the interpretative framework and the theoretical framework have been introduced. The Triple tale is introduced, and I explain how I imagine Derbhile becoming Dorothy to represent the interpretive bricolage (PAIF)

Chapter 2: *‘Personal Narrative’* explores my personal narrative as teacher and school leader and researcher. Beginning with the ‘self who teaches and key elements of my development as a teacher, I then move on to explore my journey into and through my leadership years. This includes the narrative of school improvement in the school in which I spent my leadership years. The final section of this chapter communicates how the influence of my previous research and my understanding of key concepts such as school culture, teacher learning, mentoring and reflective practice have framed my thinking in this inquiry.

Chapter 3: *‘Exploring the Landscape’*, explores the TE policy landscape as the context for this inquiry. The policy background for current developments is outlined and this includes an exploration of the economic landscape in which the suite of Teacher Education policies which are the focus of this inquiry were developed and enacted. Both the development and content of this ‘policy ensemble’ is then explored and as I was an active participant in the development of current Teacher Education policy my personal narrative as policy-maker is threaded through this.

Chapter 4: *‘Journeying to the Triple Tale: The self as Teacher Educator’* explores my journey towards identifying as a teacher educator. This includes the narrative of my previous and current research journey and culminates in development of the triple tale. Following the exploration of the experiential artefacts which I have gathered as an educator, the Narrative Threads which are an element of the interpretative bricolage (PAIF) are outlined. As is the Talisman which has accompanied me on this research journey. The research journey thus far is then synthesised in a performance script entitled *‘Millfidh sid an áit (They will ruin the place)’*. This reflective text draws together the theme, setting and quest of the inquiry and

questions if teacher Education policy, influenced by neoliberal discourse causes teachers to lose their ability to critically question as they endeavour to and live up to the ‘good girl’ ideal (Santoro 2017, p 54).

Chapter 5, ‘*Thinking with Theory*’, outlines my engagement with relevant philosophers and theory and draws together the interpretative and theoretical bricolage. It enlarges upon my engagement with philosophy as the theoretical basis of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF). In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical bricolage is outlined through further exploration of Foucault’s theory of power relations and Bourdieu’s social field theory. Guided by the narrative threads this chapter is structured around the key themes of: Power and its relationship to knowledge and truth, care and the importance of dialogue and relationships in the educational endeavour, the importance of imagination and creativity in supporting the development of critical insight and privileging the power of story to create new knowledge and understandings about everyday experiences

Chapter 6, ‘*The methodological Maze*’, is an attempt to share with you, the reader, the narrative of the methodological element of my research journey. The chapter links my research journey to the narrative threads, and it includes a brief outline of my exploration of puzzling paradigms and my qualitative quest. The concept of bricolage is developed and the rationale for choosing to identify as a narrative bricoleur theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) is explained. My journey to narrative is then explored. This concludes with a brief discussion of narrative inquiry and outlines how, in my journey through the methodological maze I found my way to Arts based narrative inquiry (ABNI)

1.10.2 Part 2: Stories from School

This section of the thesis is the retelling of teachers’ ‘Stories from School’. It commences by outlining the steps taken to gather and construct the stories. To this end, I detail the theory, personal thoughts, and choices which guided my actions throughout.

Chapter 7: ‘*The Gift of Stories*’ considers the way this research text has been devised as an ‘assemblage’, using Arts-based research methods. (de Mello 2006, Leitch 2006, Estrella and Forinash 2007, Barone and Eisner 2012, Kim 2016, Leavy 2013, 2018, McGarrigle 2018) These include ‘writing as a method of inquiry’ (Richardson 1994, 2018), creative non-fiction

(Leavy 2013; Sinner 2010; Sinner *et al* 2018), and poetry and performance as a way of presenting ‘razor sharp glimpses’(Craig 2018, p.309) of teachers’ embedded, embodied, knowledge of practice (Craig 2018).

Chapters 8 through 13 are (re)presentations of the ‘stories from school’. Accompanied by her research companions, *Dorothy*, the educator/researcher ‘enters in the midst’ of stories lived and told. Teachers’ ‘stories to live by’ articulated in these chapters lead us to new ways of imagining and reimagining (Craig 2018, p.309) teachers’ experiences at ‘the fault line between theory, policy and practice’ (Craig 2018, p.302). The stories are grouped under key themes which were highlighted in the secondary analysis which came about as the (re)presentation of the stories moved from novellas to vignettes. The themes are: The self who teaches, The courage to care, School leadership, School based teacher Education, Teacher learning and Sacred, Secret and Cover stories. Each theme is presented in an individual chapter.

The stories in part wo of the thesis were crafted from ‘narrative conversations’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1994, p.422; Speedy 2008; Leitch 2006) recorded over the course of one academic year. This conversational approach proved to be most effective since, “conversations are marked by equality among participants and involves active listening where responses are a way of deepening the conversations” (ibid). In order to interpret, analyse, and present our conversations as stories, I used creative non-fiction (Leavy 2013, p.34, Sinner *et al* 2018, p 116) to craft one novella for each of my research companions. Creative non-fiction is “fact-based writing that uses techniques of fiction to bring stories to life” (Sinner *et al* 2018, p.3). I maintain that applying creative non-fiction in this way ensures that research becomes available “beyond the academy” (Leavy 2013, p.36). In support of the use of creative nonfiction in academic writing Leavy states:

...creative nonfiction, within and beyond the academy, has changed how many view academic writing and has brought the tools of literary fiction into the researchers purview. (Leavy, 2013 p.36)

Like Leavy I argue that “When stories are expressed well, readers are more deeply impacted’ and that ‘a well written ‘story’ has the potential to be long remembered’ (ibid, p.35). I believe that my quest to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the light is achieved in an accessible manner which will be “long remembered”. As I worked towards completion it became increasingly clear that I would be unable to reconcile presenting the novellas in their entirety with maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of my research companions. I therefore engaged in secondary analysis of the novellas and splintered the characters (the

opposite of a composite character). Consequently, the stories are presented in this final public research text as thematically grouped vignettes.

Chapter 14: *'Reminding; Selling; Telling; Leaving'*, The summative chapter is a synthesis of the inquiry which aims to provide closure for the reader and place the 'gift of stories' gently in the hearts of those who accepted the Chapter 7 invitation to become 'a beginner, learner or explorer', 'break free and see the world as otherwise'. (Green 1995) This includes a brief reminder of the theme, setting and quest of the inquiry. There is also a reminder of the methodological choices made during the research journey and the key ideas in the triple Tale are revisited. Dorothy becomes Derbhile and a synthesis of the 'Stories from school' in the form of poetic performance scripts is included.

The significance of the inquiry in terms of research, teacher education and my personal journey is outlined. Finally, the overall aim of the inquiry is considered, and the chapter concludes with an exploration of 'resonant narrative threads' developed as 'wonderings' in 'conversation with distant friends.

1.11 Conclusion

[This introductory chapter has utilised the elements of narrative text structure to invite the reader into the story of this inquiry. I have outlined the theme, the setting, the problem, and the quest, which are central to the narrative. I have introduced the characters and elucidated the concept of the triple tale. I have provided a brief introduction to my methodological choices and foregrounded my personal subjectivity in the inquiry. Finally, I have outlined how I came to assemble this research text using writing as a method of inquiry and the tools of creative non-fiction.

In inviting you into the narrative of the inquiry, I acknowledge that reading this thesis may be a bumpy ride. It requires the reader to journey with me, enjoy the security of the familiar that is formalistic academic writing, and to then break free, take a leap, and ask questions in those sections where I have managed to find my voice and embrace Arts-based methods. This inquiry represents my personal journey to escape the tentacles of the grand narrative of formalistic research. As such, the present thesis is a significant personal milestone in my journey towards Arts-based narrative inquiry and identifying as a bricoleur researcher.

CHAPTER 2: PERSONAL NARRATIVE

...a man [or woman or person] is always a teller of stories; he lives surrounded by his own stories and those of other people, he sees everything that happens to him in terms of these stories and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it.
from Nausea, Jean-Paul Sartre

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins the process of tracing the development of my personal narrative lens. To reiterate: as an educator the multiple 'I's in this inquiry are:

The self as teacher researcher: research journey

The self as teacher educator ▲

The self as policy maker ▲

The self who leads ▲

The self who teaches ▲

The telling of my 'story' as an educator is predicated on the understanding that "as inquirers we meet ourselves in the past, present and the future" (Clandinin and Connolly 2000, p.60). In this chapter I therefore recount "remembered stories...from earlier times as well as more current stories' and acknowledge that they 'all offer plotlines for my future stories'" (ibid). The chapter attempts to capture an exploration of three elements of my PAIF: namely, the self who teaches; the self who leads; and the self as researcher. As such, it presents the first steps in becoming the composite avatar of *Dorothy* as the interpretative framework through which the stories which form the central research object are retold.

In my exploration of my narrative of experience as an educator, I have been guided by Dewey's precept that to study experience is to study life. This study of a life will therefore incorporate "epiphanies 'routines, metaphors and everyday actions'" (Clandinin and Connolly 1994, p.415) in the full awareness that in recalling writing, reflecting on, and retelling of these stories, I function as both the narrator and subject of the narrative. Bruner (2004) further elaborates on this stance and explains that:

The story of one's own life is, of course, a privileged but troubled narrative in the sense that it is reflexive; the narrator and the central figure in the narrative are the same. This reflexivity creates dilemmas.

(Bruner, 2004, p.693)

I recognise the dynamic nature of my narrative of experience as one such dilemma since "in the construction of narratives of experience there is a reflexive relationship between living a

life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story” (Clandinin and Connolly 1994, p.418). This underscores the interactional relationship between elements of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF) in the course of the inquiry. Guided by Denzin, I understand that:

In bringing the past into the autobiographical present, I insert myself into the past and create the conditions for rewriting and hence experiencing it.

(Denzin 2006, p 334)

The development of the story of my personal journey as an educator and the ensuing identification of the narrative threads which are central to my PAIF have been influenced by an engagement with philosophy which has caused me to question the nature of truth, knowledge, and reality (Chapter 5). Since I readily concur that “autobiography is always a re-presentation that is a retelling, since the life to which it supposedly refers is already a kind of narrative construct” (Molloy 1991, p.5), the present exploration of ‘the self who teaches’, and my journey towards and through school leadership rests on the assumption that “life is not ‘how it was’ but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold” (Bruner 2004, p.708).

The following story, shaped by my “personal and social history” (Clandinin and Connolly 1994, p.415) is deeply reflexive. Having considered the “representation of experience, the interpretation and reconstruction of experience and appropriate text forms” (ibid, p.417), this thesis includes elements of “writing as a way of knowing”. I maintain such “experiential artefacts” (ibid) can evoke a deeper sense of my remembering of “personal and social history”. I recognise that there are characteristics of ‘performative writing’ (Pelias 2005) in my choices of (re)presentation. Like Pelias I believe that performative writing “features lived experience’ and illuminates “iconic moments that call forth the complexities of human life” (Pelias 2005, p.418). As such, these artefacts are presented in the form of photographs, prose, and poetic performance scripts, which I believe allows for the articulation of the “raw and genuine through form” and ‘poetic expression’ (ibid)As previously explained; the term ‘poetic performance script’ refers to poetry which is written for performance rather than for print distribution. The poetic performance script below demonstrates my use of ‘writing as a way of knowing’ and is presented here to introduce the reader to Derbhile the teacher researcher.

2.1.1 Who am I? Today, Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today!

Today!

Today! ...I am a Teacher Educator.
Today I am in my 'happy place',
nestled between mountain and sea.

Today! ...is clear and calm.
Blue sky as far as the eye can see;
the beach,
the mountains,
the sea.
So beautiful it takes my breath away.

Today! ...I am a Teacher Educator.
Today I am in my 'happy place';
under the mountain where we scattered my mother's ashes.

Today! ...is my father's anniversary.
Eighteen years.
So long ago
and yet
only moments since he left us.

Today! ... I am a Teacher Educator.
Inside at last!
And yet,
remaining outside.

Today! ...I understand and believe that I have much to share with teachers:
My love of teaching, and passion for the profession;
knowledge in, for, and of practice,
experience and wisdom
And yet...

Today! ...the college shared a photograph of my graduation on social media.
It is thirty-five years since that day.
So many yesterdays come together today
as I work towards presenting,
re-presenting,
representing,
the multiple 'I's gathered over and through so many yesterdays.

Today! ...I am a teacher educator.
And yet...

Fifty-seven years
of yesterdays
have brought me
to today...



Dr. John Byrne, Cathalín Ní Riordan, Gerardo Chacón and Debra, and Ger Power at the Mary I conference in 2004.

Yesterdays

Yesterday! ...I was the little girl on her first day at school:
proudly wearing the uniform her mother made.

Yesterday! ...I was the middle plodder:
slow to read;
unable to learn her tables.

Yesterday! ... I was the insecure teenager who reached for the stars:
worked hard and
'got the call to teaching'!

Yesterday ...I was a student teacher:
inside at last!
and yet,
remaining outside.

Yesterday! ... I was a teacher:
three schools,
sixteen years of yesterdays.

Yesterday! ... I was a school leader:
inspiring with passion, living through loving.
Fifteen years of yesterdays.

Yesterday! ...I was a policy-maker:
a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland.
Inside at last!
Finding my voice.
And yet,
remaining outside.

Tomorrow?

Tomorrow ...I will get a 'floppy hat'?

Inside at last!

Finding my voice.

And yet...

and yet...

and yet...

Remaining outside.

Today! Yesterday! Tomorrow?

2.2 The ‘self’ that teaches?

Palmer’s question, ‘Who is the self that teaches?’ was the catalyst for the exploration of my personal narrative. In the course of 2016, which coincided with the centenary of the 1916 rising in Ireland, I began to explore my personal narrative. I wrote a considerable amount of prose which I regard as “interim research text” (Clandinin and Connolly 2000). Sometime later I decided to re-work the prose into a poetic script to be heard by an audience rather than presented as written text.

2.2.1 The Self who Teaches: Performance Script

The centenary of the Rising

Family history in shaper focus

Primary sources, artefacts abound

Activists, scholars, artists

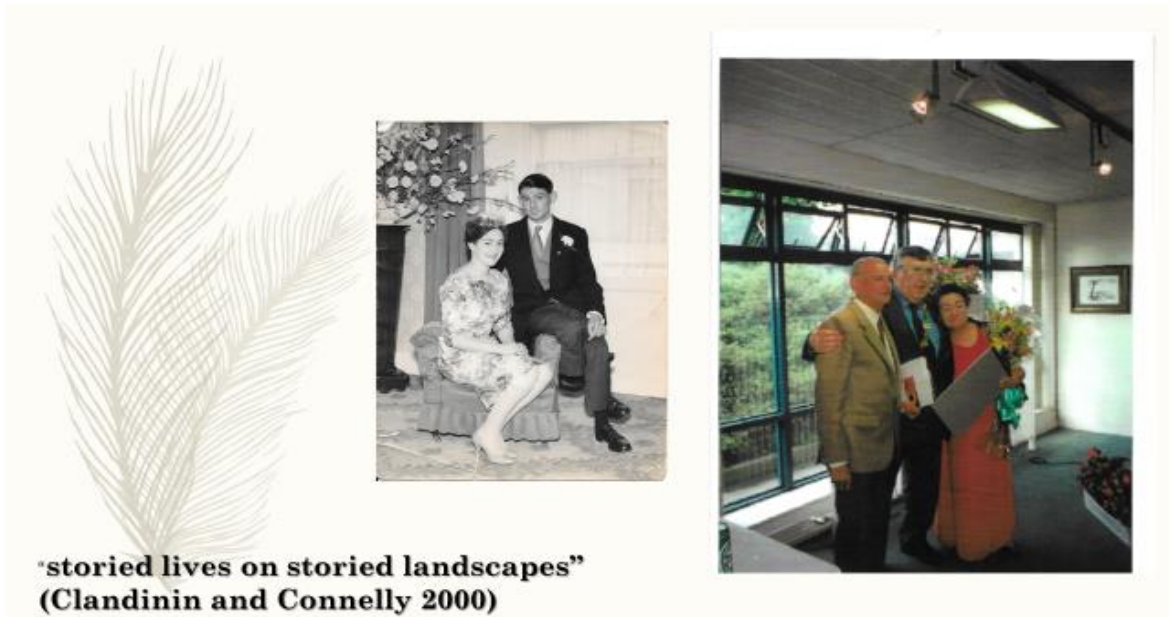
Exhibiting a strong locus of control and sense of self

Influencing the foundation of the state.



Educators, visionaries...

Aunts, uncles, mother, father -
Only graves remain,
Military honours for some.



Poets, actors, playwrights,
Artists, singers, dancers,
The daughter of true thespians
Everything but the much longed for 'ordinary' family.

Siblings.

True diversity.

The actor;

The opera singer;

The engineer;

The teacher.... the 'also ran'.

Artistic ability valued above all else...

What of teaching?

What of leadership?





The apprenticeship of observation
New progressive schools

Firsts...

First to complete in a growing primary school.
First girl in a century old boy's school.
First state funded Jesuit school....

In the world!

A middle plodder.
Supportive school culture; inspirational role models;
Encouragement enthusiasm.

Then the shock...



Teacher Education.
Catholic College.

Keep the head down.
Don't rock the boat.



Millfidh siad an áit!
They will destroy the place!

2.2.2 On Becoming a Teacher

- **The Beginning**

I arrive on the very first morning of my very first teaching practice. It is two weeks before the Christmas holidays, and the school, which I had attended as a child, was a little chaotic due to the Christmas fair which had taken place the day before.

True to form, I had very little awareness of my place in the grand scheme of things. On seeing the classroom needed to be set up again I went about this task with enthusiasm and energy. Years later I learnt this perceived presumption had so annoyed the principal that I would never be employed in that school, despite the ongoing involvement of my parents in the school community.

As it was, things eventually settled down.

As the day progressed, and my first efforts to teach unfolded, I told myself, “Well, I can do this anyway!”

The certainty and simplicity of that youthful me...

What happens that we lose this certainty as we gain experience in life?

How wonderful it would be to have that confidence in myself, that certainty, now.

But, maybe not.

Perhaps it is uncertainty and searching that allows quality, depth, and understanding to flow.

There are other memories of teaching practice: in particular, a male student borrowing my

drama lesson and not returning it in time for the day I needed to teach that lesson.

The day my supervisor told me I needed to rule the blackboard because my writing was not up to standard. This had been a persistent issue for me! In fact, in 4th class I was slapped every day for poor penmanship, and handwriting continued to cause problems right up to the completion of the leaving certificate examination. I wondered how someone with poor handwriting could become a school leader and maintain the roll books. These attendance records kept so meticulously for over a century seemed almost sacred documents to the novice teacher wherein neatness, penmanship, were as greatly prized as administrative accuracy. In any event, my faults were not limited to handwriting. I also struggled with my tables and was very bad at spelling. Throughout my career I have drawn on these childhood weaknesses to ensure my classroom, and later, the entire school, was a safe place to learn: a safe place 'not to know', and where mistakes were seen to provide opportunities for teaching and learning. I soon came to realise that the minutiae are of little consequence to me.

I'm far more interested in the bigger picture.

- **Beginning to Teach**

I began my teaching career in the mid-eighties, following graduation in 1984. Much like the recent past there were very few teaching positions and many newly qualified teachers were obliged to take short-term substitute positions. Unlike, several of my friends, who were appointed immediately, I initially found it difficult to secure a permanent position.

This certainly had a negative impact on my self-image/self-esteem as a teacher and 'the self' of the young teacher. In my first year I taught in four different schools. I was fortunate to be appointed to one of the schools at the end of this year. Unfortunately, the outset of my teaching career was not a positive experience. The culture of teaching and learning in the school did not provide the fertile soil to nurture me into the teacher I had hoped to become. Once again, re-examining this retrospectively through the lens of my growing philosophical framework, engagement with Freire, Buber, Green, Noddings, Foucault and Bourdieu has led me to "be wide awake in the world" (Green 1995) and better apprehend the "undercurrents of power, control and knowledge" (Foucault 1980). I have also come to recognise the centrality of care as a hallmark of my narrative as an educator from the very beginning. As I view my young self with the wisdom of years, experience and engagement with the literature, I have come to echo Kelchtermans' assertion that "Who I am in how I teach is the message" (Kelchtermans 2009). Moreover, in these 'beginning to teach years', my personal life was also developing very quickly. I married and became a mother to three girls within the first six years of my career.

In 'acknowledging the whole of who I am' (Palmer 1998, p.13), I am now aware that my

personal life inevitably influenced my professional journey.

While my beginning to teach experience was less than positive, I now see that my resilience and sense of self enabled me to leave the negative environment which had been the hallmark of that time. Deep within I knew that I was not being the teacher I had intended to be, and held to the kernel of aspiration which enabled me to move from a culture which was not collaborative in any way, and where judgement, isolation, and lack of professional support was the norm. My experience, the environment, and the teacher I had become were antithetical to the values which I now recognise as the narrative threads of my imagined identity as a teacher. If, as Palmer proposes “identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am” (Palmer 1998, p.13), mine were clearly misaligned and I was unable to act with integrity and wholeness:

Identity lies in the diverse forces that make up my life, and integrity lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me to wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death.
(Palmer 1998, p.14)

In confronting the jarring tensions of ‘the self who teaches’ I chose “wholeness and life”, thereby evading the “fragmentation and death” linked to the mismatch of inner and outer forces of my early teaching life. As our school was to lose a teacher due to falling pupil numbers, I took what was considered by many to be a risk and volunteered for redeployment. There was general shock and disbelief that I would give up the seniority garnered through 12 years in the school which secured my position as one of the most senior teachers.

How could I take the risk of ending up in any school, anywhere?

I took the risk in the hope that I could continue teaching from a position of integrity and wholeness.

2.2.3 The Turning Point

Looking back and reflecting on my experience in my next school in the 1996-1997 school year leads me to consider the matter of school leadership. Through this experience I came to know how leadership can impact on teachers’ self, image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, and how leadership style may create or impede a culture for young teachers to flourish.

As I flourished.

Like spring bulbs fed with water and light, I flourished!

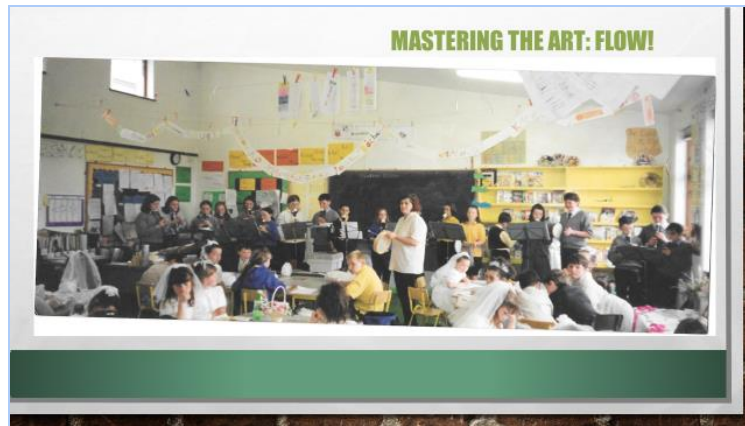
It took just one year in this nurturing environment for me to grow into the teacher I always knew I could be.

Praise and encouragement from the principal were the water and light that I had needed; collegial support and acceptance, the enriching loam.

My twelfth year as a teacher marked my first experience of professional affirmation and respect; the first time I was told I was a ‘good teacher’...

Twelve years in the dark!

2.2.4 Flourishing



At the end of the 1996-1997 academic year I was once again redeployed. I remain the only teacher ever to be redeployed from this school. I secured a position in a school with an excellent reputation for innovation and development. This was hugely helped by the fact that the catchment of the school, and almost the whole parent body, were extremely financially secure. During my years there, I fine-tuned my teaching skills; yet like the aforementioned spring bulb, I began to outgrow my pot. Since I now worked in a school which enabled my professional growth, I had arrived at a plateau of comfortable competence while my tacit knowledge of teaching and learning had flourished. At the same time, I began to develop my own beliefs about the purpose and goals of education and had somewhat outgrown the classroom. Over time, my attention became more focused on whole school matters and big- picture concepts like school vision and mission, school culture, school development, and school improvement. I needed re-potting.

Once more, I chose to take the path of integrity and wholeness by aligning the inner and outer forces that make me ‘who I am’. With the benefits of hindsight and the understanding gained through this research journey, I am confident my need to grow and change was not fuelled by personal power, control, ambition, or ego. Rather, through my experience in three different schools, I had honed a personal vision of how things ‘should be’ in a school to enable the

personal and professional growth of colleagues and create a safe healthy environment for children to recognise and realise their potential. In applying for school leadership positions, I followed the path where I could act with integrity. By this time, I had undertaken a postgraduate course in school leadership, and I encountered that concept of ‘invitational leadership.’ Such leaders operate from a purposefully invitational stance’ through actions which are “intentionally supportive, caring and encouraging” (Stoll and Fink 1995, p.109). I began to identify as an ‘invitational school leader’. I now held a deep conviction that a school could be a positive force in the lives of the entire school community. Key elements of this personal vision included care for the individual and enabling the development of leadership in all. I felt compelled to make this happen.

However, like anything worthwhile, the move to school leadership did not come easily.

2.2.5 Leaning towards Leadership

Gradually ‘the self who teaches’ began to develop a rich understanding of how a school could be. I maintained that placing an enriched apprehension of core values such as care, respect, trust, and integrity, at the forefront of school life would promote a more effective learning environment. Following several unsuccessful attempts to secure a leadership position, in the year 2000 I enrolled in a postgraduate course in Educational Leadership and Management. This first year of the new millennium also saw the death of my mother.

Undertaking the course entailed midweek travel to attend university one afternoon per week. To this end, I applied to the Board of Management for the necessary afternoon leave and arranged substitute teaching cover. The Board debated my application until very late in the evening and ultimately declined my request. Following the meeting, the acting principal of the time explained that my efforts for professional development were not supported and I would be unable to do the course. This was in direct contravention of the Education Act (1988) which directly stipulates that the principal shall:

...be responsible for the creation, together with the board, parents of students and the teachers, of a school environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers.

(Section 23 (2)(C), Education Act 1988)

While I now concede there may have been legitimate reasons for such a decision, no explanation was offered. Not wishing to appear litigious, I nonetheless informed the acting principal that this was unacceptable and that I would find a way to do the course. Thereafter, rather than taking the afternoon off, the newly confirmed principal allowed me to leave the

school 15 minutes early. This meant that I was late for the first lecture every week. However, I worked around this with the understanding of those teaching the course, and despite this lack of professional support and the untimely death of my father prior to the second year of the course, I attained First-Class Honours in Higher Diploma in Educational Management and Administration (HDEA) in 2002.

2.3 The ‘Self who Leads: Turning a School around

I set about applying for positions as principal teacher. In all I applied for four positions, including the position of principal teacher in the school in which I was working. A leap of faith led me to apply for and ultimately accept the position of school leader in what could be termed a “struggling school” or indeed a “sinking school” (Stoll and Fink 1995, p.85).

The majority of Irish primary schools are ‘small schools’ wherein the principal teacher also undertakes a fulltime teaching remit. In my naiveté, I failed to query whether the position was purely administrative or that of a teaching principal. However, it was evident that enrolment was falling, classrooms were empty, teacher morale and staff numbers were at an all-time low, and there were persistent issues with pupil behaviour and discipline.

2.3.1 My Story from School: as Narrated by a Colleague

I begin my narrative of ‘the self who leads with ‘My Story from School’ as told through a colleague. This story has been edited by me into stanza form (after Speedy 2001) from a speech which she made at one of several social events to celebrate my retirement:

Derbhile

Our principal, colleague and friend, Derbhile de Paor,
was a bit of an unknown quantity.
Female, young, very experienced, and obviously ambitious.
Passionate about her chosen profession.
Child-focused, progressive in her outlook;
outspoken, honest, caring, thoughtful.
Sympathetic to children, parents and teachers alike.
A teeny-weeny bit anti-establishment/revolutionary.
She holds certain convictions about the “art of teaching”;
about “quality teaching and learning”.
She will not compromise on these convictions.
And we applaud her for that.

Derbhile laughed with us,
cried with us,

celebrated with us,
drank with us,
sang with us,
argued with us,
disagreed with us,
and danced with us.....

But at the end of the day, we remained a united school staff.
We appreciate your wholehearted dedication to education in our school.
For believing in children.
For guiding them, and us, through example.
For inspiring with passion; for living through loving.
For leaving an indelible mark on the future of so many.
Derbhile, you have made all the difference.
We wish you health, happiness, and success,
in the next chapter of the adventure
that is your life-story.

2.3.2 Inspiring with Passion: Living through Loving

The story of this ‘turn around’ was long and multifaceted. During my first year in the school several events which I organised and managed clearly signalled my values and principles as a school leader: namely, the first school assembly; a meeting with parents, staff, and the Board of Management to draft a code of behaviour; a whole school Nativity which was performed in the local parish church; two pivotal conversations; and an Arts Week. These were the concrete manifestation of what I now conceive as the narrative threads’ in my life as an educator.

- **Reach for the Stars**

The first whole school assembly sent out a clear message of my vision for the children and the importance of the Arts.

The school hall was filled with children and staff; all equally curious and anxious to see the new principal. I pressed play on my tape-recorder and the S Club 7 pop song ‘*Reach for the Stars*’ which was popular at the time, and that my family had danced around the kitchen to on Christmas morning that year - the first without my mother - rang out:

*When the world, leaves you feeling blue
You can count on me, I will be there for you.
When it seems, all your hopes and dreams
Are a million miles away, I will re-assure you...*

The children looked doubtfully at each other; the staff shifted uncomfortably:

*We've got to all stick together,
Good friends, there for each other.
Never ever forget that
I've got you and you've got me, so....*

Then I began to sing along. Just me. Standing at the top of the school hall. A lone voice. The 170 young faces staring at me; although a few began to smile:

*...Reach for the stars!
Climb every mountain higher!
Reach for the stars!
Follow your heart's desire!
Reach for the stars!
And when that rainbow's shining over you,
That's when your dreams will all come true.*

During the chorus, I began to dance and sway while singing, and pumped the air every time I sang the word 'reach'. I began to wonder if I had gone too far. The children seemed more dubious than ever and looked around at each other in a questioning manner. Then slowly, some children joined in the singing, and some began to move their arms:

*There's a place waiting just for you.
It's a special place where your dreams all come true.
Fly away, swim the ocean blue,
Drive that open road, leave the past behind you.
Don't stop, gotta keep moving.
Your hopes have gotta keep building.
Never, ever forget that
I got you and you got me, so...*

At last we were all singing and reaching for the stars. The new mime of 'I've got you and you've got me' took hold as I pointed to the children and myself and they copied:

*Don't believe in all that you've been told.
The skies the limit; you can reach your goal.
No-one knows just what the future holds.
There ain't nothing you can't be -
There's a whole world at your feet.*

Certainly, at that moment no one knew what the future held for our school community. In order to 'reach for the stars' we needed to believe in ourselves and reject 'all that we had been told' about both ourselves and our school:

*I said "REACH!
Climb every mountain!
REACH!
Reach for the moon!
REACH!"*

This moment inaugurated the building of shared vision and values. In addition, it was the beginning of the seldom articulated but tacit understanding that 'in our school we sing...every day!' From that first assembly we continued to have assemblies; initially, weekly; and then monthly. In later years, I stepped back from leading the assemblies, and each class took turns in leading one assembly in the year.

- **Building Partnership**

I have always conceptualised school improvement in terms of the layers of an onion. While the flaky external layers are visible and easy to remove, in time the inner layers of the onion as the focus for continuing to be an improving school may prove harder to identify and are not so immediately obvious.

Active listening is key to identifying shared issues to focus on. Listening with head and heart enabled me to hear the thoughts ideas and feelings of members of the school community, and to ringfence the values and ideals which were most important to members of that community. For example, following discussions, we decided to work towards our first Green Flag: an environmental awareness and care award given to schools who take on initiatives in relation to the environment. It was actually a pupil who first alerted me to this. Shortly after, a parent brought the concept to my attention.

Even later still, a member of staff brought the idea up at a staff meeting. The dots were joining. I therefore capitalised on this enthusiasm for the project and worked with staff, parents, and children, to prepare our application for the first Green Flag. By the time I left the leadership position in the school, five green flags were flying on flagpoles outside our school. In addition, in the month before I finally finished in the school, Minister for Education, Jan O’Sullivan, raised our Active School Flag which we were awarded for the promotion of physical activities. In subscribing to the notion of ‘distributed leadership’ as “a web of leaders, followers and their situation” (Spillane 2006, p.3) I did not spearhead any of these projects. Rather, I assumed the role of ‘leader among leaders’, and supported the shared leadership and responsibility of others within the school.

On appointment, development of an agreed Code of Behaviour was the first outside layer of the onion to be addressed. The manner in which I went about this laid the foundations for building partnership rooted in respectful trusting relationships. The first step was to invite all parents and staff to an evening meeting. The postgraduate course I was doing at that time had afforded me many valuable ideas and resources for facilitating such a large gathering. There was a very large turnout at the meeting as many parents wanted to find out what the new principal was like. Since there had been considerable dissatisfaction with my predecessor and several of the parents had been quite vocal and demanding in the months prior to my appointment, I thought long and hard about the signals I would give out.

I began the meeting by introducing myself. I then invited a parent to light a large white candle. As she was doing so, I explained that we should consider this light to be a symbol of our hopes and dreams for our school community as we embarked on our work. I then outlined some broad guidelines from the DES regarding partnership in the development of school policies, and in particular, the development of a Code of Behaviour. In order to ensure that everyone had a voice and negativity was kept to a minimum, I broke the large group into smaller discussion groups to debate key questions. The result of these discussions were reported in a plenary session and recorded on flipcharts. This material provided the basis for our shared understanding and beliefs in relation to behaviour management in our school. We then nominated parents, staff, and members of the Board of Management, to form a committee to develop the policy. The meeting was extremely productive and laid the foundation for positive relationships founded on mutual respect and trust which were vital for our school to move forward as an improving school.

- **Building Community**

It is Christmas.

The village is buzzing.

Cars pulling up, excited children everywhere.

Families walking together from home to the church...

I had collated material from the Catholic Religion Programme to compile a whole school Nativity play. Each class performed a little scene, a song, and a poem, with each teacher responsible for preparing their own class. My role was managing and co-ordinating the event. With all the children, parents and grandparents, and members of the wider community in the church, we had to plan seating arrangements very carefully. In fact, rostrums and benches had to be transported from the school to the church which created its own buzz in the village. Parents with trailers transported the largest items while the senior children carried chairs and benches to the church.

Outside the church the village seems empty now.

The excitement, joy and chatter has moved inside the church.

As Master of Ceremonies for the evening, I move to the lectern to begin.

It takes a few attempts to calm the excitement and chatter.

Eventually, coupled with a frisson of excitement,

silence and calmness descends...

...I light a candle.

Once again, I used the symbol of light to foster a sense of belonging and to build community. Conscious that not all are believers in the Catholic faith, and that for many, being in the church was a rare event, I used the candle to emphasise the importance of inclusivity; of respecting the values and beliefs of others.

*I say:
“I light a candle for all of us, whatever our doubts or beliefs are.
The light is a symbol of the force for good in the universe.
A positive energy to bring us together on this special evening
for our school community.”*

On that night, our school reached out into the wider community and impacted the energy of the entire village. Parents, staff, and children began to appreciate the value of shared endeavour to build a sense of community, shared values, and identity. This beginning was an early indicator of my interest and experience in the Arts and an effective illustration of the impact this would have on the school community which I was leading. Over the years we enjoyed many such events either in the community hall or the church. My personal highlight was the staging of a musical with all the children from 3rd to 6th class in which we used two stages on different levels and the children had the opportunity to work with a professional choreographer and musicians.

- **Building Relationships**

Around this time, I had two conversations which I realised were pivotal in how I promoted and modelled positive relationships founded on mutual respect: one with a parent; and one with a colleague. The first occurred at the school gate as I walked to my car after a busy, eventful day. A parent had come to complain about a child who had been hurting and bullying other children for some time. I had been dealing with this on a regular basis: imposing sanctions; providing supports: and working with his parents.

The family were ‘on the margins’ in the community and faced many challenges. The parent, a mother, outlined her legitimate grievance to me, but followed this up with the remark “I hear that mother isn’t up to much, anyway”. I responded by explaining that neither of us could imagine the challenges and daily struggles this particular mother faced and that neither of us had the right to judge her. I knew how I reacted in that moment put down a firm marker that I would treat all members of the school community equally, regardless of their struggles, or socio-economic background.

However, I admit I did not handle all pivotal conversations correctly in the moment. In the first few months following my appointment as principal, I made the mistake of engaging in a conversation with a colleague about another member of staff. The tone of the conversation was critical and negative, and, on reflection, I was unhappy at how I had added to the negativity surrounding a colleague. Recognising this as a serious misstep I resolved to take action to

ensure I could resume a more respectful stance in relation to my colleagues. The next day I returned to my colleague and explained that I had been wrong and that I did wish to set a precedent for negativity around any staff members. Rather I advocated our need to work with and focus on our colleagues' strengths, and to find ways to negotiate the occasional inevitable challenges to collegiality. Lesson learnt, I strove to articulate and model this precept for the duration of my time as school leader.

- **The Arts**

The greatest catalyst for embedding the values articulated above into the culture of the school was the Arts Week which I organised in the school. This happened about 18 months after I assumed school leadership. Following the death of my father in 2001, just nine months after my appointment, I had access to a very large collection of artworks which were subsequently divided amongst my siblings. I wanted very much for this collection to benefit a wider audience before they were divided four ways. On a journey home from college one evening, I arrived at the idea of having an art exhibition in the school.

With the kind support of the County Council Arts Officer this idea grew into an art exhibition and an Arts Week. The exhibition was entitled '*Teaspach*', Irish for 'Spiritedness' or 'Exuberance'; and the Arts Week was called '*Solas agus Anam*', Irish for 'Light and Soul'. Our invitation to creative artists and performers across all artistic disciplines to visit the school and facilitate workshops for our pupils resulted in a range of art, dance, drama, and singing workshops for the children. The official opening of *Teaspach* was a high-profile event attended by many of my parents' friends from the artistic community.

Since the school is in a village which boasts a large artistic community, we also welcomed them to the event. The school's reputation and profile began to filter out into the wider local community and this event sent a very strong message about my commitment to the Arts in education. It was tangible and memorable; a moment in time which communicated my belief in the value of the Arts for the growth and development of our pupils, our school, and the wider community. I had thrown down the gauntlet: this is who we could be as a school community. To quote W.B. Yeats, "I am of Ireland / Come dance with me in Ireland".

I had wanted the school community to dance with me...and they had.



2.3.3 Leading an improvement -oriented School community

While I have presented the seminal moments in the transformation of the school I led for 15 years, I do not place myself or my actions at the centre of this transformation. I always viewed school improvement as a shared community endeavour. In addition to my own input there was an appetite for improvement amongst all members of the school community.

In working together, we ensured that our school became a vibrant improvement-oriented professional learning community (PLC) (2.6.4). We nurtured genuine collaboration which was the outcome of “unified collective thinking” (Rosenholtz, 1989) and worked together to generate “new ways of knowing” (Wenger 1998) predicated on “learning for all” (Du Four 2004). As such, the foundation for our work became “a shared sense of values and vision” (Stoll, Bolam *et al.* 2006). Our ethos of reaching for the stars through building relationships, partnership and community, school improvement, and self-evaluation, took place organically and became embedded in the culture of teaching and learning in the school. Our school operated as the ‘learning’ or ‘organic’ school’ theorized by Dalin and Roff (1993). The culture of teaching and learning became that of “continuous learning and improvement” with teachers involved in creative problem solving’ which Hargreaves refers to as “the moving Mosaic” (Hargreaves 1994a).

- **2.3.4 Handing on the Torch**

The performance script below is based on my retirement speech. I had prepared this very carefully as there were several strong messages I wanted to express. I present the performance script without explanation or analysis so that the reader or listener can make their own of the

messages I felt were important as I ‘handed on the torch’.

For One Night Only: “The big *I Am*”

(A performance script based on my retirement speech)

To marvel at magnificence.

To celebrate community.

To contemplate the burning flame of shared vision and purpose;

The discomfort and danger of ‘the big *I Am* space’,

Stepping into that space to mark the ending of the leadership years.

I am a woman, dancing on the ceiling as a school leader.

Dancing with community, enabled by the trust of courageous people.

I am a wife and mother; the self who leads.

Parallel journeys, community and family.

Parallel learning communities, communities of care and growth

Conscious of my limitations and the judgement of others.

I am a teacher and school leader, caring, cherishing,

Celebrating uniqueness and growth,

The messiness of humanity.

Trust, respect, integrity, care

The keeper of stories

Leading and supporting change

Enabling the extraordinary

Sowing seeds on fertile soil.

The bigger picture: **I am a policy-maker**.

Spreading concepts,

Shared professional responsibility,

Collective professional confidence,

Passion and vision shared with others to enable support for our young professionals.

Music...the life thread.

‘I am a musician’

A parallel life;

Leading others in harmony.

Sharing this with community,

The coming together:

A musical in community.

An ending:

I am retiring!

To advocate for the profession,

To question,

to be a critical voice

Handing on the ‘splendid torch...’

.... For the children of tomorrow.

2.4 On Leaving Camelot: Journeying Toward the ‘Triple Tale’

Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning

That is at one with your life’s desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;

Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;

Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,

For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

from For a New Beginning, John O’Donohue

Moving on from my leadership years, I chose to unfurl myself ‘into the grace of beginning’ - the journey as teacher educator /researcher - resolving to hold nothing back and to continue seeking to find ease in risk. As a colleague of mine once described the professional culture in our school during my leadership years as ‘Camelot’, I commence my reflection of that time through the developing lens of my research journey and emerging identity as a teacher educator by asking, “Camelot, or not?” The earlier narrative of my leadership years would suggest that, for my colleagues at least, our school did resemble Camelot. On leaving the narrative of the ‘self who leads’ I heed the words of the song. *“Don't let it be forgot/ that once there was a spot/ for one brief shining moment/ that was known as Camelot”* and cherish the achievements of ‘the leadership years.’

However, looking back on my research journey has enabled me to pinpoint a “reflexive blind spot” (Fletcher 2000, p.37). I am now aware that in my primary leadership aim of serving others I neglected myself. In acting as an ‘invitational leader’ and placing the care of others at the centre of my leadership role, I failed to set the boundaries necessary to ensure my own health and wellbeing.

On the contrary, I fully expected my colleagues to give me the same support, care, and concern, which I afforded them. Whenever this was not forthcoming, and I became aware of a level of criticism and/or some low-level underlying negativity, I was unable to absorb it and felt compelled to step back and take time to rebuild myself. I learnt that I needed to be less available and open to others and to protect myself. Listening more attentively to my inner self led me to follow my heart’s desire and I found myself unfurling ‘into the grace of a new beginning’. This ‘new beginning’ was the start of this research journey and the first tentative steps towards becoming a teacher educator.

- **Converging Pathways**

In the course of my years as a school leader there were many times when I felt that the well had run dry; when ‘the fire in my belly’ which compelled me to take on the role had burnt itself out. As I was often hurt when the support, care, and consideration I gave others was not reciprocated, sustaining my initial commitment, enthusiasm, and passion, for my role became more challenging. Ensuring our school did not become a stuck or cruising school but rather a moving school (Hargreaves, A. 1994) which fostered continuous improvement, also presented its own challenges. To this end, I made concerted efforts to pursue a Master’s in Education but

was prevented from doing so for a combination of personal and professional reasons. Finally, things fell into place, and as a result of our school involvement with the National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI), I commenced an M.Ed. in Educational Mentoring.

From the outset, I was very excited about my studies: not least, because of the two renowned female scholars leading the course, and the anticipated benefits of mentoring NQTs in our school. Indeed, I held the benefits to me as school leader and to the school community to be exponential in terms of involvement in the induction programme which provided leadership opportunities for colleagues and opportunities for school-based CPD. In addition, I observed that the culture of the school became more open, collegial, and collaborative.

Engagement with the literature, current policy development, and interaction with my peers, enabled me to look beyond the immediacy of my leadership responsibilities. I began to cultivate a greater level of critical thought and insight. This, in turn, enhanced my self-efficacy and gave me the confidence to act as a strong gatekeeper in the face of the well-documented and unprecedented educational changes and challenges in the previous decade. I made prudent choices about the enactment of policy which placed the context of our school community firmly at the centre of all actions and decisions. Moreover, I endeavoured to build strong links between practice, theory, and research as we navigated the new landscape of School Development Planning (SDP) and School Self-Evaluation (SSE). My blossoming understanding of theory and policy also facilitated effective engagement in the induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers through an informed participation in the National Pilot project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI, 2007-2011) and the subsequent *Droichead* induction policy pilot (2014).

2.5 The Self as Researcher

My engagement with the literature on my M.Ed. research journey proved the springboard for my thinking as I moved forward to become a policy-maker. A heightened awareness of the language and concepts articulated in the Teacher Education Policy (Teaching Council 2011-2018) also provided the foundation for the trajectory of the present inquiry since these documents stipulate that teachers understand, mediate, enact, and implement a shift towards acknowledging and developing the school as a site for teacher education. The key concepts include:

- Mentoring to facilitate school-based teacher learning at all stages of teachers' professional learning journey

- The centrality of reflective practice for teacher learning
- The development of schools with collaborative cultures operating as professional learning communities (PLCs)

The following brief outline of my engagement with the literature elucidates my conceptualisation of ‘the self as researcher’ since my understanding of school culture, teacher learning, models and concepts of mentoring, professional learning communities (PLCs), and reflective practice are central to the ‘multiple ‘I’s’ which comprise my PAIF.

2.6.1 School Culture

I maintain that school and teaching cultures permeate all aspects of school life. The culture of the school is the primary influence on how we observe the learning world of the school (Stoll and Fink 1995).

As such, the ‘stories from school’ elicited in this inquiry are built on the premise that mentoring and leadership of learning are directly situated in the cultural context of a school. This, in turn, impacts the development or otherwise of collaborative practices which advance teacher learning. Since the literature largely concurs that such aspects of school life influence the culture of the school (Fullan 2001), this exploration of school-based teacher learning in the current policy context is founded on the belief in “a dynamic, interactionary relationship between school culture, teacher relationships, teacher learning and school improvement” (de Paor, 2011). Hargreaves’ (1994) proposal of the fifth culture of teaching for modern professionalism, the so-called “the moving mosaic” which aims for continuous learning and improvement, further supports this understanding of the interaction between school culture and school-based teacher learning.

2.6.2 Teacher Learning

The literature on teacher learning provides a broad conceptualisation which values both formal and informal opportunities for professional development (Harris and Lambert 2003; Day 1999). My review of the literature underpins the assertion that teacher learning or CPD should be linked to individual teacher needs and differentiated to align with the culture and context of teachers’ work (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992; Sugrue 2002; Liberman 1995; Stoll and Fink 1995). Indeed, this coincides with current policy trends which uphold research into school-based teacher learning facilitated by experienced teachers. Furthermore, teacher learning situated in and linked to the daily work of the school is most likely to be effective (Harris and Lambert 2003; Sugrue 2002). The literature indicates that CPD should involve critical enquiry

and reflection in order to facilitate the construction of new knowledge within a PLC (Darling Hammond and Mc Laughlin 1995). So, in considering school-based teacher learning, my belief, in line with this brief summary of the literature, is that teacher learning in schools facilitated by colleagues through mentoring, professional collaboration, and/or critical reflection has the potential to be a powerful agent of teacher education and opportunities for both personal and professional development.

2.6.3 Mentoring

In my opinion, mentoring has particular potential to be an agent of change (Fletcher 2000; Feiman-Nemser 2001; Mitchell Sackney 2000; Lo 2004). This is linked to Hargreaves and Fullan's (2000) formulation of reflective practice which proposes mentoring as a vehicle for educational change by encouraging teachers to become critically reflective practitioners within a learning community:

Mentoring in this sense becomes not just a way of supporting individual teachers but also a device to help build strong professional cultures of teaching in our schools, dedicated to improving teaching, learning and caring.

(Hargreaves and Fullan 2000, p.54)

The present research is informed by a critical constructivist approach to mentoring (Wang and Odell 2007). As an inherently reformist practice, the multi-layered proposal of the "mentoring mosaic" (Mullen 2005, p. 81) offers a conceptualised matrix of mentoring in which the roles of mentor and mentee are flexible and interchangeable and operate across and through all teachers in a school. In this way, mentoring is transformative in supporting change, teacher learning, and overall school improvement. I also draw upon the concept of productive mentoring which "occurs in that space where critical thinking, caring, and professional agency achieve confluence" (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011, p.465). The notion of productive mentoring merely reinforces the complexities and emotional dynamics of mentorship (Perry 2000; Cain 2006; Clarke and Jarvis Selinger 2005) inherent to the present exploration of teachers' 'stories from school', particularly in the context of the mandatory, evaluated, and/or underfunded 'dark side of mentoring' (Long 1997).

2.6.4 Professional Learning Communities

The literature offers numerous formulations of professional learning communities (PLCs). These include learning organisations (Senge 1990), communities of practice (Wenger 1998), learning communities, (Stoll and Fink 1995), and professional learning communities (PLCs) (Stoll, Bolam *et al.* 2006). Wenger proposes communities of practice (COP) as a living context

where mutual engagement around a shared activity is “an ideal context for leading edge learning” (Wenger 1998, p.214). As such, he emphasises the value of COPs as an arena for the generation of new knowledge which may ultimately transform professional practice. This aligns with my understanding of mentoring as an agent of change and facilitator of teacher learning. It is my contention that the transformative practice of a learning community offers an ideal context for developing new understandings of teaching and learning because the community sustains change as part of an identity of participation (Wenger 1998, p.215). This informs my endeavours to ‘tell and retell’ stories from school which reflect the experiences of “the teacher as a professional learning in community” (de Paor, 2011). The Mitchell and Sackney (2000) definition of learning communities also resonates with the concepts in current policy. They explain that a learning community is:

...a group of people who take an active, reflective, collaborative, learning oriented and growth promoting approach toward the mysteries, problems and perplexities of teaching and learning.
(Mitchell and Sackney cited in Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003, p.132)

A review of the extant literature demonstrates a clear lack of consensus regarding the definition and/or constitution of a PLC. Rather, the many variables, including school culture, leadership, context, and established national policies in relation to curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment and teacher education, are to the fore.

While Du Four (2004) purports that shifting the focus from teaching to “learning for all” in a culture of collaboration to be the primary focus of a PLC, I argue that the concept obtains to opportunities for teacher learning at school level. Westheimer (1999, p.75) expounds that those exploring the theory of community highlight “shared beliefs and understandings; interaction and participation; interdependence; concern for individual and minority views; and meaningful relationships” as the characteristics of community: a stance which heavily influenced how I crafted stories of teachers’ experiences supporting school-based teacher education at all stages of the continuum, but particularly in initial teacher education and induction. Moreover, Stoll and Fink (1995) echo Noddings in proposing that the final ingredient of a learning community is ‘caring’ and explain that caring learning communities:

...have high expectations for all their members; they build on and recognise individual strengths while providing mutual support; they compensate and help individual weaknesses; and they behave in ways based on mutual trust, respect optimism and intentionality. Learning communities are caring families.

(Stoll and Fink 1995, p. 192)

In fact, the connection between teacher learning and caring came to light as an element of the

narrative threads in this personal narrative, and thus influenced my research journey, my personal philosophical framework, and my choices in relation to overall research design and methodology.

The literature revealed that “members of a PLC consistently take collective responsibility for student learning” (Stoll, Bolam *et al.* 2006; King and Newmann 2001; Kruse, Louis and Bryk 1995; Leithwood and Louis 1998). Stoll, Bolam and colleagues (2006) found that those working in a PLC developed a shared sense of values and vision and engage in consistent and systematic reflective professional inquiry. I agree that since valuing school-based teacher learning is an element of the shared vision developed through building PLCs, teacher collaboration is intrinsic to the process. Rosenholtz (1989) explains that teacher collaboration is the outcome of “unified collective thinking” and asserts that teachers working in “high consensus schools” of embedded collaborative practice focus on the “norms of continuous school and self-renewal”:

...it is assumed that improvement in teaching is a collective rather than individual enterprise, and that analysis, evaluation and experimentation with colleagues are conditions under which teachers improve instructionally.

(Rosenholtz, 1989 p.73, after Little, 1982)

The prevailing contention threaded throughout this narrative inquiry is that all teachers are held as both individual and group learners in schools which operate as effective learning communities.

2.6.5 Reflective Practice: What *is* it?

Dewey, Schon and Brookfield provide some thoughts which deepen our understanding of the ‘reflective practitioner’. Schon (1987) proposes “knowing in-action” as a means to understand the ‘tacit’ knowing which is integral to the professional knowledge of teachers. He also highlights the importance of “reflection-on action” which enables teachers to recognise the routine actions we carry out in an “unthinking manner”. This echoes Dewey who contends that we cannot learn from experience without some element of reflection. Dewey (1933) differentiates between routine action and reflective action: routine actions are guided by tradition/habit/ authority and institutional expectations; reflective action is “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it” (Dewey 1933, p.9). Furthermore, Dewey explains that reflective teaching rests on open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and the assumption of personal responsibility (Dewey 1933). Asserting that critical reflection is undertaken “in a spirit full of

hope for the future’, Brookfield (1995, p. xiii) proposes four lenses for critical reflection: namely, the self; our colleagues; our students; and theory. In making the case for critical reflection he presents it as:

...the process by which we research the assumptions informing our own practice by viewing these through four complimentary lenses, the lenses of our students’ eyes, colleagues’ perceptions, literature and our own autobiography.

(Brookfield 2006, p. 26)

Just as the trends of educational mentoring and professional learning communities have become the key policy-maker ‘buzzwords’ which determine conceptions of school-based teacher learning, so too has the concept of reflective practice. Indeed, current Teaching Council policies place reflective practice to the fore as is typified by one of three mandatory standards to be met by Newly Qualified teachers (NQTs). Supported by such evidence as a Teaching Council Professional Learning Portfolio known as *Taisce* (treasure), all NQTs are now required to sign a pro-forma declaration that they “have engaged in reflective practice that supported my professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively” (*Droichead*, 2017, p. 11) on this basis that:

Engaging in the process of portfolio-based learning enables the NQT to reflect on their professional learning in a way that suits them and identify and plan for areas in which they may need further support or guidance.

(Teaching Council 2017, p.5)

Cosán similarly frames all teacher learning within reflective practice. In addition to personal reflection, it is claimed that, “*Cosán* will provide the framework for collective reflection on the contribution of teacher learning to teacher effectiveness” (Teaching Council 2016, p. 21). The Code of Professional Conduct (Teaching Council, 2nd Edition, 2016) directly alludes to reflective practice in terms of professional development; and stipulates that teachers “take responsibility for sustaining and improving their professional practice by...reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional practice, in light of their professional knowledge base” (Teaching Council 2016, p. 8).

2.6.6 Reflective Practice: Who Knew?

As I navigated my way through my personal journey as an educator and my journey as a researcher, I began to hear certain internal doubts and whispers:

- *Who will tell the teachers that they are to be ‘reflective practitioners’?*
- *Do policy-makers really know what it means to engage in reflective practice?*
- *What is it?*
- *Who understands it?*
- *How does reflective practice happen?*

At the same time, I became increasingly wary of the overuse of the concept as a catch-all for policy-makers and teacher educators. I came to question whether reflective practice was merely an element of a fictitious ‘group think’ cloth. In critiquing the “common tendency for [reflective practice] to be over simplified in practice”, Thompson *and* Pascal (2012) confirmed my misgivings. Their further contention that “dominant understandings of reflective practice can themselves be criticised for lacking theoretical sophistication” (p.311) also echoed my evaluation of the lack of theoretical understanding among policy-makers, teacher education support services, and colleges and schools of education.

Alluding to the concept of “technical rationality” proposed by Schon (1987), Thompson and Pascal expressed fears that the dominant discourse and understanding of reflective practice plays into a positivist epistemology of practice wherein teachers function as mere “implementers and technicians” (Thompson and Pascal 2012, p.312). This arguably resonates with a neoliberal agenda of compliance and accountability. In short; it is easier to hold teachers ‘accountable’ within a boundaried narrative of measurable compliance within a culture of performativity.

2.6.6 Personal Reflection: Masters Research Journey

In order to synthesise the converging pathways of my leadership years and my previous research journey, I developed a performance script from the final reflection of my Masters’ studies. This sows the seeds for the narrative threads emerging from my personal narrative which inform my philosophical engagement and indicate how the multiple ‘I’s explored in my personal narrative overlap.

Self...

Reflection,
Knowledge, theory and practice
Time.

Leadership.

Power
Respect,
Care
Empower

The Jazz Ensemble.

The Lens of Self
Critical reflection
Ever hopeful;

Looking to the future
Unravelling the shroud of silence
Discoveries of self
Of leadership
Modelling extended professionalism
We are always in becoming...
reflective practitioner

Becoming?
(Brookfield/ Teaching Council / Ingold)

Reflections

Places of discomfort,
uncomfortable spaces
spaces for the creation of knowledge
Questioning assumptions
what it is to know?
to know what?
what counts as knowledge?
what value on that knowledge?
Knowing theory,
knowing practice,
Action!
Praxis!

Influences of the image of self,
Caring spaces,
caring places,
critical spaces,
transformative places.

Thinking time,
time for reflection,
time for insecurity,
time for uncertainty.
conflict ?
individual and shared,
.....create a space,
Create new knowledge,
Create new understanding.
(Noddings/ Biesta/ Freire)

Knowledge, Theory, Practice

Awareness
shared professional responsibility
professional confidence,
lifelong learning communities,
Sharing learning,

The teacher as a professional: learning in community.
(de Paor 2011/ Teaching Council)

Time?

Time for learning?
time for reflection?
Valuing this time,
Creative solutions.
outside influence...
taking control.

Leadership

Invitational leadership
Shared leadership
Leadership capacity
Distributed leadership.

Power?

Control?
Intended?
Unintended?

Empowerment

Creating spaces for others
Beware of solutions
Beware of dependent culture
slow down,
listen more carefully
share difficulties,
seek support,
admit fallibility.

(Stoll and Fink / Spillane/ Harris/ Harris and Lambert)

The Jazz Ensemble

Respect

Respect individuality,
Respect talent,
Enable experimentation,
Value improvisation.
Create a Safe environment,
Mutual trust,
Respect.

Care!

(Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003)

2.7 Conclusion

The present exploration of the self who teaches, the self who leads, and the converging pathways of leadership and research, is an iterative process which moves backwards and forward in time, situation, and context (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). The above performance script illustrates the key themes pursued throughout my personal research journey. More specifically, it assumes the foundation stone of all educational endeavours as operating from a caring stance and that critical reflection and a deepening understanding of ‘the self’ should underline all teaching endeavours. Teacher knowledge should be the pivotal force in the

theory/policy nexus. As such, a deeper understanding of leadership and the power and control this may or may not entail is vital if teacher knowledge is to be valued in this space. These are the driving forces as I continue to explore the broader policy context in which teachers live and tell their stories. As I have direct professional experience of this policy context as it unfolded, my personal narrative of policy enactment at school level and contribution to developing policy as a member of the Teaching Council will be presented in next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: EXPLORING THE LANDSCAPE: THE SELF AS POLICY-MAKER

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the Teacher Education policy landscape as the context for this inquiry. To assist a better understanding of the landscape in which ‘stories from school’ is nested, I first present a succinct background of general education policy, and teacher education in particular. I then consider the ‘rising tide and ‘perfect storm’ (Conway and Murphy 2013), in which teacher education found itself during the targeted decade of this inquiry. This is followed by a brief analysis and commentary on the ‘rapid and unprecedented policy ensemble in teacher education’ (Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, p.3) which was developed by the Teaching Council during the timeframe of this inquiry. I go on to examine policies which apply to the three distinct phases of the continuum of teacher education: namely, ITE; induction; and in-career professional learning (1.4 and 3.6.1). As the role of the co-operating teacher supporting student teachers on school placement underwent similar review and expansion, school placement is also explored. Since my lived experience of ‘the self as policy-maker’ was concomitant with the development of teacher education policy during the timeframe in question, my personal narrative as policy-maker is threaded through the exploration of the context for this inquiry.

3.2 The Self as Policy-maker

My election to the teaching Council in 2012 was borne of a passion for the profession. The Teaching Council was not universally respected amongst the profession at the time and putting my name forward was considered by some to be ill-advised. Despite this and based on my belief that “making hope practical in a world where despair would seem far more convincing” (Lingard *et al.* 2013, p.1), I began canvassing for a nomination for election. Through my previous research experience along with that of teacher and school leader, I had become increasingly driven to ensure that teachers’ experience, knowledge, and skills, were properly represented in the policy space. This passionate belief in the profession was founded on valued relationships with colleagues. Through our participation in the NPPTI, the precursor of the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), I had come to appreciate the power of collaborative support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Watching young teachers fulfil their potential in the supportive environment which we created in our school was a source of profound joy and wonder for me. I believed that we had created something special; a belief which was supported by my lived experience as a researcher and school leader.

In the course of prior research, I had identified a disconnect between the work of the council and registered teachers, and concluded that:

There is evidence of an enormous level of frustration among the profession in relation to the Teaching Council. Despite ongoing efforts by the Council to communicate more effectively with practising teachers, many are unaware of the work of the Council.

(de Paor, 2011, p.101)

I sought to redress this imbalance by bringing the voices and experiences of teachers to the policy table. As a member of the Teaching Council, I aimed to foster a greater understanding of the lived experience of teachers as they grappled with the new roles and responsibilities characterised in the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*, as “reflective, enquiry-oriented, lifelong-learners engaged in school-based collaborative inquiry” (Teaching Council 2011, p.9). I recall a conversation with an experienced NIPT mentoring colleague in relation to the Career Entry Professional Programme (CEPP). This first draft policy on induction had just been published by the Teaching Council in the final months of 2011. We both felt that the concept of structured support for NQTs was necessary and that the proposed policy reflected international best practice. However, since we were aware that the induction pilot project had been conducted on a very limited scale, we also agreed that the profession was not ready. Nor could we see when, where, or how the profession would be prepared for the implementation of this policy, since the concepts of ‘peer observation’, ‘mentoring’ and ‘reflective practice’ were not widely understood across the profession at that time. As such, we concluded that it would take a decade to develop and embed such a culture throughout the profession. This conversation proved to be prophetic given the journey from CEPP to the current national rollout of *Droichead* (Teaching Council 2017) and the disagreement and industrial unrest which came to pass when the primary teachers’ union, the INTO, instructed members not to comply with policy implementation.

3.3 The Background

To understand the policy developments during the target decade for this inquiry, an exploration of the antecedents from the mid 1990’s is integral to a contextualisation of the policy shift under scrutiny here. Moreover, my own lived experience as teacher and school leader is situated in this context.

3.3.1 The Policy Landscape

The Ireland of the 1990s was a decade of intense deliberation in relation to education policy (Coolahan 2017; O’Donohue, Hartford and O’Doherty 2017). In fact, *The Education Act*, 1998,

which instantiated the statutory foundation of all subsequent developments in education policy, was a direct result of these debates. The legislation was developed following the publication of a Green Paper on Education, entitled *Education for a Changing World* (Government of Ireland 1992) and the National Education Convention of 1994. *The Report on The National Education Convention* (Coolahan 1994), expounded on many of the aims identified in the Green Paper: the seeds of current policy in relation to teacher education are evident. In short: The Green Paper “proposed to reform the system of teacher training” (p.20). To this end, “a carefully managed induction programme” was purported to have “great importance in the formation of a confident, professional teacher” (Coolahan 1994, p.87) and the concept of “the mentor teacher/co-operating teacher assisting the student teacher’s formation” was also proposed (ibid p.86). Further expanded in a White Paper on Education, *Charting our Education Future* (Government of Ireland 1995) stipulates that:

A well-developed and carefully managed induction programme, coinciding with the teacher’s probationary year, will be introduced for first-and second-level teachers.
(*Charting our Education Future* p. 125)

In the course of these discussions, and having been first proposed as a ‘National Council’ in the 1991 OECD Report, the concept of a ‘teaching council’ was gradually developed (Coolahan 2017):

The general view was that such a council was timely in Irish circumstances and would give the teaching profession a degree of control over and responsibility for its own profession.
(*Report on the National Education Convention* 1994 p. 90)

The White Paper outlined the role of the Teaching Council “in setting and maintaining the highest professional standards” and proposed “wide ranging powers in matters of teacher discipline and recognition” (*Charting our Education Future*, 1995, p 136). As Coolahan observed, this was indeed “a decade of policy gestation, heralding a new era for teacher education” (Coolahan 2017, p.274) which laid the foundations for future developments in teacher education.

3.3.2 Teacher Education

In terms of teacher education, the debate in Ireland was influenced in no small measure by the work of the OECD (Coolahan 2017, 2013, 2007; Conway *et al.* 2009; O’Donoghue, Hartford and O’Doherty 2017). O’Doherty argues that as “one of the most powerful agents of transnational education governance” (O’Doherty 2014, p. 44), the OECD has led to the growth of a “global policy field” in education (Grek 2009, p.28). It is further argued that the OECD

has shaped the “policy habitus of the policy makers who drive reforms within nations” (Sellar and Lingard 2013, p. 723). The 1991 OECD review of Irish education, *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland*, (OECD, 1991) recommended teacher education to be understood as a continuum with three distinct phases known as the three ‘I’s; namely, initial teacher education (ITE), induction; and in-career professional learning. Their ongoing relevance and influence is further evidenced in *Teachers Matter: Attracting Developing and Retaining Teachers* (OECD, 2005). Once again, the concept of teacher education as a continuum is highlighted, and coherence and connectivity between the stages of the continuum advised:

The stages of initial teacher education, induction, and professional development need to be much better interconnected to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers.

(OECD, 2005 p. 13)

The European Union exerted a strong influence in this area, and in the early years of the twenty-first century, “great emphasis was placed on the importance of the teaching career and quality teacher education for the future well-being of European society” (Coolahan 2013, p.18). Indeed, the 2002 Barcelona Council was the first time that the “teaching career was highlighted across member states” (ibid). The publication of two further reports, *Common European Principles for Teacher Competence and Qualifications* (2005) and *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (2008), continued to ensure that “initiatives originating at the European level were becoming more and more influential in the policy debate in Ireland” (O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017, pp.170-171). Indeed these European documents which do not have any legal standing are considered by some to represent “important *symbolic* and *rhetorical* power” (Biesta 2013, p. 123 italics in the original). In terms of national developments in the area of ITE, the influence of the OECD can be seen in the *Report of the Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education* (Byrne Report, DES, 2002) and *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century: Report of the Working Group on Preservice Education* (Kelleghan Report DES, 2004). The Byrne Report recommended a system of induction with the provision of mentors in schools and reduced teaching hours for NQTs, while the Kelleghan Report confirmed that teacher education was now widely conceived as a continuum of teacher development. Commissioned by the Teaching Council, The Conway Report (2009) drew on these earlier reports to further explore the continuum of teacher education. As such, it provides the basis for many of the concepts in current TE policy which directly tie mentoring and reflective practice to school culture and capacity building:

...integrated mentoring structures would focus on school capacity as well as the capacity of individuals and teams of teachers in creating mentoring cultures in schools.

(Conway *et al.*, 2009, p.206)

Despite the intense debate, the publication of *The Education Act* (1998) and the influence of the OECD and the European Union outlined above, the early years of the twenty-first century did not see significant change and development in TE policy. Coolahan's characterisation of this time as a "desultory, deferral approach to the implementation of policy" (Coolahan 2013, p.15) is reinforced by O'Doherty's depiction of "diplomatic inactivity" (O'Doherty 2014, p.45). However, from 2011, this lull was followed by a flurry of activity which resulted in the rapid development of policy documents previously outlined (1.4, 3.6) In order to fully understand this, it is necessary to consider the impetus for this change which Conway and Murphy (2013) saw as a "rising tide" in a "perfect storm": the rising tide being the consistent growth of neoliberal ideals resulting in increased professional regulation and accountability and commensurate rise in low trust management and surveillance. (1.5.1 and 1.5.2). In addition, referencing the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) they note that the international uptake of these trends had led to "a significant systemic change comprising a focus on amplification and expansion of compliance-oriented accountability" (Conway and Murphy 2013, p.14).

3.4 The Perfect Storm

The first element of the "perfect storm" was the collapse of 'Celtic Tiger': the period of unprecedented prosperity which Ireland enjoyed prior to the global recession. This was exacerbated by the 2008 economic bailout in Ireland and the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment Report (PISA, 2009, OECD).

3.4.1 PISA (2009)

The result of the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, OECD) added to the perfect storm for TE policy in Ireland (Conway *and* Murphy, 2013). In its summary report, *PISA 2009: The Performance and Progress of 15-year-olds in Ireland*, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) maintained PISA to be the:

... largest international survey of education and policy-makers use the results not only to inform educational policy but also economic policy since the study is based on a 'knowledge economy' model.

(Perkins *et al.* 2010, p. vii)

The results of PISA 2009 compared to the previous PISA report of 2000 formed the catalyst

which shook politicians and policy-makers alike out of their “diplomatic inactivity”. Specifically, Ireland’s literacy ranking had plummeted from 5th to 17th; representing the steepest drop of the 39 countries who participated in both surveys. Likewise, Ireland had fallen from 20th to 26th in mathematics; representing the second largest decline in the same cohort (Perkins *et al.* 2010). The political response, *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy among Children and Young People 2011-2020*. (DES, 2011), became the springboard for the “rapid and unprecedented policy ensemble in teacher education” which ensued (Mooney Simmie *et al.* 2016, p.3). The document foregrounds the Teaching Council’s major role “in fostering and improving the quality of teaching generally and in core areas such as literacy and numeracy” (Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011, p.33). Highlighting the recently published Teaching Council policy outlining TE as a continuum (Teaching Council 2011), the DES strategy statement established that the continuum policy was “a sound basis for the developments that are needed to establish and build upon the skills of teachers in literacy and numeracy teaching” (*ibid.*).

Key objectives in relation to TE policy, including a reconfiguration of the content and duration of ITE programmes at both primary and post-primary level, raising entry requirements for places on such courses, support for the induction of NQTs, and a focus on literacy and numeracy in CPD courses for experienced teachers (*ibid.*), were enacted in the period between the publication of this strategy statement and 2018. This demonstrates the scope and intensity of policy implementation during the decade in question and further contextualises the mismatch between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice which I perceived as educator/researcher narrator of this inquiry.

3.4.2 Austerity Ireland

To reiterate: the timeline for this research is the decade 2008 to 2018. A global recession, a property bubble in Ireland, and the well documented 2008 near collapse of the Irish banking sector, signalled the demise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’. As such, ‘Austerity Ireland’ formed the “storied landscape” in which teachers of that period lived out their ‘stories from school’. The sovereignty of the State was threatened when the European Monetary Fund assumed control over the Irish exchequer, while the forces of neoliberalism and GERM gained momentum. In short: everything changed. Following a decade of prosperity and affluence, all educational funding was severely cut, as were teacher salaries. Moreover, a reduced pay-scale was introduced for new entrants to the profession, a new pension levy introduced, and promotion

opportunities severely curtailed.

In the face of reduced funding, schools struggled to meet their running costs, while working hours were extended in efforts to maximise ‘productivity’ across the public sector. These additional hours became known as ‘Croke Park hours’ since the national pay negotiations which culminated in these arrangements took place in the Croke Park stadium in Dublin. The various agencies which provided professional development for teachers were also amalgamated and rationalised into the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) to reduce costs. The fact that the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) was the only such entity to maintain its working autonomy demonstrates the prioritisation of teacher induction in the policy landscape of the time.

As the various sections of the Teaching Council Act were enacted, the Teaching Council simultaneously garnered increasing influence in the regulation of the profession. Teachers now had to ensure their professional registration with the Council was maintained annually, and for the first time, complaints made against teachers could result in “Fitness to Teach” hearings. The international focus on teacher quality driven by the OECD and the European Commission invested the Council with considerable influence on teacher education. In addition, a DES review of the structure of Initial Teacher Education in Ireland compiled by an international panel concluded that although the quality of entrants to teacher education in Ireland was among the highest in the world, provision did ‘not concur with high-performing international practice’ (Sahlberg 2012, p.7). Identifying a lack of research-based teacher education, the report recommended a complete restructuring of teacher education provision through the amalgamation of providers to develop centres of excellence for teacher education as institutes of education. University-based teacher education seated in a “culture of research (Sahlberg 2012 p. 19) and ‘systematic clinical practice’” (ibid p. 17) was also recommended. To this end, the report advised that TE be facilitated in university settings with systematic links to clinical practice in field schools (ibid p.24).

The vision of the review panel was “research-based teacher education in internationally inspiring environments” (ibid p.23). The Teaching Council policies therefore articulated a “new and radical approach towards both initial teacher preparation and induction” (O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017p. 210). Indeed, it has been claimed that the policies introduced during the target timeframe for this inquiry, “introduced rapidly and over a short space of time” (ibid

p.219) “operated to restrict the autonomy and professional discretion of teacher educators” (ibid, p.220).

Furthermore, lack of communication and consultation meant that the “process and agreements that were expected to eventuate, were not negotiated in advance with the nation’s teachers” (O’Donoghue, Hartford and O’Doherty 2017, p.89). Hence the influence of the Council seeped unseen and often unnoticed by members into the professional lives of teachers themselves. The policy implications led to extended professional responsibilities for teachers. As the Teaching Council in Ireland progresses professionally-led regulation underpinned by the concepts of shared professional responsibility and collective professional confidence (de Paor, 2011; Teaching Council Strategic Plan, 2015-2017), teachers are now required to support school-based teacher learning at all stages of the continuum of teacher education.

3.5 My Story: Teaching Council Election - Spring 2012

Running for election proved a challenge for me. Although I regularly attended branch meetings and principal and deputy principal’s forum meetings, I had never been particularly active in the union. I was therefore somewhat intimidated by the process of running for election as candidates seeking nomination had to address district meetings. In fact, at the time I had little understanding of the structure of the Union in terms of branches, districts, committees, and so on. I recall a phone call to the district representative of the central executive where I explained to her that I felt excluded and disadvantaged. In retrospect, I realise that Bourdieu’s’ concept of habitus and social capital was at play, making me feel excluded by the power structures of the organisation.

In the event, the election turnout was very poor: clear evidence of the frustration and apathy felt amongst the profession towards the Teaching Council. Indeed, there seemed little professional awareness of the importance of the election and the value of a teacher majority on the Council. The disappointing turnout was certainly not helped by an initial error on the printed ballot papers. This meant they had to be reprinted and redistributed, and teachers asked to cast their votes a second time. As discussed in my previous research, many registered teachers were utterly contemptuous of the Council and there was considerable negativity around the aforementioned CEPP. As very few had taken the time to read the full document, soundbites inevitably abounded in relation to “Principals doing the Inspector’s job” and “Probating teachers”. As I had foreseen, it was clear that policy was racing ahead of practice with little or no preparation or connection with the profession.

As an election candidate, I was invited to be present at the counting of votes. I had never done this before and quickly concluded that my opponent would be the victor. However, a recount was called, and I was finally elected by a margin of just one vote.

Such a slim majority could be interpreted as a fluke or fate.

I chose to embrace the result as my ‘date with destiny’.

3.5.1 Power and Politics

Following the election, the members of the newly elected council were invited to the DES to be appointed by the then Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn. Gathering in the famous Clocktower, the iconic building which symbolises the DES in Ireland, I was catapulted into a highly politicised arena. The various stakeholders immediately began jockeying for authority, with the Unions, the management bodies, the HEIs all seeking to ascertain where my loyalties lay. Power and ego loomed large, and I wondered whether I would be able to withstand it and hold to my mandate to be a voice for my profession.

At that very first meeting in the INTO head office, we discussed the membership of the various committees which were subsets of the larger council. I could so easily have been side-lined, but due to my recently completed research exploring the value of a formal school-based mentoring programme, I was confident in my understanding and the experience I brought to the table. Therefore, I spoke up, explained my specific interests in school-based teacher education and my recent research, and expressed my interest in and suitability for the Education Committee. I was duly nominated for the Education Committee and worked closely on both *Droichead* and *Cosán*. I was also nominated as a member of the Disciplinary Committee which explored policy, procedures, and practices in preparation for Part V of the Teaching Council Act; namely, ‘fitness to teach’. While this was all to the good, I soon came to realise that my understanding and experience were outside the “field” (Bourdieu). I was not familiar with the rules of the game or the extramural networking and meetings where alliances were forged and decisions weighed up.

In short; I was completely naive and brimming with care and passion. This was in stark contrast to the many experienced members of the Council who were well-versed in the rules of the game and actively political in their motivation. In the course of the four years this emotional stance marked my identity as a Council member and, over time other members of Council came to respect my integrity. Simply stated, and with the minimum of verbiage and posturing, my input

was often given careful consideration. Over time I began to assimilate the rules of the policy game, and the power structures at play gradually became more distinct.

Despite years of school leadership experience and guiding a school community, I was a mere novice at the ‘shaking and moving’ which took place outside the confines of formal meetings. In addition, the entrenched hierarchies of power were thrown into relief. It was obvious that certain voices, particularly those representing strong interest groups such as the Unions, the DES, and management bodies, wielded more power and carried more weight during debates.

3.6 A Rapid and Unprecedented Policy Ensemble in Teacher Education

When I was elected to the Teaching Council in 2012, the policy on the continuum of teacher education had already been published. During my ensuing tenure on the Council a suite of further Teaching Council policy documents was devised and published as follows:

- *2013: Guidelines on School Placement*
- *2016: Cosán: Framework for Teachers’ Learning*
- *2017: Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework*

As a member of the Education Committee, I was heavily involved in the formulation of both *Droichead* and *Cosán* from design to publication. In addition, I was involved in the early enactment of these policies at school level. In order to understand the teacher education policy landscape in which teachers ‘stories from school’ are nested, I now interrogate policies related to the three phases of the continuum.

3.6.1 Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education

This policy document considers teacher education as a continuum in terms of three ‘T’s: namely, initial teacher education (ITE); induction; and in-career learning (CPD). Founded on the pillars of “innovation, integration and improvement” this policy attempted to address the problem of fragmentation across the continuum (Sugrue *et al.* 2002; OECD: TALIS 2009) and devised the matrices for the development of future policy documents previously mentioned. The policy is guided by global and European reports and policies and underpinned by the assumptions of the teacher as a lifelong learner and of teacher education as a continuum of learning. As such, they advocate, “creating a framework in which the elements of induction and in-service play a role at least as vital as that of initial training” (OECD 1991, p.92, Coolahan 2007, p.9), and urged that greater coherence at all stages of the continuum should be addressed “as a matter of priority” (OECD 2005, p. 9). Moreover, with regard to induction,

the European Commission advised that, “The quality of education and training and with it the quality of Teacher Education, are high on the policy agenda in all countries of the European Union” (European Commission 2010, P.5). The Teaching Council defines the continuum of Teacher Education as:

...those formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as lifelong learners, during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and, indeed, late career support, with each stage merging seamlessly into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others.

(Teaching Council 2011, p.8)

In stating that “teaching is an instance, *par excellence*, of life-long learning” the policy makes clear that responsibility for teacher development lies both with the state and the profession. In terms of school placement, the policy advised the development of models of school placement which:

see greater levels of responsibility devolved to the profession for the provision of structured support for its new members and a gradual release in classroom responsibility for student teachers.

(ibid p.13)

In relation to the induction phase the policy states that:

support is primarily school-based and is given at school level by an experienced teacher, usually called a mentor, in collaboration with colleagues and initial teacher education providers.

(Teaching Council 2011, p.16)

Alluding to school-based teacher learning the policy delineates that, “induction should attend to the professional learning needs of NQTs and their induction into learning-communities for life-long learning as professionals” (Teaching Council 2011, p.17), and calls for “the development of teachers as reflective, enquiry-oriented, lifelong-learners” (ibid p. 9). The policy directly states that induction and mentoring are “the professional responsibility of the whole community of teachers” (Teaching Council 2011, p. 17).

My lived experience as school leader, and later as an associate with the NIPT, indicates that preparation for the implementation of these policies did not take place at school level and that many teachers were wholly unsupported in understanding and/or negotiating such professional responsibilities. This foregrounds the problem of teachers’ understanding and experiences of their role in supporting school-based teacher learning across the continuum.

Addressing the issue of time provision, the policy recommends that “discrete time be set aside by schools for the purposes of NQT and mentor development” (Teaching Council 2011, p. 18).

As such, time for professional learning should be “built into teachers’ non-teaching time” (ibid p.19) and CPD linked to teachers’ needs within the school as a learning community.

In Ireland primary school teachers are not routinely allocated daily ‘non-teaching time’ and the policy fails to explicate how this can be determined or the necessary time found. Indeed, the issue of time provision for supporting school-based teacher learning continues to pose difficulties for both school placement and in the enactment of the policy on induction (Banks *et al.* 2015; Hall *et al.* 2018).

3.6.2. Initial Teacher Education

In the course of the target years for this inquiry, an unprecedented level of change “permeated all aspects of initial teacher education” (O’Donoghue *et al.*, 2017, p.179) With the publication of *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council 2011, Revised Edition, 2017) the Council set out to regulate programmes of initial teacher education (ITE).

This policy document is the basis for *Strategy for Review and Accreditation of Programmes in Initial Teacher Education* (Teaching Council 2011) and is intended to “form a bridge between policy and programmes of initial teacher education offered by Higher Education Institutions” (Teaching Council 2011, p.6) As providers of ITE programmes HEIs were “required to observe” clearly laid out inputs, process and outcomes (p.7). The policy called for the extension and reconceptualization of programmes of initial teacher education and clearly articulated “learning outcomes for all graduates of ITE programmes” (ibid) were outlined for the first time. However, as this policy was “not the product of a consultative process”, many teacher educators saw the demands of the review and accreditation process as “an intrusion into the work practices of teacher educators...which operated to restrict the autonomy and professional discretion of teacher educators” (O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017, p.220).

In terms of ITE, the main focus of ‘Stories from School’ is the element of school placement in the reconceptualised programmes. This impacts the professional responsibilities of teachers who were now officially charged with increased responsibility for school-based teacher education.

Reflecting this change, all teachers hosting students on placement were now to be known as ‘co-operating teachers’ rather than simply class teachers. The Council policy advised teacher educators to provide for “extended periods of school placement” which would facilitate the

“development of a more reflective, enquiry-oriented approach to school placement” (Teaching Council 2011, p.16). In addition, student teachers should have opportunities to observe experienced teachers and “seek and receive advice in a supportive environment”. (ibid, p.13) As Coolahan states, policy documents indicate that ‘a much greater role is envisaged for the teaching professional in student formation’ (Coolahan,2013, p.21, 2017, p.281). To that end, the policy further advised that school placement should include “opportunities for systematic observation in the school, for collaborative work with school staff and for structured participation in school life” (Teaching Council 2011, p.16). Such “structured support for student teachers” is deemed desirable and is described as “mentoring, supervision and constructive feedback on practice” (ibid). Moreover, Coolahan identifies a “much greater emphasis on partnership and the collaboration between HEIs and the schools” (Coolahan 2013, p.21, 2017, p.281,). The policy envisaged an ‘enhanced relationship between the co-operating teachers and the school placement tutor from the HEI, stressing school placement learning outcomes would be evidenced “through the HEI placement tutor and co-operating teacher’s observation and evaluation of the student teacher during the school placement experience”’. (Teaching Council 2011, p24). This gives rise to fundamental questions:

- Who is responsible for communicating these developments to the profession?
- And who is responsible for the required professional development?

Some consider that:

...the communication that was to take place in relation to the proposed school placement processes and the agreements that it was expected would eventuate, were not negotiated in advance with the nation’s teachers.

(O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017, p.189)

This reinforces the disconnect between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice identified through a process of autobiographical triangulation (Fig. 1). In response to the proposed developments teacher education providers called for clearer school placement guidelines. This led to a further policy document.

3.6.3 My Story: Rhetoric and Reality

I began to wonder about the Teaching Council agenda:

Where was it coming from? Who was driving it?

It was apparent that certain members had the ‘inside track’ and the input/voice of the Minister for Education, the DES, and the Inspectorate, were fairly obvious (O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017). I became highly sensitive to the GERM language such as *-inputs, outputs, process, criteria,*

standards - and the unseen, but pervasive neoliberal forces which seeped into everything. During my term on the Council, they hosted two European conferences which epitomised these: a 2013 conference exploring the role, responsibility and identity of teacher educators; and a 2015 conference under the auspices of the European Network of Education Councils which examined continuous professional development for teachers. This conference coincided with the publication of the *Eurydice Report* (European Commission 2015) and the TALIS Report (OECD 2013). The language of both events appeared to be closely aligned to my own thinking and the concepts I had come to understand through my engagement with the literature on teacher education; yet I was increasingly conscious of the mismatch between the conference rhetoric of teacher education policy and the experiences of teachers at school level. Educational literature soundbites littered the policy landscape. Buzzwords like ‘*distributed leadership*’, ‘*collegiality*’, ‘*reflective practice*’, and ‘*professional learning communities*’ were in constant use. On several occasions I queried our understanding of these concepts but never received a satisfactory elucidation from the DES, Teaching Council, or Inspectorate. In fact, I feared that the policy-makers were peddling a “rhetoric of conclusions” which was arguably devoid of theoretical understanding (Clandinin and Connelly 1994 p. 9) (1.7.1)

3.6.4 School Placement

Following the publication of the *Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* document, the Council convened a working group to consider the issue of school placement. The aim was to “ensure consistency” across providers as school placement was deemed a “critical component” of initial teacher education. In 2012 the Council invited stakeholders to participate in a “partnership process” to develop the guidelines. This resulted in the publication of the *Guidelines on School Placement* (Teaching Council 2013), in addendum to the original document. While broadly adhering to the details laid out in the criteria and guidelines document, the guidelines on school placement were “more nuanced”, contained more realistic expectations, and acknowledged the voluntary nature of school placement facilitation by schools (O’Donoghue *et al.* 2017). In fact, “a partnership approach without placing undue burden on schools” is *suggested*’ [my emphasis] (ibid, p.7).

The roles and responsibilities of all involved in school placement are laid out in detail, with the role of the co-operating teacher deemed ‘pivotal’. (p.15). The concept of the school as a learning organisation working in partnership with HEIs is threaded throughout the guidelines. Indeed, the entire thrust of the guidelines ‘is based on the premise that the teaching profession

is committed to engaging in the process of teacher education' (p. 10). Once more, unanswered questions remained:

- Are any or all schools operating as learning organisations?
- Is the teaching profession committed to engaging in the process of teacher education?
- Do schools and HEIs work in partnership to support student teachers?
- Is there consistency of experience for student teachers across the system?

I agree with O' Donoghue and colleagues' assertion that:

Overall the guidelines are mostly aspirational, having little or no mention of exactly how any great change in the school- provider partnership model is to be realised, operationalised or resourced.

(O'Donoghue *et al.* 2017, p174)

3.6.5 My Story: School Placement

The continuum document and criteria documents require student teachers to spend more time in schools in order to provide them with a more authentic learning experience. As “a critical part of teacher education” the policy clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, which, for the first time, clearly articulates guidelines for co-operating teachers. The overarching emphasis in the document is recognition of schools as a site for teacher learning which is ideally framed by a partnership between schools and HEIs. Considering this now through the lens of my personal narrative as school leader and teacher educator, my lived experience has brought me to the realisation that many teachers are completely unaware of the changes in school placement, or that such guidelines exist. In the years 2011 to 2018, I have been keenly aware of the issue of responsibility for ensuring that practicing teachers were made aware of and understood their changing role. Looking back, I regularly asked for clarification regarding responsibility for communication and dissemination of the guidelines and supporting experienced teachers at school level.

While the responsibility was never taken on by the Teaching Council, many HEIs endeavoured to build partnerships, provide CPD, and support the professional development of extended professional knowledge and skills required. However, they have had to do so with little or no funding or additional staff allocation. Over the years several small-scale projects have endeavoured to do this (Ni Aingléis 2009; Young *et al.* 2015), and in the course of my own research journey I have also been involved in several efforts to build partnership between schools and HEIs. Some of these projects completely failed to get off the ground, while others

enjoyed some small successes, only to be subsumed by the imperatives of school and HEI life. As a result of my personal narrative and my research journey I have formed the opinion that space and time are imperative to ensure that the “the reconceptualization of the school placement experience” becomes more than a mere “roadmap for the journey” (School placement Guidelines 2013, p.8).

3.6.6 Induction

In terms of the induction phase of the continuum, the current policy document, *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council 2017) is the result of complex and protracted negotiations with the profession and the DES. The impetus for a systematic induction programme stems from OECD and European policy documents; in particular, *Developing coherent and Systemwide Induction Programmes for Beginning Teachers: A Handbook for Policy-makers* (European Commission, 2010). The policy includes four interlocking elements identified by the European Commission (ibid): namely, mentoring; expert inputs; peer support; and self-reflection (p.7). As Smyth and colleagues (2016) elaborate:

The introduction of the *Droichead* pilot programme in Ireland reflects a wider trend internationally toward the design of more systematic, integrated and intensive programmes to support induction.’

(ESRI/ Teaching Council, 2016, p.1)

The Teaching Council’s statutory responsibility for induction is “to establish procedures in relation to the induction of teachers into the teaching profession” (*Teaching Council Act 2001, Revised, Updated 12 February 2019* (F) p. 12). This was reflected in *Fás agus Forbairt: Teaching Council Strategic Plan 2008-2011*. Goal 2, which focused on maintaining teaching standards and quality of teaching, clearly states that the teaching council intended to:

Establish procedures in relation to the induction of teachers into the teaching profession following the commencement of the relevant section of the Teaching Council Act, 2001.

(Teaching Council 2008, p.13)

The Teaching Council initially published a Career Entry Professional Programme (CEPP). This document was highly prescriptive and stipulated procedures and practices for professionally-led regulation through school-based induction activities. It was at this point that my personal narrative as an educator and the development of policy became inextricably intertwined.

In the autumn term of 2011, I had just completed my previous research and was also running for election to the Teaching Council. Moreover, in my school leadership role I had seen the

value of school-based mentoring. I encouraged a colleague to undertake initial mentor training (IMT) and our school became involved with the National Pilot programme for teacher induction (NPPTI), the precursor of the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). I recall a conversation about CEPP with a colleague who had completed IMT with the NPPTI in which we concluded that the foundations for school-based induction had not yet been laid and that it would probably take ten years for the aspirations outlined in the policy to embed within the system. This is indeed what came to pass. The words of key players witnessed by me in those years further illuminate the story: “The birth of *Droichead* was torturous” (O’Ruairc 2018); and “This policy became a ‘lightning rod’ for discontent amongst primary teachers” (Nunan 2015).

In 2013, *Droichead: Teaching Council Policy on a New Model of Induction and Probation for Newly Qualified Teachers* (Teaching Council 2013) was the precursor to the current 2017 policy and defined induction as “a vital stage in the teacher’s professional journey between initial teacher education and fully independent practice as a qualified teacher” (Teaching Council 2013, p.2). The link between induction through the *Droichead* process and full teacher registration was fully detailed, along with the importance of resourcing and building mentor capacity in the system. This was followed by the 2013/14 pilot phase. The involvement of the primary sector was fraught with industrial unrest and the Irish National Teacher Organisation (INTO) Executive issued non-co-operation directives on two occasions. The main difficulty; namely, teacher/ school leader reluctance to recommend NQTs to the Council for full registration, led to a policy change that experienced teachers did not sign off on NQTs. Rather; NQTs personally confirmed their compliance with all *Droichead* policy requirements.

The *Droichead* policy is predicated on an emphatic shift towards acknowledging and developing schools as a site for teacher education, and, as such, requires each school to form a Professional Support Team (PST) to scaffold and guide NQTs through school-based learning opportunities. The NIPT provides professional development for PST teachers. The support of NQTs through mentoring, observation and feedback is central to the *Droichead* process, as are reflective practice and portfolio-based learning. However, school-based teacher learning is advanced through professional interaction between the NQT and the members of the PST. My personal narrative as school leader and policy-maker has highlighted the need to explore teachers’ stories as they navigate their experiences supporting school-based teacher learning. The concept of mentoring in education, which had been gaining momentum under the auspices

of the NIPT, is now being mainstreamed in the rhetoric of teacher education policy; as is the concept of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. Once again, autobiographical triangulation has enabled me to identify another element of the problem driving this inquiry: namely, precisely how concepts of mentoring and reflection for school-based teacher learning for NQTs can be mapped onto the understanding, experiences, and practices, of teachers negotiating and enacting this policy shift at school level.

Following publication of the *Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot Programme* (Banks *et al.* ESRI, 2015) protracted negotiations with the profession were finally settled in March 2017, and this led to the publication of the current version of induction policy, *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council 2017). This iteration reflects the concerns of the profession in relation to the evaluative element of the process. The findings and recommendations of the *Review of the Droichead Pilot Programme* (Banks *et al.* 2015) were also considered in the final document. The National Induction Programme for teachers (NIPT) has overall responsibility for providing professional learning and support for the implementation of the *Droichead* process at school level. Experienced teachers who take part in school-based induction activities as PST receive four days professional development. In addition, the NIPT runs NQT induction workshops and cluster meetings. A carefully planned growth phase spanning five years followed the publication of the finalised policy which has been rolled out on an incremental basis since 2016. At time of writing, schools are in the final year of the roll-out and are on track for complete and fully resourced implementation by the 2020/21 school year (Teaching Council Executive 2019).

3.6.7 My Story: Induction - From CEPP to Droichead

As a member of the Education Committee, I was closely involved in the evolution of the CEPP into the final policy outlined above. Due to my work at school level and previous research, I combined a practice-based understanding of the work of the NIPT with research data on the value of school-based mentoring as a vehicle for providing opportunities for teacher learning, developing professional learning communities, and supporting the growth of distributed leadership. I concluded that there was a “theoretical link between effective school culture, mentoring and the development of a commitment to shared goals and a vision for school improvement” (de Paor 2011, p. 99). The progression of CEPP to *Droichead* began with an exploration of the CEPP policy which addressed the overt discontent of primary teachers. I found myself acting as a bridge between the industrial relations/union agenda, and the

theoretical/ professional position. The development and negotiation of the *Droichead* policy provided me with an in-depth understanding of the highly politicised world of policy development. Like an iceberg, the great bulk was submerged below the ostensible surface. Many informal multifaceted discussions and meetings took place as the committee sought a solution which would answer the concerns of primary teachers.

During this time, I continued to be motivated by the value of school-based teacher learning and the value and importance of teacher knowledge, of, in and for practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999), considered “situated knowledge” (Wenger 1998). The pace of policy development and change is also noteworthy. There was a sense of intense urgency about the development of the induction policy as the implementation of relevant sections of the Teaching Council Act (2001) had been announced by the Minister for Education at the McGill Summer School in July 2010. In the intervening years until publication of the final *Droichead* policy (2017), there were concerted efforts to maintain pace with DES and Teaching Council requirements. This was most evident in the decision to move from pilot to growth phase in March 2016. This created the fear that the counter narrative articulated by members of the profession would ignite to a burning blaze: a situation which indeed transpired and culminated in a directive from the Central Executive of the INTO:

The Central Executive Committee (CEC) directs all members not to participate in or co-operate with Droichead or any form of probation/induction that does not include fully external evaluation for all NQTs with effect from 1 July 2016.

(*Intouch*, September 2016, p.15)

This was mirrored by a recommendation from my M.Ed.:

Data indicates that induction activities should be supported by school-based mentoring under the national framework of the NIPT. Furthermore, induction activities should not be mandated and must not include any form of assessment.

(de Paor, 2011 p. 101)

At this juncture, I became anxious that the understanding of educational theory and concepts I had brought to the table had been co-opted to serve a very different agenda.

Was my belief, passion, and naiveté misguided?

Had I really served the profession I so desperately wanted to support?

3.6.8 In-career Professional Learning

In-career professional learning, referred to as continuous professional development (CPD), and

more latterly as teacher learning (TL), is the third stage on the continuum of teacher education. The 2011 Teaching Council policy on the continuum inscribes the professional learning of teachers to be the “full range of educational experiences designed to enrich teachers’ professional knowledge” (Teaching Council 2011, p. 19). The document emphasises that teacher learning should be “based on teachers’ identified needs” and take place within a school functioning as a learning community within a collaborative school culture. It further underscores that instructional leadership and distributed leadership should support teacher learning in schools operating as professional learning communities (PLC) as follows:

Effective CPD should be constructivist in nature, involving both formal and informal ways of learning where emphasis is placed on reflection, joint problem solving, networking and systematic sharing of experience and expertise.

(Teaching Council 2011, p.20)

The Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education (Teaching Council 2011) and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council 2011) were seen to “pave the way for ITE providers and schools to develop beyond ITE to CPD and shared research agendas” (Sahlberg 2012, p. 21). Having developed and implemented policy in relation to ITE and induction the Council turned its attention to the regulation and promotion of in-career professional learning. In line with Section 39 of the Teaching Council Act (Government of Ireland 2001), the Council published its policy document for this phase of the continuum. *Cosán: Framework for Teachers’ Learning*, (Teaching Council, 2016) was the result of protracted consultation and engagement with the profession and relevant stakeholders. Though one would question if this merely provided the “illusion that the voices of teacher have been included in decision making (Santoro 2017, p.57).

With this policy the Council moved “to both promote and regulate the profession” at all three stages of the continuum of teacher education. Introduced in the foreword as “the next step in this development of professional standards”, *Cosán* emphasises that teachers’ learning is an ongoing process and states that the policy provides “a long-awaited opportunity to affirm the value of teachers’ learning” and acknowledges the full range of learning activities teachers undertake” (Teaching Council 2016 p.2). This document uses ‘new vocabularies of practice’ (Ball 2013, p. 1050) which implies “a discourse of quality” which may be considered to bring “increased levels of regulation and bureaucracy” which leads me to wonder if this is contributing to a “degree of de-professionalisation of the teacher” (ibid p.1051).

The focus, theme, and problem, of this inquiry which comprise both formal and informal

opportunities for school-based teacher learning directly obtain to the *Cosán* policy document (Teaching Council 2016) which delineates such learning in terms of dimensions, processes, and learning areas.

The dimensions of teachers learning are considered to be individual and collaborative; personal and professional; formal and informal; and internal and external to the school. (p. 13). School-based learning is included as a dimension of teacher learning. This further indicates the policy shift towards acknowledging and developing the school as a site for teacher education.

Of the learning processes identified, those most pertinent to this inquiry are practice and collaboration, and mentoring and coaching. Practice and collaboration includes sharing expertise with colleagues, team teaching, action research, and piloting of new initiatives; while mentoring and coaching refers to working as a co-operating teacher, supporting colleagues to develop their teaching, and working as a mentor or member of a PST (Teaching Council 2016, pp. 16-17). In addition to ringfencing a number of priority learning areas linked to the national agenda for school improvement, “supporting teacher learning” is included and defined as:

Teachers’ learning through supporting student teachers on school placement as Co-operating teachers, or through supporting NQTs during their induction phase as a member of a Professional Support Team.

(Teaching Council 2016, p.19)

The policy claims to support teachers’ professionalism by fostering “cultures of ‘powerful professional learning’ based on teachers’ active engagement in their own learning” (ibid p.3). The stated aim is to encourage teachers to be responsible for the trajectory of their own learning by developing their intrinsic motivation to engage in professional development in the course of their career. *Cosán*’s recognition of teachers as “autonomous professionals” foregrounds the inherent dichotomy between the rhetoric of policy and the lived experiences of teachers as professionals in their own school communities. My experience as a school leader and teacher educator confirms that many teachers feel that the focus of their professional learning is dictated and mandated, leaving little time or opportunity for “active engagement in their own learning”. Situated in the “midst of stories lived and told”, this inquiry seeks to redress this dichotomy by offering true and insightful ‘stories from school’ which contest prevailing discourse and assumptions in relation to school-based teacher education.

Finally, the concept of reflective practice frames the entirety of the understanding of teacher learning articulated in the policy. I question how well this will work in reality; particularly

since many experienced teachers have not been supported in developing as reflective practitioners. Furthermore, my work with student teachers has led me to question the actual level of engagement in critical reflection, and development of reflective practice habits across both ITE and induction.

Following the promotion of *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning* (Teaching Council 2016) as a flexible, trust-based, empowering, and teacher-led framework, the Council proceeded to work with the profession in the development phase of the policy. To this end, Council staff have introduced “opt in exploratory” initiatives with teachers. This phase of *Cosán* development has been progressing somewhat slower than originally expected. One of the key findings to date is the “huge spectrum” of understanding in relation to reflective practice within the profession (Teaching Council Executive Staff 2019). Without the pressure of the externally imposed deadlines set for *Droichead*, the development process of *Cosán* has been more organic and less hectic than the national roll-out of prior policies and it is claimed that greater input from teaching professionals has been welcomed.

3.6.9 My Story: *Cosán*

The development of *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning*, (Teaching Council 2016) also forms part of my policy narrative. In contrast to the development of the induction policy, *Cosán* was built on open consultations with members of the profession. Policy makers claim that the voice of teachers was welcomed and heard at consultation meetings across a wide geographical spread of Education Centres. However, in the course of attending one such meeting I experienced misgivings about the manner in which the consultation was facilitated. Specifically, I wondered how the facilitators were chosen for these events and the level of expertise in relation to the work of the Teaching Council or the literature on teacher learning and professional development. In addition to the consultation meetings, there was a general call for teachers to complete online questionnaires while opportunities for input from school staff were also facilitated. The Council provided a template and school leaders were invited to submit joint statements from staff in relation to their views on CPD. In hindsight, I now see that the careful structuring of this consultation process left little or “no space for off-the-menu moral discourse” (Santoro 2017, p. 59) and wonder if this was in fact an instance of the ventriloquisation of the moral concerns of teachers by a powerful societal institution. (ibid) In any event, the number of schools that provided shared feedback was noticeably few. This may have been due to of a lack of awareness, time, or apathy amongst the profession.

In an attempt to harness the voices of all involved in CPD for teachers, the Council also facilitated meetings with a wide range of stakeholders. In all, there were two rounds of consultations with teachers and other stakeholders. Yet again, I was conscious of the insidious dominance of the agencies of the DES, and School Management bodies within the consultation process.

While the policy underwent several drafts, the final iteration nevertheless applied the language of ‘*standards*’ and ‘*processes*’ typified below:

Standards to guide teachers learning and reflection provide a focus for ‘dynamic teacher learning processes’ “”and these should be considered “growth- based” rather than “threshold-based”.

(Cosán, p. 22)

3.7 Poacher Turned Gatekeeper?

The snapshot into ‘the self as policy maker’ explored above outlines my thoughts and experiences in the course of my term as a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland. Now that I am no longer at the ‘policy table’ I am once again an ‘outsider’. Whether this is a case of loss or liberation to once again pursue my chosen mission remains to be seen. The mission is to ensure that those involved in the negotiation and enactment phase at the site of practice are seen as moral agents and that their input and experience is validated so that policy development moves towards valuing a bottom-up approach opening up the possibility of more democratic educational policy development (Sant 2019).

Throughout my time as a member of the Teaching Council, I made concerted efforts to represent the perspective of teachers at school level. These teachers, the grass-roots majority of the profession, were not included in what I now regard as the ‘golden circle’ of policy level. These are the individuals who possessed the social and cultural capital to achieve success in the policy making habitus and held prestigious positions within the DES, Management Bodies and the Teacher Unions. However, with the benefit of hindsight, I also realise that despite spending most of my time at the site of practice as a school leader, in my role as teacher representative on the Teaching Council I occasionally succumbed to ‘ivory tower’ syndrome.

3.8 Conclusion

This exploration of the context for this inquiry demonstrates the influence of supranational organisations such as the OECD, the GERM and EU to shape Irish national policy should not be underestimated. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to indicate that the policy landscape in Ireland has been engulfed by the global prioritization of teacher quality and consequent

emphasis on teacher education. Understanding the “rising tide” of accountability and performativity in the context of the “perfect storm” of the Celtic Tiger crash fuelled by global recession and PISA 2009, elucidates the socio-economic context in which teachers lived out their ‘stories from school’ during the target decade of this inquiry.

The exploration of policy documents threaded with my personal narrative, supports the identification of key concepts in the policy documents which affect the professional responsibilities of teachers and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they require.

This chapter also advances understanding of the policy shift towards school-based teacher education, and presents detailed contextual evidence to support the problem, quest, and overall aim, of this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4: JOURNEYING TO THE TRIPLE TALE: THE SELF AS TEACHER EDUCATOR

4.1 Introduction

Recognising that narrative inquiry is a conversation between theory and life “between theory and the stories of life contained in the inquiry” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000 p. 41), I now explore my journey towards identifying as a teacher educator. This journey and the unfolding narrative outlined below are inseparable from the narrative of my previous and current research journey. As such, I have included my thinking as I journey towards narrative. In so doing I travel towards identifying as a narrative bricoleur (Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

This researcher identity has guided me in the presentation of this final research text. The culmination of my exploration of the self as teacher educator and my research journey is the development of what I denote as the ‘triple tale’: an attempt to synthesise my thoughts as I moved forward to accept the ‘gift of stories’.



4.2 Weaving the Narrative Threads: Artefacts

Through family stories people learn self-identity...Family artefacts...become trigger to our memories, to recollecting the little fragments that have no beginning and no end and around which we tell stories.

(Clandinin and Connolly 1994, p. 420)

The above photograph was taken at a research methods conference where I presented my

personal narrative ‘the self who teaches’ (Palmer 1998) through poetic performance scripts and a selection of photographs and artefacts. I also presented elements of my research journey which led to the uncovering of ‘The Triple Tale’.

4.2.1 Valuing Educational Opportunities

Moving backwards in time, I have included my father’s Primary Certificate. For me, this precious family artefact signifies the value which should be placed on educational opportunities. Claude Byrne was awarded his Primary Certificate in 1946. At that time, second level education was not an option for most children, and the Primary Certificate represented the highest level of educational opportunity. I include this as an ‘experiential artefact’ because I have always admired my father’s educational achievements. His own father had died when he was just one year old, and he was reared by his mother and her sister. As the youngest of four, he continued after primary school and gained national first place in Leaving Certificate Mathematics; the Irish state exams taken at the conclusion of second level education prior to matriculation or employment. Claude was also awarded a scholarship to undertake a BSc at university; an unheard-of achievement in his family. Moving forward in time; in recent years, I displayed this certificate to parents and pupils at the annual graduation of our sixth-class pupils to highlight the educational prospects now routinely available for young people and urged anyone who would listen not to squander such opportunity.

4.2.2 Critical Insight in the Teaching Profession

This original copy of the Report of the National Education Convention (Coolahan 1994: 3.3.1), bequeathed to me by my Aunt Mairin, underscores the commitment to education throughout my wider family. Indeed, as an activist and advocate for the profession throughout her life, my aunt critically engaged in educational developments with passion and a deep sense of being “wide awake in the world” (Greene, 1995 p.4). She remained a critical thinker in relation to educational policy all her life. During school holidays I spent a considerable amount of time in her care and as a result she influenced my values and identity as an educator from the very early stages of my journey.

4.2.3 The Value of Arts Education

The framed painting is for me a symbol of my commitment to Arts education. The painting reproduced on the cover of the invitation to an art exhibition and Arts Week which I organised for our school community early in my leadership years was painted by my mother, Dairine. As such it signifies multiple aspects of my narrative as an educator: the influence of my mother’s

passion for Arts education, the influence of the Arts Week as a catalyst for change in our school community; and my deeply held belief in the value of the aesthetic dimension of the human condition.

Finally, the painting symbolises my belief in the value of the nurturing of creativity and imagination to enhance a school community.

4.2.4 The Courage to Care

Meet Molly. Molly is a 'forever friend' teddy which was given to me by a child in my class two decades ago. Since then Molly has been my constant companion on my journey as I evolved from teacher to school leader. In times of trouble during my leadership years, when the children in my care needed support with relationships, behaviour, or emotional problems, I relied on Molly as a 'speaking object' during circle time (Mosley 1996). More recently, I have introduced Molly to college students in their first year of teacher education. Molly is the physical manifestation of the caring stance I have always taken as an educator. Like Noddings, I maintain that education is a "constellation of caring encounters" and that every interaction between a teacher and pupil is seated in caring relationships. It is my contention that the care and emotional toil undertaken by teachers and school leaders is rarely seen, valued, or understood.

4.2.5 Establishing a Safe Environment

So, to the whistle, engraved with my name. This was presented to me by the parents at my last assembly as a school leader. I used a whistle every day. Surprising as it may seem, I see the whistle as a symbol of 'self-care'. I had damaged my voice over the years, and this upset me greatly, as the joy of singing in choirs had been a hugely important part of my life. In my school leadership years, I wore a whistle around my neck every day to save my voice. Before leaving the office in the mornings I would put on my 'yard coat' emblazoned with the school crest and my whistle. I would say 'ShowTime' to myself and launch myself onto the corridors and the yard to 'meet my public' for 'front of house duty'. The 'silver whistle' therefore epitomises positive relationships between pupils, staff and parents.

4.2.6 The Conductor

My conductor's baton is included in my collection of artefacts. During my teaching and leadership years, I had a parallel journey as a musician. In fact, it was my work as a musician, conducting musical theatre, and a brass and reed band, which led me to recognise my leadership

abilities. Through my work with musical groups, I became confident in my ability to bring people together, bring them with me, and lead them on a shared journey, and share my interest in and love of music with pupils, teachers and parents.

For many years I led the school choir which rehearsed on Fridays after school. This meant that I left school every Friday having sloughed off the responsibilities of school leadership (I literally took off my suit jacket and kicked off my shoes when singing with the children) and with the sound of the children's singing echoing in my head. Towards the end of my time as a school leader, we performed a musical in the local community hall, and I 'came out' as a conductor to the entire school community. I had engaged a professional choreographer and professional musicians all of whom knew me from my 'musical life'. Despite my own reservations of being 'the big *I am*' they insisted that I conduct the musical as this was something, they had seen me do many times before. To my surprise the parents were delighted; even 'proud of me'!

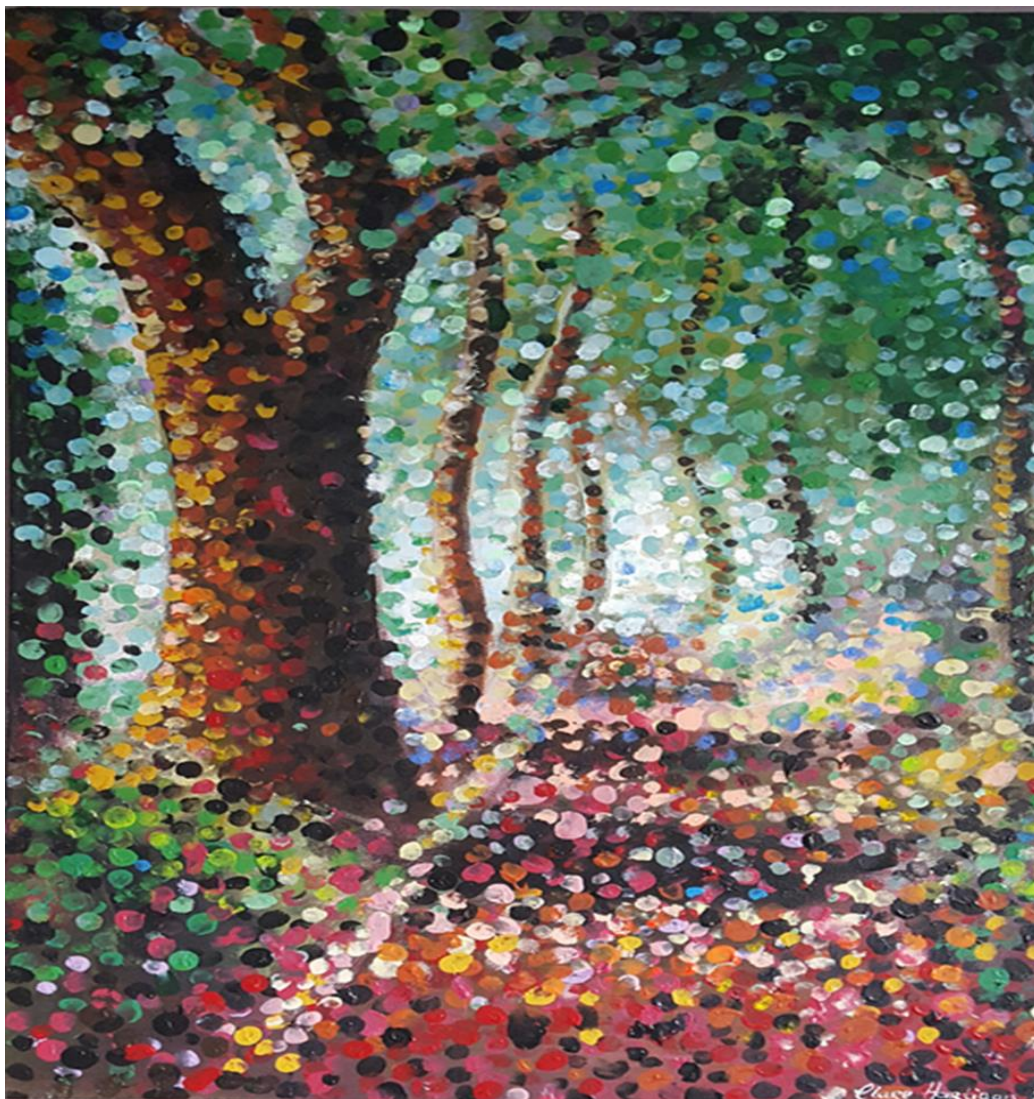
4.2.7. Teacher; Leader; Policy-maker?

I undertook my role as a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland with a naïve sense of passion and commitment to the profession. The artefact which says 'learning' in Ogham was presented to us on completion of our term on the Council. This experience proved a significant part of my narrative as an educator as I feel that I finally 'grew up' at the policy table. It was here that I gradually became aware of the "noxious cloud" (Greene 1995, p.47) which I regard as the influence of neoliberalism and the political dimension of the policy space. This artefact is also treasured because of the affirmation and sense of collegiality I encountered on the Council, and where I felt my experience and opinion were heard and valued. Moreover, the artefact symbolises the value of my previous research journey, since membership of the council enabled my Master's research to influence policy development in terms of induction and the strategic direction of the teaching Council. In this way, the narrative of my research journey harnesses the story of practitioner research influencing the policy space. The aforementioned artefacts provide the final element in my personal narrative as an educator. Using writing as a way of knowing (Richardson 1994) and "autoethnographic performance scripts to create and enact moral meaning" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p. 5) I have come to a full understanding of the narrative threads which guide this inquiry.

4.2.8 The Narrative Threads

- The value I place on care in education
- The centrality of trust and respect in building relationships which enable meaningful dialogue
- My understanding of leadership as an invitation to others (Stoll and Fink 1995)
- A belief that power associated with leadership should be channelled in the service of others
- The importance of building professional confidence and agency
- The value which I place on the Arts.
- The centrality of imagination and creativity to develop critical insight and see the world as otherwise


4.3 The Talisman



As an object which brings good luck or keeps the owner safe from harm, this painting has been my personal talisman since I embarked on my research journey. It was painted using the fingerprints of the children from the school where I was leader. As a metaphor this painting signifies the uniqueness of the individual and the importance of those we meet on our journey. In addition, the use of pointillism as a technique purports that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and that experience, beauty, meaning, and by extension, knowledge, can be created and known through collective endeavour. The painting portrays a pathway through the trees: either a beginning or an ending of a journey. This talisman is a guiding light and a support for me as I journey from school leader to teacher educator through my research journey. It has brought me luck and kept me safe from harm as I journeyed to escape the grand narrative and uncover the triple tale.

4.4 The self as teacher educator: A reflective moment...

Bringing it all together -31st March 2017



Millfidh siad an áit!
They will ruin the place!

A Performance Script

My shoes need new heels!
I realised this when I was walking on the corridors of the college and the click of metal on tiles entered my consciousness.

The tiles, which have been there for a very long time, certainly before I was a student in the college in the early 1980s, are still in very good condition.
Thoughts come flooding back of another time;

Another ME.

A young student teacher who began her studies in the college having attended progressive primary and secondary schools dressed, not in the uniform of the young students...jeans and a jumper, but in a skirt and stiletto heels.

These shoes, the shoes of the young student teacher also needed new heels and the metallic click reverberated around the hushed corridors of the foundation building. One of the Mercy sisters, the religious order who had founded the college with the support of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick stopped suddenly at my side and in a raised voice...and exclaimed *as gaeilge*, something about my shoes:

‘Millfidh siad an áit!’

I was taken by surprise and felt at a loss as I didn’t understand what she had said to me or the reason for her sharp tone. Her concern and the manner in which she corrected me about the metal tips on my shoes was for the building; the tiles in the building...
Not the young student teacher she had the power to nurture.
Where was the I-Thou? (Buber); the educative relationship?
The modelling of ways of being for my young self as a student teacher who would eventually have the potential to be a positive or negative influence on so many young people, colleagues and wider school communities.

The tiles...

They survived completely intact and, in many ways, could be considered a metaphor for the tone and values, issues of power and control, which were part of the ‘hidden curriculum’ which so many teachers experienced in their formative years...
Has this influenced how teachers negotiate and enact current policy at school level?
Did it diminish our ability to critically question?
accepted wisdom?
ways of thinking?
ways of knowing?
ways of doing?
and ways of being?

I spent the rest of my college years walking on tip-toe every time a member of the religious order was anywhere near me...my ‘creative compliance’ (Solbrekke and Sugrue 2014, p. 18) finding ways around things, but not actually giving in to my ‘good girl’ button which seems to guide many of us experienced teachers.

Broadening the analogy to the here and now, to the structures which espouse to seek improved educational experiences for children, or support teachers in their work in schools and in their professionalism:

I wonder, are the tiles which make up the elements of these structures, which serve the neoliberal agenda more valued than other ideals which connect with the self, values, and integrity of so many teachers?

This leads me to ask:

Are the words and concepts which make up the tiles of these structures-

rules, roles,
responsibility, standards,
domain of practice,
inputs, outcomes,
evidence-based practice

more precious than the growth and development of our teachers across all stages of the continuum?

***Millfidh said an áit!
They will ruin the place!***

Does the current education policy field deliver this message, in just as harsh a manner to teachers who seek to create experiences for their pupils where the child's needs and well-being are at the heart of the educative relationship?

Does the current policy context communicate that compliance and conformity is neat, tidy, and well-ordered?

Does it say to teachers: the 'messiness' and 'noise' of critical thought will ruin the place?

Millfidh said an áit?

Where is creativity and imagination cherished (Hedderman 2012) and where is the space for an ethic of care (Noddings 2005) as a priority permeating all aspects of our work?

Well, I know I walked that little bit louder today and enjoyed the metallic click as it echoed down the corridor...

I survived!

I struggled but held firm to my voice!

With only a little wear and tear...

And the confident click, click, click of metal on century-old tiles rang out in celebration!


***But...
...the tiles of the neoliberal agenda will remain intact for decades!***

4.5 Derbhile becomes *Dorothy* and uncovers the 'Triple Tale'

To reiterate: The Triple Tale may be understood as an 'autoethnographic performance text' (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5). As such, it is presented as a dialogic text and presumes the engagement of an active audience. Like Denzin and Lincoln, I maintain that such a text "moves from the personal to the political" and from "the local to the historical" (ibid).


A Triple Tale!

The Pied Piper




- **Ethic of Care...** (Noddings)
- **Knowing** teaching and learning (Palmer)
- Who is **the self** that teaches? (Palmer)
- **I –thou** relationships (Buber)
- Creativity and imagination in education (Hedderman 2012)
- The yellow brick road: The **grand narrative** of formalistic research. (Clandinin and Connelly)


The Wizard Of Oz



The Emperors New Clothes



- **The Pied Piper** of neoliberalism (Mooney Simmie)
- **The wizard of Oz**..... policy makers.
- **Dorothy**..... the one on a journey into research
- **The tin man, scarecrow and lion**.... The narrative inquiry engagement group
- **Obligato**: An instrumental part, typically distinctive in effect, which is integral to a piece of music and should not be omitted in performance.



4.5.1 Narrative Performance

Script: A Triple Tale!

The Tale of the Pied Piper /The Wizard of Oz /The Emperor’s New Clothes!

Who am I in the landscape of Teacher Education?
 I am nobody, and yet,
 I hope to understand and represent everybody!
 I know very little, and yet,
 Have practical experience of all stages of the continuum.
 Could I be the little boy in the *Emperor’s New Clothes* who proclaimed:
 “The King is in the altogether!”?

I hear the *Pied Piper* of neoliberalism call the tune,
 Sometimes even follow his tune, and play the melody with him.

Could I be Dorothy?
 The researcher, following the yellow brick road,
 hoping the great Oz will help me home?

Or Dorothy the researcher, composing the counter-melody?
 She needs a true, strong, powerful tune to rise above the pied piper of neoliberalism.
 This-counter melody needs to grow into a stunning obligato,
 enriching the harmonies and melodies of holistic teacher education;
 Which may, in turn, enable teachers to provide
 creative and imaginative educational experiences for all in their care.

Am I Dorothy, the educator/researcher?
 Who, together with her companions,
 the Tin-man, the Scarecrow, and the Lion,
 bring themselves to the educational endeavour every day?
 Who believes in the I-thou educative relationship?

Who embodies an ethic of care every moment of every day?
Who 'knows' that which others cannot know:

That the King is in the altogether.
That the Wizard of Oz is nothing.
Unless the obligato of teachers' voice is heard
bright and clear
in the music of teacher education policy.

4.6 Epilogue

The Triple Tale omits consideration of an important character in the adventures of *The Wizard of Oz*; namely, Elphaba; whom society cast as the Wicked Witch of the West on the basis of 'otherness' and inability to normalise her appearance and her behaviour. The control and domination of the *Pied Piper* and the insecurity of *The Wizard of Oz* could have led me to fear being similarly cast due to my gender, age, and my critical insights. However, I believe that these are precisely the attributes which enable me to give voice to 'stories lived and told' by my companions as we work towards escaping the tentacles of the grand narrative' of policy makers. So, I choose to move forward as Dorothy, with the full awareness of the all-pervasive influence of the *Pied Piper* of neoliberalism, and the understanding that while seen to offer pastoral abundance (5.3.3) *Wizard of Oz* policy actions may actually be control masquerading as emancipation (Day 1999).

CHAPTER 5: THINKING WITH THEORY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter enlarges upon my engagement with philosophy as the theoretical basis of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF). To this end, the iterative nature of the connection between the multiple 'I's is once again underlined as the telling and retelling, living and reliving, of my narrative in the course of this inquiry means that the interpretative lens is unavoidably inconsistent. As I have moved forwards and backwards in time and space during the inquiry, the multiple 'I's have been dynamic and the fluctuations of each in turn has inevitably impacted the others. Like Jackson and Mazzei (2012), I do not regard myself as an "audacious philosopher". Instead, I maintain that engagement with the philosophers has equipped me to "think with theory" in order to access new knowledge and understandings in relation to teachers' stories from school. In this conversation with the philosophers, I endeavour to work towards exploring teachers' stories by "thinking methodologically and philosophically together" (Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. vii). In this way "thinking with theory" about teachers' stories will ensure that my 'knowledge is opened up rather than foreclosed and simplified' (ibid). In addition, by "plugging in" (Jackson and Mazzei 2012) to the "thinking tools" (Lingard *et al.* 2003) of Bourdieu's social theory I add a multidisciplinary dimension to the overall theoretical framework

5.1.1 The Journey thus Far

To reiterate: Kincheloe and Berry (2004) purport that becoming a narrative bricoleur is perhaps a natural destination as a "lifetime endeavour" (Kincheloe and Berry 2004, p.4 cited in Kim 2016, p. 260). In identifying as a narrative bricoleur (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, Kim 2016) I therefore imagine myself as a "narrative inquirer who longs to experiment, to try things out with creativity and imagination" (Kim 2016, p.258). As a narrative bricoleur I put something of myself "into every step" of this inquiry (Kim 2016, p. 258). Identified as the threads of my personal narrative, the narrative threads previously outlined (4.2.8) are the 'leitmotifs' (Bruner 2004) which guide my conversation with the philosophers.

The overarching macro level theories (Kim 2016) guiding this inquiry are interdisciplinary and include Foucault's theory of power relations and Bourdieu's' social field theory. Thus qualitative "disciplinary boundaries are crossed and the analytical frames of more than one discipline are employed by the researcher" (Kincheloe 2001, p.685 cited in Kim 2016, p. 259) enabling both Foucault and Bourdieu to provide the framework necessary to explore sacred,

secret, and cover stories situated on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes.

My conversation with philosophers begins by exploring power and the relationship between power, knowledge and truth. I then consider the centrality of caring in the educational endeavour and how this links to democratic relationships and true dialogue. I consider the importance of imagination and creativity in supporting the development of critical insight. Finally, I argue for the use of story as a way of building new knowledge and understandings about everyday experiences and so my engagement with the philosophers concludes with a brief philosophical exploration of narrative as a way of understanding ourselves and the world we inhabit. (Kearney/ Bruner). I then consider the above in the light of the 'Thinking tools' of Bourdieu's social theory.

5.2 Power and its Relationship to Knowledge and Truth

In my previous research journey, I began to trouble the relationship between theory and practice. This is articulated in the performance script in Chapter 2 (2.6.6). This performance script provides the seeds of my developing awareness and understanding of knowledge and truth and how this is linked to power

Thinking with Foucault has enabled me to understand and articulate my unease with power and control in society: unease which I always felt deep inside but was unable to name. Engagement with Foucauldian discourse revealed that the social arrangements which have a normalising effect on human behaviour are derived from particular 'epistemes' or regimes of power.

Thus, the power relations which our lives invariably characterize structure our understanding of the accepted social order. Indeed, the exercise of power over another is symbiotic with repression. In short; normative social orders are situated in perpetual relationships of force and resistance. While we are rarely conscious of it, Foucault asserts that power seeps "into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their learning process and everyday lives" (Marshall, Gordon *et al.* 1980 p.201 cited in Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. 54).

For Foucault, "power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalises, professionalises and rewards its pursuit" (Foucault 1980, p. 93). As such, it is synonymous with a 'subjection' that circulates everywhere and functions in the form of a chain

and is organized and exercised through a net-like organization and people as the vehicles or validators of domination or ongoing oppression of the other. Thinking with Foucault about the concept of power is an integral element of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework; particularly as I consider the multiple 'I's in this inquiry. As a member of the Teaching Council, I was an insider of a societal institution which exercises considerable power over teachers' professional selves; now I am outside this societal institution, facilitating teacher learning and contesting teacher education policy from the margins. Through thinking with Foucault, this inquiry considers sacred stories as the "productive effects of power as [they] circulate through the practices of people in their daily lives" (Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. 49). In considering this, I am guided by his question: "What rules of the right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth?" (Foucault 1980, p.93). Since this question explicitly connects the Foucauldian hypothesis of power and our understanding of truth, my interpretative lens reformulates his question as follows:

- *What 'truths' developed by the systems of power influence teachers' professional knowledge landscapes?*
- *How can we identify such 'truths' and bring them to the shared consciousness of those operating within the systems of power, so that all forms of teacher knowledge may be brought to light in a truly democratic policy landscape?*

5.3 Foucault: Key Concepts

Foucauldian discourse offers several key concepts which obtain to 'sacred, secret, and cover stories' played out on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, including *disciplinary power, panoptic surveillance, pastoral power, and false freedoms*. Engagement with these ideas has assisted my understanding of the setting, exploration of the problem, and building resolutions within the narrative of this inquiry.

5.3.1 Disciplinary Power

Foucault refers to the aforementioned societal institutions as modern systems of disciplinary power which exercise three techniques of control: namely, hierarchical observation; normalizing judgment; and examination. He particularly highlights concern in relation to what people do not do (non-observance) as a feature of disciplinary control. Non-observance includes personal failure to attain certain prescribed standards. Indeed, the insidious leaking of the term '*standards*' into the policy and practices of societal institutions clearly manifests this form of disciplinary control as an attempt to normalise certain codes or behaviour.

5.3.2 Panoptic Surveillance

Foucault purports that control can be affected through observation and/or the possibility of observation and adopts Bentham's paradigm of the panopticon as the model of societal disciplinary power. In a building designed to precise architectural specifications (originally conceived as a prison) constant observation from a central viewpoint is possible, though not knowable or probable. My personal narrative as an educator leads me to believe that a kind of panoptic surveillance is applied by the DES in the current regime of school inspections; in that unannounced 'incidental visits', collegially known as 'drive-bys' are always a possibility.

5.3.3. Pastoral Power

Foucault views social control in terms of discipline and pastoral control. Discipline operates by dominating the other. As such, laws and rules may be broken, and can occasionally cause violence to break out, when others do not conform. Pastoral power on the other hand operates through the self-regulation feature of modern government. Interesting then, that the core Teaching Council value of 'professional regulation' is in fact a form of self-regulation. Indeed, for the pastoral power of the Teaching Council's 'professional self-regulation' to succeed, it must:

... flow through the consciousness of subjects in such a way that they internalize the relevant laws, rules, and norms so as to regulate themselves in accord with them.

(Bevir 1999, p. 355)

As pastoral power compels individuals to be "subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault 1982, p. 212), it is neither overtly violent, nor explicit domination. Rather, it is a highly effective "type of influence" (ibid) which ensures social control by convincing people of the appropriateness of certain behaviours. The exercise of pastoral power by societal institutions considers people "to the very end as a person who acts" (Foucault 1982, p. 220). Moreover, since "creative agency" (Bevir 1999) encourages individuals to willingly subjugate themselves to regimes of power, such types of pastoral power arguably harnesses the grand deception that we may be creative agents in our own 'becoming' and behaviour. On the contrary, regimes of power limit precisely this, and false freedoms ensue.

5.3.4 False Freedoms

For Foucault, freedom is a mere illusion. He contends that our *becoming* or construction of identity is not wholly of our own making since we must construct ourselves in line with the hegemonies developed by the accepted truths of societal institutions. In fact, the "false

freedoms” of *freedom to be, freedom to live, freedom to choose*, and so on, are actually by-products of the power of societal institutions. Indeed, the power they hold and the truths they ostensibly produce, perpetuate hierarchical observation, normalize judgment, and drive examination as a way of exerting disciplinary influence on how we construct ourselves.

Thinking with Foucault helps me to consider the epistemological dilemmas teachers face on their professional knowledge landscapes. (Clandinin and Connolly 1995, 1996, see section 1.7) I believe that the concepts explored above link to how teachers experience and enact policy, negotiating the sacred stories of policy makers.

5.4 Knowledge and Truth: An Effect of Power

The interrelationship of power and knowledge is elucidated by Foucault. In his exegesis, he emphasises and examines how power and the control of knowledge are used as a form of social control via societal institutions. Using Foucault’s theory of power relations, wherein power is understood to exist among and between people, knowledge and truth can be construed as an “effect of power” (Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. 49), I have come to understand that “how people are understood, or how knowledge is constructed about people is a function of power” (ibid p.52). In exploring the power/knowledge/truth trinity I contend that teachers live their stories of practice in and through hierarchical power structures. As such I propose that a combination of these power structures and teachers’ individual contexts be understood as professional knowledge landscapes which “combine power and knowledge to create their subjectivities” (Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p 49). These ‘subjectivities’ are explored in the teachers’ stories presented in the ‘assemblage’ that is part two of this research text as:

...the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world.

(Weedon 1997, p. 32 cited in Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. 52)

In contending that all knowledge is seated in our subjectivities, this inquiry rests on the belief that knowledge as an epistemology is like ether: it cannot be “identified, measured or transmitted”. As such, education cannot simply obtain to the transmission of knowledge but is rather “the promotion of the person as a totality designed to make personal contact with the surrounding world” (Hedderman 2012, p. 41). Hedderman (2012) goes on to explain that “knowledge is not fundamentally a technique or a craft, it is a way of being, of being myself” (ibid p.42). Moreover, he argues that knowledge can be considered as both epistemology and pedagogy, that knowing is ‘the activity of me alive in the body’, and that ‘thinking is our way

of existing' (ibid p.40). In exploring the context in which teaching and learning take place and in which teachers do their work, Greene (1995) clearly delineates the current context without mention of the neoliberal agenda. In considering how power links to knowledge she alludes to the "Dominant Voices"...who assume the objective worth of certain kinds of knowledge" (Greene 1995 p. 9).

That all teachers are required to comply and serve is a clear articulation of "the teacher as a functionary and technician" (Moonie Simmie 2012). Echoing my own observations and the unfolding stories in this narrative, Greene refers to teachers in the system without agency, and much like myself, wonders at that fact that "eager teachers do appear and reappear" (Greene 1995, p. 11). Her claims that policy is now developed from "a vantage point of power or existing ideologies" resonates with the technical/ rational/ normative stance of the current policy context in Ireland. While such developments may be understood through "the lenses of benevolent policy making" (ibid, p.11), Green contends that the difference actually lies in how we approach things: in seeing big rather than seeing small:

...seeing schooling small is preoccupied with test scores, 'time on task', management procedures...accountability measures...screens out the faces and gestures of individuals, of actual living persons.

(Greene 1995 p.11)

5.5 Care, Dialogue and Relationships

The centrality of 'care' to the educational endeavour is fundamental to my personal narrative. Indeed, the importance of 'care' is a common thread in all elements of my personal autobiographical interpretive framework.

Like Noddings, I believe the main aim of education should be "to encourage the growth of competent caring, loving and lovable people" (Noddings 1995, p.366), and that, as such, we should "legitimize time spent in building relations of care and trust" (ibid. p.368). Noddings further aligns with my conviction that the responsiveness of "listening attentively and responding in a positive manner" are the hallmarks of caring (Noddings, 2005, p. xiv). By underscoring a "relational view of caring" (Noddings 2005, xv), she also guides me to a more fruitful understanding of the relationship between the carer and the cared for: namely, that to be caring is to be successful in building caring relationships. Therefore, I understand that to be caring is to be successful in building caring relationships. I see the relationship between co-operating teacher and student teacher and mentor and mentee as a professional caring relationship. This provides some insight for this inquiry in exploring schools as sites for teacher

education, seated in the landscape of unprecedented policy change, in austerity Ireland.

As a teacher, school leader, researcher, and teacher educator, my choices around methodology are grounded in and guided by an ethic of care. The work of Noddings is a fundamental element of my personal philosophical framework and aligns with my thinking as an educator:

Our society does not need to make its children first in the world in mathematics and science. It needs to care for its children - to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to reward excellence at every level, to ensure a place for every child and emerging adult in the economic and social world, to produce people who can care competently for their own families and contribute effectively to their communities...Our main educational aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people. This is a morally defensible aim for education in the 21st century.

(Noddings, 1995, p. 366)

5.5.1 Relationships

This commitment to an ethic of care and the consequent centrality of the person in the educational endeavour leads me to explore the nature of relationships and the importance of dialogue for building these relationships. As such, the work of Martin Buber is axiomatic to my understanding of relationships; more specifically, understanding relationships in terms of I-Thou relationships and I-It relationships. Guilherme and Morgan (2009) assert that as the I-Thou relation is an encounter of equals, there is an inherent level of “mutuality in an exchange”:

...when two free rational human beings encounter each other, and recognize each other as equals, then an infinite number of meaningful and dynamic situations may be established within the I-Thou relation.

(Guilherme and Morgan, 2009, p.566)

Since a person wholeheartedly enters into more meaningful and dynamic encounters, a connection and sense of fulfilment is available on entering into the other’s emotional space. This is considered a subjective stance. In contrast, the I-It relationship is typified by an encounter where one person treats another as a means to an end rather than being open to dialogue or an encounter. This is considered an objective stance. While utilitarian I-It encounters are adequate to meet our basic needs, Buber contends that human beings need both types of relations with the world around them and those whom they encounter. In terms of educative relationships, Buber advocates a dialogical teacher/pupil approach which should include the I-Thou relationship as necessary. As complete mutuality in a student/teacher relationship has the potential to undermine the educative relationship, he qualifies that educators should not wholly enter an I-Thou relationship with their pupils: rather, the educator

should step into the I-Thou relation as appropriate in support of the learning relationship. The contention that the higher level of mutuality within an adult-to-adult educative relationship relies on higher level of ‘communion’ is directly relevant to this inquiry. Guilherme and Morgan observe that:

The one-sidedness of the I-Thou relation between teacher and student in child education is replaced by an I-Thou relation that is more symmetrically reciprocal and more empowering for the adult student. This empowerment of adult students via an I-Thou relation based largely on mutuality is the value core of adult education, as it allows it to become the source of personal and community transformation.

(ibid, p. 570)

A thorough understanding of I-It and I-Thou relationships has shaped my understanding of the tutor/student teacher relationship during school placement and the mentor/mentee relationship in induction. Indeed, I have discerned a continuum of movement with increasing levels of the I-Thou relationship and that the tendency to hold back lessens as the supportive ‘learning’ relationship becomes more equal as a result of experience and development of teacher knowledge. This understanding of the I-Thou relationship proposed by Buber clearly establishes the centrality of an ethic of care and colours my understanding of power, truth, and knowledge, as previously explored.

Expanding on this understanding of relationships in an educational context, Hedderman (2012) sees relationships in terms of the “educational equation”: a relationship in a situation which leads to an educational encounter. Relying heavily on the philosophical precepts of Buber, Hedderman highlights the importance of ‘relationship’ and the space between the student and the teacher where he claims true educational encounters happen:

...real education is a duet between the person of teacher and the person of student. Unless the life of dialogue can be inserted fully into educational practice, education ceases to be a fully human or humanising endeavour.

(Hedderman 2012, p.56)

Moreover, he maintains such a relationship is predicated on contact rather than content. In this context, he refers to the “flow” of contact and argues that “there has to be electricity in the air. If not, there is no ether on which the educational relationship can travel” (ibid p59). This impacts on how I view the ‘educational encounters’ between teachers which take place at school level to facilitate school-based teacher learning. This understanding of the I-thou relationship as proposed by Buber links to the value I place on an ethic of care and colours my understanding of power, truth and knowledge as previously explored.

5.5.2 Dialogue

Thinking with theory leads me to consider the concept of dialogue as a synthesis of the main elements outlined in this chapter to date. Freire (1970) highlights “the life of dialogue” in our educational practice and notes the higher levels of “communion” required to support educative relationships. Like Freire, I maintain that “dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others” (Freire 1970, p.70). Furthermore, I posit that true dialogue cannot exist in relation to domination but requires a ‘horizontal relationship’. This has implications for the manner in which Teacher Education policy is developed and echoes Buber’s I-Thou paradigm and my previous exploration of power and the consequent ownership of knowledge and truth. Freire’s contention that love, faith, hope, and humility are required for true dialogue to take place, links to the centrality of ‘an ethic of care’ as an element of my PAIF; most particularly, how I trouble the problem identified in this inquiry which is the mismatch between policy and practice. In relation to the development of policy I argue that “to glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce” (Freire 1970, p.72), and ask ‘How can I dialogue if I am closed to - and even offended by...the contribution of others?’ (ibid. p.71). Finally, Freire underscores the importance of “thinking; stating that ‘true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking’” (ibid p.73).

5.5 Developing Critical Insight through Imagination and Creativity

5.5.1 Being wide awake in the world

Exploring power knowledge and truth and assessing whether these may or may not support caring dialogic relationships has led me to develop a considerably enhanced level of critical insight. I am now “wide awake in the world” (Greene 1995, p.4). Two images, one of “a noxious cloud” and the other of “secret knowledge” (Greene 1995, p. 45), name the unease I have felt in the course of my journey as an educator. Greene contends that this world is “polluted by something invisible and odourless, overhung by a sort of motionless cloud...the cloud of givenness” (ibid, p. 47) and explains this as the taken-for-granted in our everyday. Like Greene, I fear that the world in which teaching and learning now takes place is a world which includes the “language of domination, entitlement and power” (ibid). It is my intention to go some small way to enter the “terrible silences” (ibid) caused by this and illuminate the stories which may be hidden in these silences. As a result of engaging with Greene’s discourse,

I apprehend that:

The modern world is...a world where what we conceive to be our tradition is petrified, located in private enclaves, or surrounded by auras that distance it from lived experience, from the landscapes of our lives.

(Greene 1995, p. 47)

This stance has influenced the interpretative framework I have built through the exploration of the narratives of the multiple 'I's, which are central to this inquiry. It is now clear to me that many of us operate in the conscious space where we "live our lives in a small arc of artificial light" (Greene, 1995, p. 16). The advice to spend more time "introducing ourselves to the unconscious means listening to it and allowing it to inform us of its presence" (ibid) further informs my PAIF and has shaped my choices in terms of research methodology and the presentation of this final research text. In fact, these choices were driven by a desire to inject some "extraordinary magic" into the "arc of artificial light" (Greene 1995, p. 22) and to present the research text in a manner which ensures the telling of the narratives taps into the 'magic' that is the integrity and veracity of the voice of teachers and their 'Stories from School'.

5.5.2 Imagination and Creativity

Lifelong experience of and commitment to the Arts in education is an evident thread throughout my personal narrative. As previously explained, I understand the dynamic nature of the multiple 'I's in this inquiry and therefore recognise their various influences on my engagement with theory.

For instance, 'the self as researcher' was particularly drawn to the work of Maxine Greene. Like Greene I believe that imagination is key to critical insight because it can "give credence to alternative realities" (Greene 1995, p.4). Similarly, I have seen that stimulating imagination can forge communities (2.3.2). My narrative as school leader supports her assertion that engagement with the Arts provides a space where we are enabled to "give credence to alternative realities" (ibid). Her claim that the Arts can develop and build "social imagination" and our "capacity to invent what should be" (Greene 1995, p. 5) also helps me to identify and understand my personal beliefs in the value of the Arts in education. Greene's concept of 'social imagination' and advice to engage in "thinking that refuses mere compliance" which may lead to "moments of awareness and intensified consciousness" (Greene 1995, p.6) has also informed how I engaged in dialogue with colleagues to learn and know their stories. Linking imagination, thinking, and consciousness, enables me as researcher to move away from the 'grand narrative of formalistic research'. Greene purports this endeavour "depends upon breaking free, a leap

and then a question” (ibid). This too has guided my choices in relation to research methodology.

Positing the importance of imagination in bringing new knowledge to consciousness, Greene observes that “consciousness always has an imaginative phase” (Greene 1995, p. 21). Identifying an “ebbing sense of personal and communal efficacy” as a barrier to change and growth, Greene advises using our imaginative capacity ‘to look at things as if they could be otherwise’ (ibid, p19). She explains that, “as imagination is set free, windows open in the actual, and all sorts of alternatives for living become clear” (ibid, p.42). Once again this is an element of my PAIF. If I am to build narratives of experience through my research, I must recognise that “each person’s reality must be understood to be interpreted experience’ and that this will require several lenses so that I may see “the number of perspectives that will disclose multiple aspects of a contingent (not a self-existent) world” (Greene 1995, p19). To this end I adhere to Greene’s advice:

To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real” ...carve out new orders of experience.

(Greene 1995, p.19)

I believe that an understanding of myself in “the midst of things” and seeing myself as “a beginner, or learner or explorer” (ibid p.22) has enabled me to make new knowledge and understanding possible by imagining anew anything is possible. I argue that “we can only know as situated beings” (ibid, p. 26), and that such knowing is influenced by our imaginations leading us to “a felt possibility of; looking beyond the boundary where the backyard ends or the road narrows” (ibid p. 26).

In so doing we may then “find pathways, through the nettles, the swamps, the jungles of our time” (ibid, p. 35).

5.6 The Power of Story to Create New Knowledge and Understanding

This inquiry privileges the power of story to create new knowledge and understandings of everyday experiences since narratives provide an opportunity for us to “look at things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene 1995, p.19) and create “moments of awareness and intensified consciousness” (Greene 1995, p. 6). This position is supported by the work of Kearney (2002) and Bruner (2004). Supporting the privileging of story in this inquiry, Bruner argues that logical thought is only one approach to thinking about our thinking (Bruner 2004). I agree that constructing our stories of experience and stories of our lives is simply another mode of

thought. Bruner's contention that "we seem to have no other way of exploring lived time except in the form of narrative" (Bruner, 2004, p.693) underpins the privileging of story in this inquiry.

Like Kearney (2002), I further believe that stories make our lives worth living and help us to explain ourselves to other people. Kearney's assertion that "the art of storytelling...the dramatic imitating and plotting of human action....is what gives us a *shareable world*" (Kearney 2002, p. 3) further supports my decision to use 'story' to build new knowledge and understanding about teachers lived experience as they negotiate the policy shift towards school-based teacher education. In addition, Kearney concurs that exploring the haphazard happenings of our lives through story enables us to "become full agents of our history" (Kearney 2002, p. 3) and that our narrative is one of the most viable forms of identity. His definition of a story as an "intersubjective model of discourse" (Kearney 2002, p.5) links with Greene's contention in relation to building identity in dialogue and in relationship with others. Moreover, Kearney's talk of building 'a dream of possibilities' (ibid p.5) through story mirrors the power of 'imagination' proposed by Greene and the 'magic' born of creativity and imagination as argued by Hedderman (2012).

In considering my methodological approach and the representation of this final research text, I have been guided by the understanding that "any story one may tell about anything is better understood by considering other possible ways in which it can be told" (Bruner 2004, p.709) and cognizance that life narratives are influenced by the prevailing theories of the "possible lives" which are part of our culture (Bruner 2004).

Any given culture contains a "stock of canonical narratives or canonical stances and circumstances" (Bruner, 2004, p. 694) which are rooted in givenness and normative perceptions within that culture. "Making the ordinary strange" (Bruner 1983) or "seeing the world as otherwise" (Greene 1995) as a means to interrupt the policy space is the ultimate aim of the telling of my story and the 'retelling' of the stories of my research companions.

Referring to the 'grand narrative of formalistic research' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), Kearny identifies a resistance to narrative based on the popular epistemological and ontological assumptions which underpin the grand narrative; in particular how 'objective knowledge' may be valued over 'narrative knowledge' (Kearney 2002, p.128). In terms of my own ontological position, I am persuaded that subjective personal truths, linked with understanding, may be built through narrative. The fact that narrative has the power to both create and disclose

(Kearney 2002) supports this narrative quest to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the light to create new understandings of issues in relation to school-based teacher education. Bearing in mind that I both participated in, and told the story of this inquiry, I am mindful that we are all “subject *to* the narrative as well as being subjects *of* the narrative” (Kearney p.153). Understanding reflexivity as explored by Bruner, I acknowledge, indeed celebrate, the fact that my axiological position is central to the interpretative framework (PAIF) I have built through the exploration of my narrative as an educator:

Storytelling...is never neutral. Every narrative bears some evaluative charge regarding the events narrated and the actors featured in the narration.

(Kearney 2002, p155)

Finally, in telling my own life or exploring the lives ‘as told’ by my research companions, I am conscious that life as narrated cannot ever be a definitive or exhaustive account of how life was, but rather presents “how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold (Bruner 2004, p.708).

5.6 Thinking Tools

Bourdieu’s social theory provides us with a set of ‘thinking tools’ (Lingard *et al.* 2003 p.61) with which to excavate more deeply and build new knowledge in relation to the school as a site for teacher education. Bourdieu’s concepts of *field*, *capital*, and *habitus*, are the instruments which support a revealing exploration of teachers’ professional landscape stories.

5.6.1 Field Theory

Bourdieu’s ‘field’ is a “bounded social space in which there are determined positions” (Thompson 2005 p.741) held in hierarchical relation to others within the field, which produce ways of being, thinking, and doing. For the purposes of this research, the multiple relevant fields arranged in a hierarchical manner comprise the economic field, the political field, and, of course, the educational policy field. However, “overarching all other fields is the field of power” (Lingard *et al.* 2005, p. 664) as “the product of the synthesis of the actions of all fields taken together” (Thompson 2005, p.749). Indeed, Bourdieu proposed all fields as homologous in that they operate in similar ways. Thus, through participation in a particular field, we learn and adopt the rules and capitals particular to the field. In this way, the concept of teacher knowledge, which Schon (1987) regards as tacit knowledge, aligns with Bourdieu’s social theory of the assumed, but seldom articulated, rules of the game. Linking this to Foucault, it is clear that as we become socialized within a particular field and internalize the rules of the

game, our actions may not be constructed as a result of our personal agency because we are unconsciously shepherded by our position in the field:

Bourdieu argued that as social beings we learn, in a semi-conscious fashion, the rules of the field and how to play the game. This learning is literally embodied as habitus, a set of dispositions to know, be and act in particular ways.

(Thompson 2005, p. 742)

5.6.2 Doxa

Bourdieu held that each field has a specific and particular rationale for its existence, denoted as 'doxa' (Thompson 2005 p.746). Accepted 'doxa' are internal to the game and taken as 'self-evident truths' which legitimize participation in the field. Once again, this links to Foucauldian power relations in the production of discourses of truth in societal institutions, which are, in turn, positioned across various fields. These 'doxic narratives' obscure the fact that the game as understood by the players in the field, often perpetuates hierarchy and the unequal development of capitals to ensure that some do not thrive. Conversely, those that do not thrive are often regarded as poor players; which, in turn, obscures the fact that the nature of the game is at fault. This has significant implications for understanding teachers' experiences of the educational policy field within their professional knowledge landscapes. As such, the 'Stories from School' may elicit certain 'doxic narratives' which hinder or support teacher agency, and also beg the question of whether TE policy-makers blame poor playing rather than the education game per se. Doxic narratives could be considered the sacred stories which are situated on Teachers professional knowledge landscapes.

5.6.2 Codification

In its simplest form the concept of codification can be understood as the accepted codes for behaviour in a particular field or habitus. Codification as an operation which makes things official and thus legal may create an illusion of consensus and control in that it brings about, "calculability and predictability over and above individual variations and temporal fluctuations" (Bourdieu 1990, p. 83) The concept of 'codification' is thus 'an operation of symbolic ordering' which normalizes behaviour, activity and achievement and 'goes hand in glove with discipline' (ibid p.80). Codification is rooted in a specific epistemological stance and values particular forms of capital above others. In Foucauldian terms, this may be considered as discipline masked as the pastoral power which compels subjection to the power of societal institutions without explicit compulsion.

5.6.3 Capital

As previously outlined, a social agent progresses in a particular field by means of capital; whether economic, cultural, social, and/or symbolic (Bourdieu 1986). The possession of ‘capital’ ensures success or progression within each field. While the concept of economic capital is self-explanatory and easily identified, other forms of capital are more difficult to pin down. Cultural capital may be regarded as knowledge specific to the field, language, voice, and familiarity with a particular aesthetic. Social capital includes our links to networks, the relationships we build, and family, religious, and/or cultural affiliations. Finally, symbolic capital includes the achievements and attainments that symbolize all other forms of capital. While the value of capital differs across social fields, it becomes symbolic “when it is known and recognized as legitimate and powerful” (Lingard *et al.* 2003, p. 66). The value of symbolic capital is different in each social field.

5.6.4 Habitus

Understood as “an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted” (Bourdieu 1977, p 95), ‘habitus’ describes the way people habitually behave in particular social arenas in particular fields of practice. I understand this to mean the (sub)conscious ways of being which we learn through membership of a group in a social structure or field. I believe that the effect of this is that knowledge, and practices evolve to seem natural or rational to those privy to the knowledge held by members of the field.

An example of this is the concept of teacher professional knowledge, the particular knowing that teachers gain over time as they engage in the education policy field. This is described by Schon (1987) as ‘tacit knowledge’ which manifest in teachers’ actions as ‘knowing in action’. As a “form of internalised social conditioning that constrains thoughts and directs actions” (Lingard *et al.* 2003, p. 63), habitus can be considered a bridge between subjectivism and objectivism (Jenkins 1992, p.74). The concept of agency is described as individual habitus which has a recursive relationship between this and the social structures or fields as explored above (Lingard *et al.* 2003). As such, one’s individual habitus is not “static or deterministic” (Lingard *et al.* 2003, p. 63) but may rather change and develop over time.

As I attempt to bring teacher stories, their thoughts feelings and experiences into the light, I have adhered to the notion that, “habitus is the product of both individual history and the collective history of family, class, gender, and thus always has elements of indeterminacy and contingency” (ibid). In addition, I understand that ones’ individual habitus is gendered, and

that ‘symbolic social relations are thoroughly organised in androcentric principles’ (ibid). Lingard and colleagues (2005) exemplify this by explaining how “growing up as a girl or a boy means internalizing a gendered social order and experiencing unequal treatment as normal or natural” (ibid p.64).

5.6.5 Strategy

Since “strategy is the habitus in action” (Lingard *et al*, 2003, p. 66), when individual habitus and the norms, values, and practices of the social field are aligned in such a way as to ensure success and progression within that social field, strategy is at play. I understand that a particular habitus gives one a feel for the game and behaviors and actions taken without conscious thought in a habitual manner ensure that one has deep understanding and experience of the social field in which one is operating.

The pervasive nature of neoliberal ideals and values which has led to increased levels of accountability and a culture of performativity indicates a prevalence of particular codes across social fields. Thinking with Foucault leads me to understand this as the function of power within societal institutions. In recognizing that a match between an individuals’ habitus and the particular codes within a social field ensures success, we can begin to understand why certain types of people seem to achieve success. This exploration of Bourdieu’s field theory has enabled me to use his ‘thinking tools’ as a structuring device for the theoretical bricolage outlined below. This is my attempt to provide a graphical representation for ‘thinking with theory’ through which we may understand teachers’ stories of school-based teacher learning situated on their professional knowledge landscape.

5.8 Theoretical Bricolage

Bricolage does not simply *tolerate* difference but *cultivates* it as a spark to researcher creativity. (Kincheloe, 2001, p.687).

The central element of this bricolage is the ‘Teachers professional knowledge landscape. Sacred, secret and cover stories are lived out in this narrative context. The concept of Teacher’s professional knowledge landscape’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1995), is the framework used to understand the narrative context where teachers live out their stories. As outlined in Chapter 1 (1.7), I understand teacher knowledge to be, ‘that body of convictions and meanings, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from experience and that are expressed in a person’s

practices” (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p.7) This personal and practical knowledge constitutes teachers’ ‘stories to live by’ and is the filter through which teachers live and tell their stories of experience and is positioned “at the interface of theory and practice in teachers’ lives”. (Clandinin and Connolly 1995 p.4). Teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes are ‘composed of relationships among people, places and things’ individual teacher knowledge, the working landscape and the ways this landscape relates to public policy and theory’ (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p.24). This landscape may be understood on three levels, the self, the school and public policy. Teachers stories seated on this landscape may be considered in terms of ‘sacred, secret and cover stories. (1.7.2) (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, 1996).

Thinking with Bourdieu, I understand this to be teachers’ habitus. This habitus is seated in the education policy field which in turn is subject to the economic policy field. These fields surround and impact on the stories lived out on teacher’s professional knowledge landscapes. The outer layer, the field of power surrounds and underlines all inner elements. Therefore, both Foucault and Bourdieu provide the framework for us to understand teachers’ stories nested in their professional knowledge landscapes. The graphic below is the theoretical bricolage and is a synthesis of the overarching theories as a lens for coming to know the stories told in the vignettes. This links to the tripe tale, as I see the field of power as the pied piper of neoliberalism and the policy makers in the education policy field as the *Wizard of Oz*:

Thinking with Theory

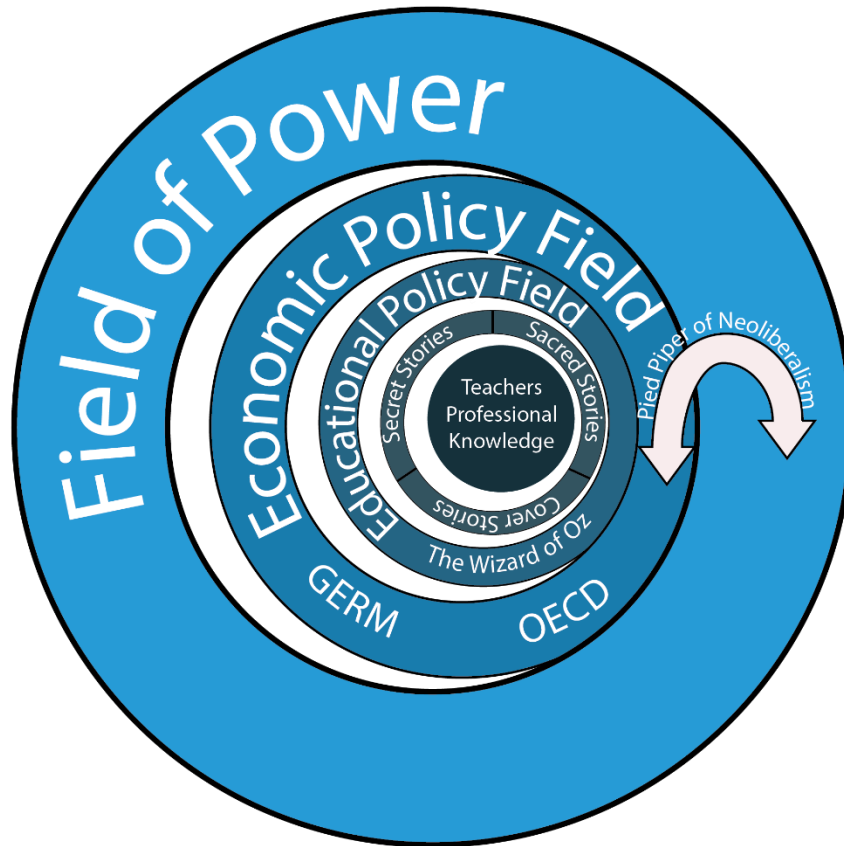


Figure 2: Theoretical Bricolage

5.9 Interpretative Bricolage

In this inquiry the ‘interpretative bricolage’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) outlined by me as my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF), has been influenced by my engagement with the philosophers. Thinking with theory, I came to identify key themes which guided my journey towards identifying the narrative threads which are central to the interpretative bricolage. I have used these themes to structure this chapter.

The interpretative bricolage, coined as my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF), named as Dorothy, the composite character who shares the ‘stories from school’ is outlined in the graphic below.

Personal Autobiographical Interpretive Framework

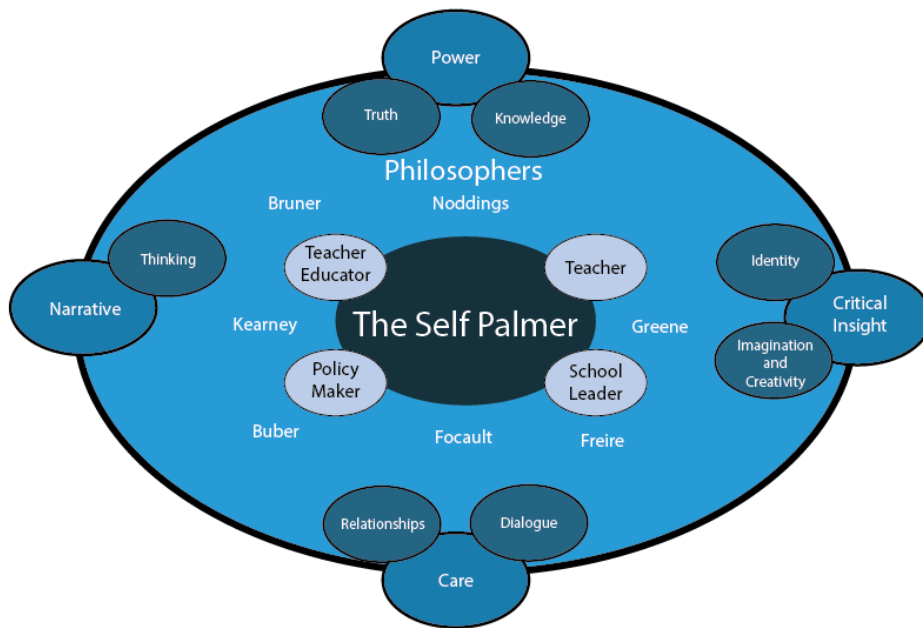


Figure 3: Personal autobiographical Interpretive Framework: Dorothy

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the narrative threads which guided my engagement with relevant philosophers and led to the key themes in this chapter, including:

- Power and its relationship to knowledge and truth
- Care and the importance of dialogue and relationships in the educational endeavour
- The importance of imagination and creativity in supporting the development of critical insight
- Privileging the power of story to create new knowledge and understandings about everyday experiences

These key themes are the various 'leitmotivs' (Bruner 2004) woven through the narrative of this inquiry, which have influenced choices and decisions in relation to methodology and the presentation of the final research text. These same key themes have led me to identify as a narrative bricoleur and vehemently oppose the 'tentacles of the grand narrative of formalistic research' (Clandinin and Connelly).

CHAPTER 6: THE METHODOLOGICAL MAZE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter represents an attempt to share with you, the reader, the narrative of the methodological element of my research journey. As such, I do not claim to represent anything close to a definitive account of the various theories, concepts and methodologies explored. Rather, the chapter tells the story of my discoveries, understandings and choices as I worked through puzzling paradigms and navigated the profusion of research methodology literature which I considered to be ‘the methodological maze’.

I begin by linking my research journey to the narrative threads discovered through the construction of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF). A brief outline of my exploration of puzzling paradigms and my qualitative quest follows. I then explore the concept of bricolage and provide a rationale for choosing to identify as a narrative bricoleur theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). My journey to narrative is then explored. A brief discussion of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990,1994, 2000; Clandinin 2006, 2013, 2020; Speedy 2008; Kim 2016; Craig 2011, 2017) is then outlined. In journeying to narrative, I found my way to the safety of a temporary home as I discovered arts based narrative inquiry (ABNI) (de Mello 2006; Leitch 2006; Estrella and Forinash 2007; Barone and Eisner 2012, Kim 2016; Leavy 2013, 2015, 2018; McGarrigle 2018), which supports the creative representation of the inquiry which had been emerging uninvited in my writing.

6.1.1 The Narrative Threads

My journey through the ‘methodological maze’ is filtered through the multiple ‘I’s as outlined in my PAIF (Fig. 3, 5.9). The experience of this journey through the methodological maze is in itself an element of my interpretative framework. The narrative threads which were identified by me as a result of an exploration of the multiple ‘I’s reveal the values which were my compass as I navigated the maze and found my way safely home. Nonetheless I understand that this is a temporary home which is liable to change. This is because I understand home to be a place where you can rest for the moment until the winds of change rise and once more, I may be catapulted into uncertainty and another adventure.

These narrative threads developed through the exploration of the multiple ‘I’s articulate my

values and are clearly linked to the key themes developed through thinking with theory. These are articulated in my PAIF, the interpretative bricolage. This is the composite character which I have named Dorothy. Navigating the maze as Dorothy, home is a place where I can align the quest and aim of the inquiry with the theoretical bricolage and the narrative threads which embody for me ‘a basic set of beliefs that guides action’ (Guba 1990, p.17).

My journey, through the ‘methodological maze’ has led me to identify with ‘The ‘eighth moment’ ...the future, which is now!’ as identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.3). I am guided by the advice of Lather as I find my way “into less comfortable social science full of stuck places and difficult issues of truth, interpretation and responsibility” (Lather 2006, p. 52). I understand that this inquiry is somewhere ‘between the no longer and not yet’ (ibid) which led me to identify as a narrative bricoleur-theorist. A compelling desire to ‘escape the tentacles of the grand narrative of formalistic research’ (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 25) led me to presenting this final research text as ‘arts-based narrative inquiry’ (Kim 2016, p.138).

This chapter tells the story of my journey through the methodological maze.

6.2 Identifying as a Narrative Bricoleur Theorist

My identity as a researcher has been developed through my attempts to puzzle research paradigms and understand qualitative research as a field, encompassing multiple methodologies which struggles against positivistic approaches to research. In his exploration of the researcher as bricoleur, Kincheloe argues that “no concept better captures the possibility of the future of qualitative research.” (Kincheloe 2001, p. 679). In understanding my research identity as a bricoleur I believe that:

At the core of the deployment of bricolage in the discourse of research rests the question of disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity. Bricolage, of course, signifies interdisciplinarity—a concept that serves as a magnet for controversy in the contemporary academy. (ibid, p.680)

However, I am prepared to risk ‘controversy in the contemporary academy’, because I truly believe that disciplinary boundaries are reductionist and do not accommodate the complexities inherent in this inquiry. Acting as a narrative bricoleur theorist, I understand the interdisciplinary nature of my interpretative framework, built as it is from my personal autobiographical framework and thinking with theory. This is the interpretative bricolage which guided the inquiry and I see this “bricolage as a manifestation of interdisciplinarity.” (Kincheloe 2001, p 680). Like Kincheloe I also believe that acting as bricoleur and presenting

research as bricolage has a “profound influence on the nature of the knowledge produced by researchers” (ibid, p.682).

In identifying as a narrative bricoleur theorist I do not claim to be a master craftsman, rather I have endeavoured to build a working knowledge of an array of crafts, understanding that to be a bricoleur one should be “adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks’ (Levi-Strauss 1996, p.17). Denzin and Lincoln explain that a researcher may act as ‘bricoleur’ utilising multidisciplinary approaches ‘including interpretive, narrative, theoretical and political’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.4). Acknowledging the inherent interdisciplinary nature of narrative inquiry, Kim suggests that, “Perhaps there is a need for a narrative inquirer to use multiple epistemologies or multiple forms of representations and become a bricoleur.” I have come to understand that, in working as a ‘bricoleur’, I choose to use whatever tools are at hand (methods), and that ‘bricolage is the creation of a bricoleur, in which a new arrangement of elements that come in handy is put together (Kim 2016, p. 258). Denzin and Lincoln argue that:

If new tools or techniques have to be invented or pieced together, then the research will do this.
The choice of which interpretive practices to employ is not set in advance.
(Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.4)

How this happens depends on the context and the questions being asked and this has been my experience in the course of my research journey. This idea of the theoretical bricoleur supports my approach in thinking with theory and including my engagement with philosophers in my interpretative framework. Therefore, rather than positioning myself in one particular belief system or paradigm I see myself as ‘researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist working ‘between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.5).

Further, in the course of my research journey I have seen myself as an ‘interpretive bricoleur’, understanding that my research is shaped by my personal narrative which includes my ‘personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5). This is clearly articulated in this inquiry as my personal autobiographical interpretative framework. The interpretative bricolage developed in the course of this inquiry has enabled me to present the research text itself as a bricolage of literary-based narrative inquiry which uses “literary genres such as creative non-fiction, fiction, short story, novel, drama or poetry” (Kim 2016, p 303) .

Though like Kim, I do not consider this inquiry to be arts-based research (ABR) rather, guided by Denzin and Lincoln, I present the final research text as arts-based narrative inquiry (ABNI) (Kim 2016, p.153):

the product of the interpretive bricoleur's labor is a complex, quilt –like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.

(Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p6)

6.3 Puzzling Paradigms

In the course of this research journey, I embarked on a ‘Puzzling Paradigms’ voyage of discovery with colleagues who were also undertaking doctoral research. We met regularly and through conversations, the sharing of theoretical literature, and discussions via the TREX online forum we arrived at a deeper understanding of the theoretical assumptions which underpin the various research paradigms. Explaining that a paradigm is the philosophical intent or motivation for undertaking a study MacKenzie and Knipe (2006) define it as “a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research” (Bogdan and Biklen 1998, p22).

The literature offers multiple opinions, views, and understandings of research paradigms, they are something of a puzzle (Scotland 2012; Hammersley 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2011). In consequence, I formulated a personal research paradigm which includes my PAIF, my engagement with philosophers, and the narrative threads excavated by the exploration of my personal narrative as an educator and researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) provide support for this approach in asserting that “the net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a *paradigm*” (Guba, 1990a, p.17) or interpretive framework” (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.13).

Thinking with theory, I have considered “power relations and modes of domination” (Lather 2006, p. 41) and become increasingly sensitive to the manner in which dominant discourses are shaped. I have pondered “what it means to claim to be a knowledge producer after so long being positioned as the knowable object of powerful others” (Lather 2006, p. 42). I have been working towards “producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently” (St. Pierre, 1997b, p.175, cited in St. Pierre, 2018).

As previously stated, I now regard the interpretative paradigm for this research as being ‘between the no longer and the not yet (Lather 2006 p.52). I believe that my choices of methodology and presentation will ensure that ‘more interesting and useful ways of knowing will emerge’ (Lather 2006, p.53).

6.4 The Qualitative Quest

I began this research journey with confidence that my epistemological and ontological positioning would produce an inquiry which would be qualitative in nature and design. I believe that choosing to situate this inquiry in the qualitative research field ensured that I remained closer to participants’ view of the social world and this has enabled me to provide very rich descriptions of their experiences and their meaning making of that social world. As I weighed up the various research options and engaged with the wider literature on research methodology, I realised that qualitative research moves well beyond particular types of data collection and analysis. On the contrary, qualitative research is situated in ‘the world of lived experience’, where the experiences, beliefs and actions of social actors are situated in a cultural context (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p. 2). I therefore revised my understanding of qualitative research to a ‘field in its own right’ which ‘crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter (ibid. p.3). Of the ‘baffling number of choices and approaches’ (Creswell 2013, p.7) it is evident that no single method is favoured over another or tied to any particular framework or paradigm (Creswell 2013; Denzin and Lincoln 2011), and I recognise that “conducting qualitative research is like walking in the swamp, not an easy path but one that explores the complex issues of what it is to be human” (Kim 2016, p.4). This latitude buttresses my decision to construct the interpretative framework for this inquiry; namely, ‘thinking with theory’ in conversation with the philosophers and the narrative threads uncovered through the exploration of my personal narrative as an educator and researcher.

I am wholly aware of the pernicious trend towards evidence-based practice and how this may impact qualitative researchers (Lather 2006; Denzin and Lincoln 2011, Biesta 2007). Here I see the agenda of the neoliberal ‘odourless cloud’ (Greene 1995). Guided by the advice that due to ‘the evidence movement’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 7) those engaging in qualitative research need to ‘think outside the box’, and “resist conservative attempts to discredit qualitative inquiry by placing it back inside the box of positivism” (ibid).

This has guided my journey to narrative inquiry.

6.4.1 Philosophical Assumptions

Following Creswell (2013), I assume four philosophical assumptions to underpin qualitative research: namely, ontological beliefs; epistemological beliefs; axiological beliefs; and methodological beliefs. My certainty that this inquiry would be qualitative in nature stems from my belief that reality is socially constructed and that there is a close relationship between the researcher and that which is being studied. I celebrate the idea that there are multiple realities, multiple forms of evidence and believe that research texts should report a multiplicity of perspectives, foreground subjective knowledge and disrupt dominant discourses (Estrella and Forinash, 2007, p. 377).

In my engagement with philosophers, I explored my epistemological beliefs, which align with Creswell's proposition that "knowledge is known through the subjective experiences of people" (Creswell 2013, p. 20). Regarding axiology, Creswell contends that identifying, exploring and acknowledging the researchers own values is an axiomatic characteristic of qualitative research, explaining that "all researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers make their values known" (Creswell 2013, p.20). These values are clearly identified by me as the narrative threads in this inquiry. As argued by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), my values 'shine through' all elements of this inquiry. Creswell provides further support for my approach asserting that in qualitative research 'stories voiced represent an interpretation and presentation of the author, as much as the subject of the study' (Creswell 2013, p. 20).

Qualitative research operates in an inductive manner. As such, the methodology is considered emergent; wherein knowledge is built from the ground up and shaped by the researcher's experiences (Creswell 2013). Thus, "the inductive logic process means that the qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning skills throughout the process of research" (Creswell 2013, p. 45). As such, every choice relating to the methodology of narrative inquiry, engagement with participants, and the final research thesis, have emerged as the study progressed.

Finally, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) place qualitative research within the interpretive, naturalistic interpretive framework and highlight how qualitative researchers explore and interpret social phenomena by uncovering the meaning making of the social actors. They further elaborate that those engaged in qualitative research demonstrate "a commitment to some vision of the naturalistic interpretive approach" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012, p. 8). In addition, there is an element of "an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of post

positivism” (ibid). Once again this supports my belief that the problem quest and aim of this inquiry would be best served by positioning the inquiry in the qualitative realm.

6.5 Journeying to Narrative

As I began my research journey, I was very sure of my goals. I wanted to bring the voices and embedded embodied experiences of practising teachers into the light in order to create new understandings of issues in relation to school-based teacher education at the site of practice. This has been identified by me as the quest of this inquiry. From the outset, I sought to present teachers’ stories from school with a level of verisimilitude and in a manner that would impact in the policy space. This was driven by my desire to champion the importance and value of teachers’ personal practical knowledge and to place teacher knowledge and experience at the centre of the theory, research, practice relationship.

6.5.1 The First Whispers

Very early in my research journey in conversation with a colleague as I was about to leave his office, I almost whispered,

“I just want to tell the story!”

“You’re talking about narrative”, he replied.

This concept was new to me, I had never heard it before. In the following weeks in my exploration of the research methodology literature, I came upon the concept of Narrative. First with Creswell (2013), which led me to Clandinin and Connelly (1990,1994,1995, 1996, 2000). I then began to explore journal articles which were referenced in these books.

A light came on!

There followed a very wise and supportive suggestion from colleagues that I transfer to a different supervisor who had experience and a passionate interest in Narrative Inquiry.

The journey into narrative was now well underway.

6.5.2 Building Understanding

As I embraced the voyage of discovery that was my journey into narrative, the types of narratives proposed by Creswell (2013), gave me food for thought. I began to wonder how I would integrate my personal narrative, my research journey and the stories from school I hoped to discover.

In addition, my engagement with philosophers led me to a place of uncertainty where I began questioning my understandings of knowledge, truth and power. I had begun to identify the elements of the loom on which the final narrative is now woven.

I now understood that narrative research may be a biographical study, autoethnography, life history or an oral history (Creswell 2013). As my journey progressed, I began to understand that narrative inquiry may also include, 'life story, personal narrative, performance narrative and arts-based narrative' (Kim 2016, p. xv). This knowledge enabled me to think outside the box with creativity and imagination. I began building my personal narrative using photographs and narrative performance scripts, which emerged organically. I began to see that the inclusion of the lens of my personal narrative meant that there was an element of autoethnography in the initial stages of the inquiry. This was subsequently developed into the personal autobiographical interpretative framework. I understood that, the stories, structured as they are in a temporal manner also include an element of life history. This links in with my understanding of myself, in the course of the research journey as researcher –as –bricoleur-theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) as outlined previously in this chapter.

In journeying towards narrative, Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000), have been my travel companions. As I worked towards completion, I became aware of the work of Craig (2011, 2017, 2018) who followed Clandinin and Connelly's research line in "positioning teachers as knowers and doers in the educational enterprise" (Craig 2011, p. 21). Together they have led me to recognise that the concept of narrative in research may be both the phenomenon and the method of inquiry, where story is the phenomenon and narrative inquiry is the method (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990). My own inclination as a teller of stories and my experience of living a multi-storied life on the educational landscape means that like Clandinin and Connelly, I celebrate that "humans are storytelling organisms, who individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Clandinin and Connelly 1990 p. 2), and that teachers "Stories to live by, merges personal practical knowledge, life on the professional knowledge landscape and teacher identity" (Craig 2011, p.25), and that "story conveys narrative knowing" (Craig, 2018, p.300) Hence the privileging of 'story' in this inquiry.

In journeying to narrative, I have come to recognise that "as researchers we become part of the process" (Clainndin and Connelly 1990, p.5). Therefore, the stopping point for this inquiry, this public research text reflects the belief that, "The two narratives of participant and

researcher become, in part, a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through the inquiry” (ibid).

My journey into narrative, has not been without its difficulties. My struggles to think narratively and to ‘think with theory’ were negotiated through my exploration of the multiple ‘I’s in the inquiry, my engagement with philosophers and my exploration of the methodological maze. I have endeavoured to learn to ‘think narratively’, ‘think with theory’ and write in a narrative style. Sometimes this came naturally as I ‘broke free’ and worked with creativity and imagination using writing as a way of knowing. At other times I was drawn to the grand narrative and the security of formalistic academic writing.

This journey to narrative is a central element of my research story. I have struggled against ‘the enduring backdrop of positivism’ (Kim 2016, p. xvii) which I feel continues to impose its reductionist, positivistic forces on my research journey and identity as a researcher. This is evidenced by the combination of writing styles in this research text. I recognise that the writing style moves from a widely accepted academic style to a more narrative creative style. I realise that this may prove to be a ‘bumpy ride’ for the reader. As described by Kim (2016), I have discovered that narrative inquiry is “rich but complicated, approachable but elusive, and well defined but still perplexing” (Kim 2016, p. xv). I continue to feel that I am living on an ‘academic archipelago’ (ibid) and like Squire et al, I will continue to argue that:

Narrative research is a multilevel, interdisciplinary field and any attempt to simplify its complexity would not do justice to the richness of approaches, theoretical understandings and unexpected findings that it has offered. (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou 2013, p. 13)

6.5.3 So.... to Narrative Inquiry

I recognise that Narrative research is built on a ‘historically-produced theoretical bricolage’ (Squire et al 2013, p.5), and has been guided by two schools of thought. Firstly, the humanist approach which emphasised person centred approaches and worked against positivistic approaches. Secondly, the Russian structuralist school of thought leading to French poststructuralism, on to postmodernism and then to deconstructionist approaches (Squire *et al*, 2013, p.3). Therefore, I understand narrative inquiry research to be founded on ‘Diverse histories and theoretical contradictions’ (Squire et al 2013, p. 2). This provides for a ‘synergy of interdisciplinarity’ (Kim 2106, p, 3). Kim (2016) explains that:

Narrative inquiry utilizes interdisciplinary interpretative lenses with theoretically, philosophically diverse approaches and methods all revolving around the narratives and stories of research participants.

(Kim 2016, p. 6)

Squire *et al.* (2013) argue that despite “The historically -produced theoretical bricolage” (ibid p.5), there is a level of convergence in the field of narrative research. Like Squire *et al.*, I understand that the point of convergence is that many researchers employ “narrative as modes of resistance to existing structures of power” (Squire *et al.*, p. 4), as is the case in this inquiry. In addition, I understand narrative inquiry enables researchers to ‘unearth fine grained knowledge’ (Craig 2018, p. 300) which may provide ‘razor sharp glimpses’ of teachers stories to live by thus enabling ‘new ways of imagining and re-imagining’ (ibid p. 309) teachers personal practical knowledge situated on their professional knowledge landscapes (Schafer and Clandinin 2019).

In learning to ‘think narratively’, I have had to negotiate ‘reductionist, formalistic and narrative theoretical boundaries’ (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.34). I have negotiated tensions in regard to the place of theory, the balance between theory and experience, and an understanding of people “in a process of personal change” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.30). I have learned that the key difference between “thinking according to narrative inquiry and thinking according to the grand narrative” involves consideration of issues of temporality, the position of people in the inquiry, the significance of action, certainty or otherwise and the importance of context (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p 29-32). I now understand that ‘In the grand narrative, *the universal case* is of prime interest. In narrative thinking, *the person* in context is the prime interest.’ (Clandinin and Connelly 2000 p.32, italics in the original). In addition, I have come to recognise the importance of the context of the inquiry as an element of the story. Recognising that this context ranges from the macro context of the rise of neoliberalism and performativity through the meso level of the Irish educational policy landscape into the micro level of the school, I have been guided by the advice that:

Learning to think narratively (*at the boundaries*) between narrative and other forms of inquiry is perhaps, the single most important feature of successful narrative thinking.

(Clandinin and Connelly 2000 p. 25, italics in original)

Described as “a dynamic process of living, and telling stories, and reliving and retelling stories, not only those of participants but those of researchers as well” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. xiv), narrative inquiry allows us to learn about “storied lives on storied landscapes” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.11).

In narrative inquiry, “an inquirer enters.....in the midst of living, telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up other people’s lives” (Clandinin and Connolly 2000, p.20. As a research methodology, narrative is understood to be ‘qualitative research that pursues a narrative way of knowing by exploring the narratives or stories of participants’ (Kim 2016, p. xv). In choosing narrative as the methodology for this inquiry I believe that:

Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences both personal and social in relevant and meaningful ways.
(Clandinin and Connelly 1990, p.10).

In contrast to the grand narrative of formalistic research, which begins with theory, this inquiry begins with experience (Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Kim 2016). This is because in narrative inquiry, “We seek to understand the meaning of human experience, including the challenges of life events and the complexity of human actions” (Kim 2016, p.69).

The previously stated quest in this inquiry is to bring the experience of practitioners into the light in a manner that honours and articulates their voice and embodied experiences with a sense of verisimilitude. Choosing narrative inquiry as the methodology for this inquiry allows me to place personal experience, emotion, memories and ‘stories lived and told’ at the core of the inquiry. Thinking with theory ensures that there is a strong theoretical foundation to the articulation of this personal experience. In this inquiry thinking with theory is articulated clearly through the interpretative bricolage (Fig. 3, 5.9) and the theoretical bricolage (Fig.2 5.8). In developing these lenses, it is important to understand that I believe that:

Theories should inform or guide us to understand a story but not diminish our ability to listen. Theories are there to be used not to dictate to us or shape our stories. (Kim 2016, p. 77).

I believe that narrative as the method for this inquiry operates in “a three-dimensional inquiry space” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.50). The narrative is understood in terms of interaction, continuity and the situation. Interaction, both personal and social, continuity in terms of the past present and future and situation being place and context (ibid). These three dimensions are seated in the story as the phenomenon of the inquiry which is comprised of the time and place the plot and the scene as articulated in this inquiry. Therefore, in choosing Narrative inquiry I argue that the stories seated in the ‘three-dimensional inquiry space are the ‘thing itself’.

Time and place, plot and scene work together to create the experiential quality of narrative. They are not, in themselves, the interpretative nor the conceptual side... They are the thing itself.

(Clandinin and Connelly 1990, p.8)

It is my assertion that narrative, understood as both the method and phenomenon of this inquiry, will create new understandings of issues in relation to school-based teacher education. Further, I believe that the research text presents teachers' stories from school in a manner which honours the veracity of the stories while simultaneously identifying new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. In eschewing the grand narrative, operating at the boundaries and negotiating tensions in relation to the place of theory and experience I argue that I have developed new understandings and meanings of the lived professional lives of teachers. It is my belief that shining a light on stories lived and told, relived and retold will have significance and meaning for policy makers in the area of teacher education and beyond. I believe that 'learning to tell and live a new mutually constructed account of inquiry in teaching and learning'.....new stories emerge.... stories that hold new possibilities for researchers and teachers and for those who read their stories'. (Clandinin and Connelly 1990, p.12). In understanding teacher knowledge through a narrative lens, we see that teacher knowledge 'has a history, is growth oriented and continuous' and 'involves relationships among people' (Craig 2011, p.22). This has been my hope: to build stories that hold new possibilities to bring teacher voice and teacher experience into the light in the policy space. This aligns with the stated aim of the inquiry. In arguing this I believe that:

The contribution of a narrative inquiry is more often intended to be the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance in respect to the research topic than it is to yield a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field.

(Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p.43)

However, believing deeply that narrative inquiry is "where the heart belongs" (Kim 2016, p.114), I heed the advice to attend to the criticisms of narrative inquiry because "every criticism is valid to some degree and contains the seed of an important point". (ibid) Hence the carefully crafted development of my PAIF, my engagement with philosophers, the brief exploration of research paradigms and the field of qualitative research included in this research text. I argue that because of the reflexive stance I have taken, I am more aware of the "intersubjective quality of the inquiry and have checked carefully that the study doesn't 'risk the dangers of narcissism and solipsism'" (Clandinin and Connelly 1990, p.10). It is my hope that I have avoided 'narrative smoothing' or the Hollywood plot'(ibid) by remaining true to the stories as told in the narrative conversations.

6.6 Narrative Interlude 1: A small story

To me it felt like the writing, thinking with theory, making connections, writing ‘small stories’ and performance texts just happened. Enjoying the journey, I embraced this new-found ability to communicate using the written word in a creative manner. I suppose I had discovered what Richardson (1994) claimed over two decades previously that writing provided a method of discovery and a way of knowing. Indeed, writing for me was a way of knowing, of coming to understand my personal narrative and later the research narrative and the ‘stories from school’ articulated through the vignettes in part two of this research text. In embracing this creative journey, I genuinely thought that I was completely outside the boundaries of what would be accepted as research in social science within the academy. Wanting to be true to my values and continue my journey with integrity, I always trusted in serendipity believing that I would somehow at some moment in the course of my research journey come upon like-minded scholars who could frame what I was doing in terms which would satisfy the academy. At the very least, satisfy those who worked at the boundaries, who populate the ‘academic archipelago’s (Kim 2016) in the universities. And so, it came to pass.

First Denzin and Lincoln (2011) led me to understand that a researcher may act as bricoleur, quilt maker or jazz musician. I then began to understand that researchers could use ‘ethnographic prose, historical narrative, first person accounts, still photographs, life history, fictionalised “facts” and biographical and autobiographical materials (Denzin and Lincoln 2011 p.10). Then Leavy (2013), introduced me to fiction as research practice and the concept of creative non-fiction. Richardson (1994) then provided me with a strong argument as to the value of writing as a way of knowing and the value of poetic form as a way of communicating that knowing. Finally, on reading Kim (2016) I came to the realisation that I was not making it all up! Finally, what I had been doing had a name. Kim (2016) explains that:

When narrative inquiry uses the arts, mainly literary and visual art such as short story, fiction, novel, poem, photography and video it becomes what I call arts based narrative inquiry.
(Kim 2016, p.138)

I wasn’t lost. I hadn’t betrayed my values, my integrity my creativity. I was home to rest. (for the moment at least) I had found my way through the methodological maze at last.

6.7 ‘There’s no place like home...’

In keeping with the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry, I did not intend or plan to use the

arts in this inquiry. I did however embrace the creativity which bubbled to the surface as I enjoyed writing as a method of discovery. Kim (2016) explains that arts-based research (ABR) began to develop through the 'genre blurring' identified by Geertz (Geertz, 1980, p.165). Denzin and Lincoln refer to this genre blurring as the 3rd moment, (1970-1986) in the historical development in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.3). Barone and Eisner, identified by Kim (2016) as the 'main figures' in the promotion of arts-based research explain that:

Arts based research represents an effort to explore the potentialities of an approach to representation that is rooted in aesthetic considerations and that, when at its best, culminates in the creation of something close to a work of art.

(Barone and Eisner 2012, p.1)

Like Barone and Eisner, I too desired to move beyond 'the limiting constraints of discursive communication hoping to build a research text which will, 'express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable' (ibid). I argue that using arts-based research methods in this narrative inquiry ensures that it moves beyond certainty, facts and objective knowledge. I believe my choices in relation to this final research text will enable the reader to access, 'forms of feeling that have something to do with understanding some person, place or situation' (Barone and Eisner 2012, p.7), and that "working artfully in a narrative inquiry landscape" will enable readers to 'live an aesthetic experience' so that teachers' stories from school' as they play out on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes may be understood vicariously. (de Mello 2006, pp. 207-214)

Understanding ABR as 'a method designed to enlarge human understanding" (Barone and Eisner 2012, p.8), I believe that the use of performance texts, and creative non-fiction in the final research text will 'raise significant questions' and enable readers to 'see aspects of the social world that they might have overlooked otherwise (Barone and Eisner 2012, p.166). In particular, I argue that the use of performative writing will "challenge the hegemonic ways of seeing and representing the other "(Denzin 2006, p. 333) and "evoke what seemed impossible to evoke" and perhaps "say what seemed unsayable" (Pelias 2005, p.415). In line with the stated aim of this research, I believe that using the techniques of ABR may 'generate conversations' among teachers and policy makers and perhaps 'serve as a catalyst for action' in terms of interrupting the policy space.

6.7.2 Arts-Based Narrative Inquiry

The use of arts-based research methods, both visual and literary, in narrative inquiry is termed

arts-based narrative inquiry (ABNI) (Kim 2016, p. 138). Outlining two main types of ABNI, literary based narrative inquiry and visual based narrative inquiry, Kim (2016, p.139) explains that both are vehicles “for the narrative inquirer to mediate stories into being” (Kim 2016, p.151) in a manner that engages the reader. In exploring my personal narrative and mediating stories into being I have used literary tools in the whole process of the inquiry, “including ways of thinking, collecting, analysing, interpreting and producing” the stories contained in this inquiry (Kim 2016, p.138). Kim advises that:

To use art as a mode of narrative inquiry is to move toward a research paradigm in which ideas are as important as forms, the viewers perceptions as important as the artist-researcher’s intentions, and the language and emotions of art as important as its aesthetic qualities.

(Kim 2016, p.13)

Therefore, I argue that, in using arts-based methods in this narrative inquiry, meaning is expressed rather than stated (de Mello 2006, p. 207) and new knowledge and understandings are accessed through an aesthetic experience where ‘a provocative experience a work of art can promote in a human being’. (ibid p. 206)

In this final research text, the ‘genres are blurred’. This is because the various artistic representations were emergent in the same way as the entire inquiry was. I have integrated multiple arts-based methods (Kim 2016, p. 151) in the course of my research journey and in this final research text. Creative non-fiction (Leavy 2013, 2015, Sinner et al 2018) is used to share the ‘Stories from school’ which were gifted to me by the participants in the inquiry. At times I have used poetic form, intended as performance scripts, as the voices, words and stories told, led me to believe that this was the most effective manner to provide the reader with a “felt sense of knowing through the experience of art” (Estrella and Forinash 2007, p. 379), thus building empathy with coherence and verisimilitude (Kim 2106, p. 139). This was important since:

empathy is a necessary condition for understanding meaning in human life, and the arts elicit empathic understanding because of their evocative and compelling nature.

(Kim, 2016, p.138).

6.8 Narrative Interlude 2: Home to rest

Home to rest for a while until the winds of change carry me on a new adventure. Home in more ways than one. Home in terms of navigating the methodological maze, but even more so if I view this inquiry as a vehicle for growth and a personal voyage of discovery.

My personal narrative highlights my background, growing up in a family steeped in the arts, where artistic talent was prized above all other abilities. I was a teacher; a school leader!

The narrative threads highlighted through the exploration of my personal narrative as an educator and the development of my PAIF include, the value which I place on the arts and the importance of imagination and creativity in developing critical insight and seeing the world as otherwise. While recognising that this “research is not going to be characterised as full-fledged art” (Kim 2016, p.138), I have come to know and understand that I do have artistic talent (see The self who teaches, 2.2.1)

I can write, I can perform stories in a way that builds engagement, empathy and understanding. Who would have thought!

Home to rest and soon I can begin to wonder where the winds of change will carry me to adventures new.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter you have journeyed with me through the methodological maze. I have identified research paradigms as a contested space and explored how qualitative inquiry may be emergent in nature. I have outlined the concept of a researcher as bricoleur theorist and I have argued that in thinking outside the box with creativity and imagination this inquiry will explore teacher stories in a manner that is both personal and social in meaningful ways. I have explained that I understand narrative to be both the phenomenon under exploration and the method of the inquiry. Journeys end through the methodological maze is arts-based narrative inquiry (ABNI).

6.10 Moving On

In this first part of Stories from school I have built the interpretative and theoretical bricolage through which the ‘Stories’ in part two of this research text should be understood. Part two begins with an exploration of how the stories were gathered. The following chapters (8-13) are the (re)presentation of the stories as vignettes grouped around key themes. The final chapter entitled, ‘Reminding, telling Selling and Leaving,’ presents a synthesis of the stories and brings the inquiry to a close in a manner which outlines the significance of the inquiry, poses new questions and, I hope will leave the reader with a sense of understanding and subjective knowledge about teachers’ ‘stories from school’ their stories to live by’ which articulate their personal practical knowledge as lived on their professional knowledge landscape.

PART 2

STORIES FROM SCHOOL

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE GIFT OF STORIES

Introduction 7.1

This chapter outlines the steps taken to gather and construct the stories in Part Two of this research text, and therefore outlines the theory, personal thoughts, and various choices which guided all my actions. I pay particular attention to the interview as an instrument for gathering stories and elucidate my process of extending the concept of interviews to facilitate narrative conversations with the storytellers and present a detailed account of how I engaged with and constructed the ensuing stories. Finally, I discuss the manner in which I have built this research text as an ‘assemblage’ that harnesses various arts-based research methods including ‘writing as a method of inquiry’ (Richardson 1994, 2018), creative non-fiction (Sinner 2010; Leavy 2013; Sinner *et al* 2018), and poetry and performance as a way of knowing. The rationale for this is supported in the literature (Denzin 2006; Pelias 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Lather and St. Pierre 2013; Kim 2016, Honan and Bright; 2016; Denzin 2018).

7.2 Entering in the midst of stories lived and told

As my research journey progressed, I felt ready to invite teachers to become storytellers to share a situation place and time (Clandinin and Connolly 2000) with me. At all times I was aware of the central place of relationships and that relational ethical matters are key to narrative inquiry (*ibid*). I paid attention to the negotiation of entering into and exiting from participants personal and professional ‘stories to live by’ and the ongoing negotiation of the narratives of experiences which came to light during the inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 1988). I was aware that “ethical matters need to be narrated over the entire narrative inquiry process”, and that:

“Ethical matters shift and change as we move through an inquiry. They are never far from the heart of our inquiries no matter where we are in the inquiry process.

(Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 170)

My process entailed inviting six teachers to be my research companions. To this end, I held an initial meeting with the group to outline the nature of the inquiry. Thereafter I interviewed each teacher on three consecutive occasions: once during each term of the academic year. Based on the tenet that “central to the creation of field texts is the relationship of the researcher to participant” (Clandinin and Connelly 1994, p.419), I purposefully selected research companions with whom I had pre-existing professional relationships. Like Clandinin and Connelly, I maintain that “a relationship embeds meaning in the text” (*ibid*) and that “what is told, as well as the meaning of what is told, is shaped by the relationship” (*ibid*). Following my initial contact with them, all of the colleagues I approached immediately agreed to join me on

my storytelling journey despite the many demands of their personal and professional lives.

The participants and I first met in the Teacher Education College where most of us had completed our Initial Teacher Education. Guided by the concept of invitational leadership (Stoll *and* Fink 1995) I modelled ‘Thinking with Theory’ by sharing an outline of my engagement with the literature, my personal exploration of the ‘self who teaches’ (Palmer 1998) and a draft outline of my research. The entire meeting was recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. As part of this process, I developed a more heightened awareness of the stories *I* tell and recognised that these stories were an integral part of ‘the self who teaches’. This revelation provided the *field text* mirror for me as I began to devise my PAIF.

7.3 Thinking with Theory: Invitational Leadership

The premise that “invitational leaders operate from a purposefully invitational stance” through “intentionally supportive, caring and encouraging” actions (Stoll and Fink 1995, p.109) formed the basis of my engagement with the group. I emphasised that my invitation represented an opportunity for us all to journey and explore our stories *together*. I saw my role as a gatherer of stories in the hope of honouring and validating practitioner experiences ‘in the midst’ of the personal and professional stories nested in the current policy context.

Acknowledging that we all live “storied lives on storied landscapes” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 24), I reiterated my commitment to reducing and/or remaining mindful of the perceived ‘power’ of the interviewer/ researcher. In inviting the group to participate in the research and tell their ‘stories from school’, I took the opportunity to ensure participants had a clear picture of the nature of the research. In the spirit of ‘invitation’ I recounted my efforts to develop a theoretical framework by ‘thinking with theory’ and engaging with the literature and philosophy; more specifically, the issues of voice, power, and control. We then reflected on our various understanding of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge; and the ownership of knowledge, with a particular emphasis on what constitutes teacher knowledge. Finally, I explained how my personal narrative was the catalyst for the inquiry and how my personal narrative as an educator would be integral to the inquiry and to the final research text.

7.4 The Gift of Stories

To begin the process of story gathering, I considered ways to bring previously established

relationships into the common research space. While each member of the group was aware of certain aspects of my professional narrative of teacher, school leader, policy-maker, researcher, and/or teacher educator, they were less familiar with my personal narrative of mother, wife, and daughter. In order to model “living and retelling stories and reliving and retelling stories” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. xiv) then, I opted to begin the meeting by sharing my autobiographical narrative and my personal attempts to ‘think with theory’. Using my presentation on ‘the self who teaches’ (Palmer 1998), which has now evolved into ‘the self who teaches performance script’ (2.2.1), the group evaluated the inextricable links between personal and professional narratives and self-identity. In sharing my personal narrative, I was guided by advice that, “close rapport with respondents’ opens doors to more informed research” (Fontana and Frey 1994, p.367). As I had hoped, the meeting came to resemble a ‘focus group interview’ (Fontana and Frey 1994). As such, I had to “balance the directive interview role with role of moderator” (ibid p. 365 remain alert to potential effects of ‘group dynamics’, and/or ‘emerging group culture’ (ibid) on the stories participants would revisit in future conversations.

In preparation for the individual conversations (interviews) the concept of ‘creative interviewing’ (Douglas 1985) provided some guidance. Douglas defines interviewing as “collecting oral reports from the members of society” (Fontana and Frey 1994, p. 368). As I have always felt inhibited by structures and rules and feel that they often quell the richness and colour of human experience, I judged that ‘forgetting the rules’ (ibid) and gathering more freely expressed stories would afford the participants a stronger and more authentic voice and thereby educe a richer research text.

7.4.1 Interviews

From the outset, I was aware that the skills and nuances required to conduct a successful interview were a tall order. However, as I was working from a caring perspective, holding a strong desire to ensure that I considered issues of power, voice and control, I was quietly confident that I would develop the skills over the course of the journey of sharing stories with participants:

Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets.

(Oakley 1981 p.4)

In apprehending the interview to be “one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings” (Fontana and Frey 1994, p.361), I was

nonetheless conscious of its attendant complications and complexities. In fact, as interviewing research participants is “inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically and contextually bound” (Fontana and Frey 2005, p. 695), I questioned my ability to subsume my agenda so as to fully embrace the “rambling or going off at tangents” (Bryman 2012, p.470) which enriches the authenticity of the stories I was seeking to gather and retell. I was cognisant that “what is crucial is that the questioning allows interviewers to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world” (Bryman 2012, p.472) and wondered whether I had or could develop the varied and nuanced skills necessary to carry out the interviews with success: namely, being knowledgeable; clear; gentle, sensitive; open; and critical (Kvale 1990, cited in Bryman 2012, p.475). I also felt the pivotal importance of balancing the participant input (Bryman 2012) might prove a challenge for me. Moreover, I felt enormous pressure to structure and steer the interview while simultaneously committing elements of what was being said to memory and responding to and/or interpreting the interview as it progressed.

7.4.2 Journeying to Narrative Interviews and Beyond

In order to select and prepare the style of interview for the individual interviews, I began by exploring the self in teaching. Together with the participants I wanted to explore the self-identity and ‘the heart’ they brought to teaching. As the lens through which we perceive the social world of work and influences how we make sense of what we are experiencing, I wanted to ask: “Who is the self that teaches” (Palmer 1998, p.4). Central to this self is identity and integrity (Palmer 1998), and the recognition that “identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am” (Palmer 1998, p. 13). In light of this, it was essential for me to ringfence spaces where participant identity could be fully and safely interrogated. In exploring ‘the self who teaches’, I sought to establish whether, like me, the participants sensed any disconnect between “the self who teaches’ and the current values and beliefs prevalent in the “reform policy ensemble in ‘austerity Ireland’” (Mooney-Simmie *et al.*, 2016 p.13). In addition, I hoped to tap into the secret stories which may be found in the unsayable spaces which underlie conversations (Speedy 2008). Thus, considerations of what lies beneath Palmer’s (1998) inner and outer worlds influenced my overall interview formulation and technique.

My thinking was that in exploring the various elements of ‘the self’, I could explore the particular ‘knowing’ of teachers as conceptualised by Palmer (1998, p. 92). Despite the fact that ‘tacit’ teacher knowledge arguably reinforces the professional artistry (Schon 1987) or

educational virtuosity (Biesta 2013) of teachers, I maintain that teacher ‘knowing’ has been all but written out of the current policy discourse (Ball 2003, 2013; Biesta 2012, 2013). This is hardly surprising, since teacher ‘knowing’ rarely registers beyond the classroom, and even those teachers who actually discern it, find it difficult to articulate.

Following Palmer, I accepted that there would be a biographical aspect to the stories I gathered. With this mind, I shared my own story of ‘the self who teaches’ at the initial meeting as an invitation to participate. My choice of interview style clearly needed to foster a safe environment which encouraged ‘mutual trust’. My options therefore ranged from structured interviews to unstructured interviews and all the various styles between these ‘extremes’ (Bryman 2012, p.469). As an alternative to semi-structured interviews, I weighed up the use of interviews which begin with a ‘generative narrative question’ (Flick 2009, p. 178) which is followed up by probing elements of the narrative which were not fully explored by the interviewee and concludes with a ‘balancing phase’ (ibid) which encourages the interviewee to make ‘meaning of the account’. In applying narrative interviewing techniques to hear and retell stories, I hoped to trigger ‘talk that sings’: a use of metaphor and poetic expressions to chisel away ‘taken for granted assumptions’ (Speedy 2008, p.62). Nonetheless, in considering the schedule for successful narrative interviews, I was conscious that:

If you want to elicit narrative which is relevant to your research question, you must formulate the generative narrative question broadly but at the same time sufficiently specifically for the interesting experiential domain to be taken up as a central theme.

(Flick 2009, p.178)

In light of Flick’s guidance, I was particularly diligent about the overall themes and the questions I formulated for each interview. Due to the emergent nature of this inquiry the key themes for the narrative conversations were ultimately refined to:

- The self who teaches
- School based teacher learning
- The here and now at the end of the school year

Keeping my researchers voice to the fore I was aware that the focus of my research privileged the experiences of school-based teacher learning within the current TE policy context. However, as I was strongly aware that the story of ‘the self’ which forms the foundation of teacher’s stories to live by and their personal practical knowledge (Schafer and Clandinin 2019) needed to be explored, told, retold, and perhaps even lived and relived, before being presented in the research text, I decided that Flick’s narrative interview configuration (2009) was too constraining for the level of fluidity I sought in the unfolding narratives of experience.

7.4.3 Narrative Conversations

Following the first one-to-one interview with each participant, the concept of “transformative conversational practice” (Speedy 2008, p.84) wherein participants begin to “excavate unexpected knowledge of their own lives” began to chime with me and to influence how I gathered the stories. Effectively then, the inquiry moved beyond an ‘ethics of description’, and at times approached an ethic of ‘transformation and emancipation’ (Speedy 2008, p. 84). Indeed, the professional researcher/participant relationships occasionally proved therapeutic, and more than once I found myself supporting the participants in our journey together.

Considering the continuum from structured, through semi-structured, to narrative interviewing, I realised the most fruitful approach was conversational. Thereafter, I conducted each interview as a ‘research conversation’. Such “collaboratively connected interviewing” techniques (Speedy 2001 p.110) encourage an openness and trust which is “marked by equality among participants” (Clandinin and Connelly,1994 p.422). Clandinin and Connelly support the use of conversational interviews which diminish the power differential in conversations and purport that such an approach involves active listening in which responses are a way of deepening the conversations. In fact, their framing of responses as a “probe into experience” (ibid) that moves the conversation beyond what is possible in an interview was my touchstone as I set about accepting ‘the gift of stories’:

There is probing in conversation, in-depth probing, but it is done in a situation of mutual trust, listening and caring for the experience described by the other.

(Clandinin and Connelly 1994, p. 422)

7.5 Telling and Retelling Stories

Following the initial group meeting, I met with the storytellers a further three times during one academic year. Meeting once per term, I hoped to capture the ebb and flow of their experience as the school year progressed. As previously discussed, I originally intended to use one broad narrative question (Flick 2009) for all the interviews but as the inquiry progressed the interviews developed into narrative conversations. I found that the nuanced skills which had concerned me at the outset developed over time.

At the outset, my own stories absorbed a lot of time as is evident from the transcriptions of the first set of interviews: clearly, Bryman’s (2012) concept of ‘balance’ (6.4.1) was a major challenge for me.

However, as the interviews evolved into shared storytelling experiences, the stories I told the participants grew out of the reciprocity of trading, telling, and building new stories. In line with the ‘emergent nature’ of narrative inquiry, the initial ‘narrative interviews’ seamlessly progressed into narrative conversations. During the final round of conversations, my input primarily comprised consolidation and feedback as I confirmed and summarised my understanding of the ‘stories told’ in a succinct manner. Subsequent listenings to these final conversations reveal much of my input as analysis in-action during which I consolidated and analysed the conversation, while simultaneously requesting feedback and agreed understanding with my fellow storytellers (Bryman 2012)

7.6 Standing Back

While listening to and transcribing the inaugural group meeting recording provided me with a necessary starting point to build a shared understanding as we began exploring our stories from school, I chose not to listen to the recordings of the subsequent conversation/storytelling sessions until they were all completed. On completion of all 18 narrative conversations, I therefore immersed myself in listening to and transcribing them verbatim, while also annotating any links with my interpretative or theoretical bricolage which I observed. These included the overall concept underlining a particular story, a connection which I made with my own narrative, and my engagement with the literature or thinking with theory. Since I was keenly aware that ‘narrative data can easily seem overwhelming: susceptible to endless interpretation, by turns inconsequential and deeply meaningful’ (Andrews 2013, p.1), I listened to all three recordings for each storyteller and mapped the conversation meticulously as a mind-map (Appendix 6). In engaging with the conversations in this way I was able to synthesize and consolidate the stories as they developed. Meanwhile, ‘the self’ I was bringing to the journey was ever-changing over the course of my research journey and I fully appreciated that ‘we are always in becoming’ (Ingold 2014). At the same time elements of this ‘self’, outlined as my personal autobiographical interpretative framework influenced how I interpreted the stories. Like St. Pierre (2018), I understood that these were “already in the mind and body and they cropped up unexpectedly and fittingly in my writing” (Richardson and St. Pierre 2018, p.829). Based on my experience as a teacher and school leader, I argue that the stories are deepened by my personal understanding of the field of experience of the participating teachers’ professional knowledge landscape described by Clandinin and Connolly as the “embodied, narrative, relational knowledge teachers carry autobiographically” (1995, p.3). This is supported by the feedback from one participant who responded to her story by saying, “You

are a very empathic writer”.

Using the mind-maps I had so carefully constructed, (Appendix 6) I set about crafting the stories by identifying themes and clustering them into individual scenes in the novellas. These were developed through the lens of my PAIF and the theoretical bricolage I had developed in the course of the inquiry and were carefully structured to draw the reader in, build interest and suspense, and offer resolution in the closing scene. To this end, I worked in a methodical manner; ticking off every element of the interviews as I wove them into the novellas. The novellas were developed as research texts using ‘creative nonfiction’ as a tool (Caulley 2008; Sinner 2010; Leavy, 2013; Kim 2016; Sinner *et al.* 2018) whereby precise analysis of the conversations ensured they properly aligned with the recorded conversations. Thus, I crafted fictional situations and companions while remaining true to the unique voice of each storyteller; sometimes quoting directly from the transcripts. With Derbhile now in the guise of *Dorothy*, each storyteller shared a situation or conversation with the composite character representing the multiple ‘I’s identified as the main character in ‘The Triple Tale’. (4.5: 4.5.1). I shared the novellas with each participant and sought verification and feedback. At this time, absolute verisimilitude became problematic and there was a degree of emotional fall-out as the novellas held up a truthful mirror for some participants. Indeed, the confidentiality and anonymity concerns expressed by several participants at this juncture led to a hiatus in my work as I explored various options to present the stories in the final research text.

7.6.1 From Novellas to Vignettes

I had originally intended the novellas to be included in the final research text. However, as I worked towards completion it became increasingly clear that I would be unable to reconcile this with the identity and anonymity concerns of my research companions. Following discussions with them it became evident that the novellas should remain interim research texts and that “each writing story offers its writer an opportunity for making a situated and pragmatic ethical stance about whether and where to publish the story” (Richardson 2018, p.826).

However, rather than a failure or obstacle, I chose to consider this issue as a positive effect of the conversational approach. The egalitarian way I had facilitated the narrative conversations meant that I had been gifted with a deep understanding of ‘the self who teaches’ by all my companions.

Furthermore, the manner in which I had remained true to the voices of the storytellers through methodical analysis of the recorded conversations ensured that I had succeeded in illuminating their personal practical knowledge and articulating their secret and cover stories. Indeed, I felt privileged to hear some stories which cannot and should not be retold. I now regard the novellas as a synthesis of my companions' personal and professional journey as teachers to date which I offered back to them. Their warm responses to the novellas indicate their deep appreciation for the care I had taken in retelling *their* stories from school.

Realising that some of the novellas were too personal and precious to share publicly in their entirety, I spent considerable time formulating an ethical and more pragmatic alternative to the final representation of the work. Since such considerations inevitably diminished some of their dramatic power, I decided to break the novellas into vignettes grouped into a number of core themes: namely, the self who teaches; beginning to teach; the courage to care; school leadership; school placement induction and teacher learning; and sacred, secret and cover stories. Rather than develop a composite character then, I splinter the characters so that each vignette represents a scene featuring a specific teacher.

7.7 Building the Research Text

“An assemblage isn't a thing - it is the *process* of making and unmaking the thing. It is the process of arranging, organising and fitting together” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.1). To reiterate: this research text is presented as one such ‘assemblage’, the development and presentation of which has been guided by Denzin and Lincoln's identification of the “mixed genre text...in the post experimental moment” in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5). They welcome the fragmentary and untidy nature of such texts in contending that:

The qualitative researcher who uses montage is like a quilt maker or a jazz improviser. The quilter stitches, edits and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience.

(ibid p. 5)

Like Denzin and Lincoln, I believe that whatever form of representation is used, it is not possible to capture reality with complete objectivity. Since they propose that as qualitative researchers, “we interpret, we perform, we interrupt”. We challenge and we believe nothing is ever certain” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p10), this thesis incorporates a number of ‘performance texts that quote history back to itself, texts that focus on epiphanies; on the intersection of biography, history culture and politics; on turning point moments in people's

lives' (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p10).

In using creative non-fiction, (Caulley 2008; Sinner 2010; Leavy, 2013; Kim 2016, Sinner et al 2018), poetic performance scripts (Denzin 2006, Pelias 2005), I blend this final mixed genre research text in 'an assemblage' or 'montage' presentation. The ensuing dialogic text "creates space for give and take between reader and writer" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p.5) and rests on the presumption of "an active audience." (ibid).

7.7.1 Fiction as Research

I have put forward arguments for understanding this inquiry as qualitative social research and shown how narrative inquiry may be seen as the phenomenon and method for my study. Leavy (2013, 2015) provides me with a connection and a rationale for choosing to use fiction-based research methods (Leavy 2013, p. 12) to present the narrative as the phenomenon in the research text. Since qualitative research aims to 'generate deep understanding' and shed light on human experiences, she locates this form of research firmly within the 'qualitative and arts-based paradigm' (Leavy 2013, p.20). Moreover, she argues that "qualitative research values sensory knowledge, and experience, multiple meanings and subjectivity" (Leavy 2013, p. 21):

Combining the tenets of qualitative research and fiction uniquely allows us to create believable virtual worlds into which we may insert a theoretical, philosophical or socially minded substructure.

(Leavy 2013, p.40)

I concur that the lines between research practice and fiction have always been blurred, and that, "fiction grants us an imaginary entry into what is otherwise inaccessible" (Leavy 2013, p.20). This is because both fiction and research "seek to build believable representations of existing or possible worlds" (ibid). Like Leavy I believe that the use of fiction as research "is engaging, evocative and accessible to broad audiences" (Leavy 2015, p.55) and that "unique capabilities for creating and disseminating social research"(ibid) are inherent in the approach. Richardson supports this argument by suggesting that we experiment with 'evocative representations' (Richardson 1994, p.521), and proposing writing as 'the method of inquiry' and 'a way of knowing'. In presenting the teacher stories as creative non-fiction, I have drawn on my imagination and creativity while simultaneously presenting the stories with 'coherence and verisimilitude" (Kim 2016, p.139). It therefore follows that in using the literary tools, the fictional portrayal of 'stories from school' will yield "access to new yet familiar worlds in which we might meet strangers or through which we might reflect on our own lives" (Leavy 2013, p.20).

This, I hope, will work towards ensuring that the aim of this inquiry is achieved by drawing in and engaging the reader (Leavy 2013, p. 20). I maintain that the use of fiction in this research text results in ‘publicly accessible research practice’ (ibid) and challenges the fact/fiction dichotomy by placing the person and experience in the centre of the research text. As placing the person and experience at the centre of an inquiry is central to narrative inquiry, my choices in devising this final research text converge with the method and phenomenon at the heart of the inquiry and supports my challenge to positivist paradigms of what constitutes knowledge and truth. As Leavy 2013 puts it:

Fiction writers and qualitative researchers both seek to build believable representations of existing or possible worlds (Viswewaran 1994,1) and to truthfully or authentically portray human experience. It is not as if fiction writers *created* fantasies and researchers *recorded* facts. The materials writers use in fiction comes from real life and genuine human experience. Similarly, qualitative researchers very much shape every aspect of their investigation, imbuing it with meaning and marking it with their fingerprint.

(Leavy 2013, p. 21)

7.7.2 Creative Non-fiction

In efforts to present ‘stories from school’ with imagination and creativity, I embarked on a creative journey by telling “stories of others in creative, expressive dynamic and authentic ways” (Leavy 2013, p. 35). As previously outlined, I sought to build coherence and verisimilitude from the narrative conversations by transcribing and identifying themes in the recorded conversations. I then constructed mind-maps which gathered the content from the conversations into core themes. Having set out to write ‘fiction’ I quickly realised that the ‘tentacles of the grand narrative’ meant I was crafting the stories in a methodical manner. As I included and ticked off every element of the transcripts so as to remain faithful to the original conversations, I realized that I was actually engaged in “factually accurate prose about real people and events...told in a compelling, vivid dramatic manner” (Gutkind 2012, p.6). Considered to be “an expansive genre that is difficult to synthesize or delineate” (Leavy 2015, p.45), ‘creative non-fiction’ brings “the tools of literary fiction into the researchers’ purview” (Leavy 2013 p. 36) as it requires the combined “skills of a storyteller” and the “research ability of a fact-finding reporter” (Kim 2106, p. 140). Guided by “aesthetic intent and aesthetic reception” (Sinner et al 2008, p. 186), creative non-fiction reports *facts* in a way which draws that reader in. The writer remains true to the facts often using quotations from interviews, but representing them in an “interesting, evocative, informative way” (Cheney 2001, p.1) which offers the reader a deeper understanding of the social world at the centre of the inquiry. This is because stories become sites of excavation which “serves to illuminate experiences” thus moving from understanding to a way of knowing (Sinner 2010, p. 26).

As such, creative non-fiction is deeply committed to the truth (Caulley 2008, p. 426), and considered “a rather gradual introduction of an imaginative approach to reporting narrative data” (Kim 2016, p. 139) in which “collected facts and information are presented in a more accessible manner” (ibid). I believe that representing teachers’ experiences at the site of their professional practice using the tools of fiction generates empathy and understanding while ‘openly communicating’ my “subjectivity or personal feelings” (Kim 2016, p.140). In addition, I argue that adopting the methodical and systematic approach of mind-maps, and the interpretative and theoretical bricolages discussed in Chapter 5, ensures scholarly rigour in the crafting of the novellas now presented as vignettes in this final research text:

For the qualitative researcher writing creative nonfiction, the result is only as rigorous as the rigor of the research and the data on which the writing is based.

(Caulley 2008, p.445)

7.7.3 Poetry and Performance as a Way of Knowing

I did not originally set out to write poetry or performance scripts; that is simply what transpired when I allowed myself to believe in “experimental writing as a way of knowing” (Richardson 1994, p. 520). Once I accepted writing as “a dynamic creative process” (ibid, p. 517) and a legitimate “method of discovery and analysis” (ibid p. 516) I was conscious of this additional element in my struggle to move away from formalistic research and evoke my personal narrative using “literary devices to re-create lived experience”, (ibid p. 521). I was aware that using experimental representations as valid elements of a research text could be construed as a “violation of prescribed conventions” (Richardson 1994 p. 520). Nevertheless, I continued to work in this way believing that I would eventually garner support for my approach in my navigation of the methodological maze. Like Morrissey (2014), I see a link between creativity and serendipity, understanding both to mean “the occurrence of a chance event.... [that] involves anomalies or opposing forces...which is recognised as significant and which is capitalised upon” (Morrissey 2014, p. 837). Though I brought a “high level of readiness or preparedness” (ibid) Laurel Richardson chanced to provide support for my approach by defending the use of poetry in research as a mean to “problematize reliability, validity and “truth”” (Richardson 1994, p.522). Alluding to the poet Robert Frost, she goes on to assert the poem as “the shortest emotional distance between two points - the speaker and the reader, or the listener in the case of performance” (Richardson 1994, p. 522):

Poetry is above all a concentration of the power of language which is the power of our ultimate relationship to everything in the universe. It is as if forces we can lay claim to in no other way become present to us in sensuous form.

(De Shazer 1986, p. 138 cited in Richardson 1994, p. 522)

Finally, in the course of my research journey, and following successful presentation of a number of conference papers, I came to appreciate the power of performance as a means of creating new knowledge by facilitating a shared moment in time to build understanding, empathy and subjective knowledge. I became convinced of the value of presenting elements of this inquiry in a dialogic manner which would allow the audience to ‘know’ in a subjective manner. Once again serendipity played its part, as toward the end of my research journey I came across unexpected support for my belief in the power of performance to communicate the knowledge and understanding I sought to bring into the light in this inquiry. As I was reviewing the relevant research methodology literature, I discovered a discussion on the concept of “performative storytelling” in which Kim (2016) explains that:

Narrative inquiry is currently extended to the realm of performative storytelling as scholars have called upon performance as a way of knowing how to understand human phenomena.

(Kim 2016, p. 263, after Pelias 2008)

Therefore, I contend that the final public research text for this inquiry is “a performative text that enacts rather than fixates meaning” (McGarrigle, 2018, p.275) because performative writing “opens doors to a place where the raw and genuine find their articulation” (Pelias, 2005, p. 418). I now maintain that a performance element in narrative inquiry is inherent in both the making and the doing (Kim 2016, p. 264) and that presenting teachers personal practical knowledge, or ‘stories to live by’ as ‘telling and moving tales’ (Pelias 2005, p. 418) is a form of scholarship which “calls forth the complexities of human life” (ibid, p. 415). I believe that this may be enriched through an element of performance. As such, presenting this inquiry in written form inevitably limits the impact and significance of the inquiry. I thereby intend to address this through performances at conferences and events for teachers and policy-makers.

7.8 Continuing the Journey

Arts-based narrative inquiry is the final element in the development of my personal autobiographical interpretative framework which is the lens through which this research text may be experienced and understood. Thus, the puzzling paradigms and my journey through the methodological maze has, for this moment in time at least, enabled me to find a temporary home.

Understanding this inquiry as an Arts- based literary narrative inquiry (Kim 2016, p. 139)

enhanced by elements of performative storytelling in the layout of the written text has equipped me to reconcile the problem, quest, and aim of this inquiry with the narrative threads identified through the exploration of the multiple 'I's.

As previously stated, being aware of the interdisciplinary challenges of being a narrative bricoleur theorist, I view it as a "lifetime endeavour" (Kincheloe and Berry 2004, p. 4). Logically then, my exploration of the use of creative non-fiction, poetic performance scripts, and performative storytelling, is necessarily incomplete. Just as this journey led me to these particular methods of inquiry and representation, it is almost certain that 'the winds of change' will lead me to adventures new, and that at some time in the not too distant future, I will negotiate a different labyrinth of future research.

7.9 Invitation



You have journeyed with me as I built the theoretical and interpretative bricolage through which the novellas were crafted.

I now invite you to break free, take a leap, and create your own subjective questions, wonderings, and understandings by engaging with the vignettes.

I gift you the Talisman (4.3) which has been the metaphor for my personal and professional journey throughout this inquiry.

This pathway through the trees may represent *your* journey.

Wherever you are on your journey in coming to an understanding of narrative as both the method and phenomenon of inquiry in the social sciences or Arts-based research methods I invite you, the reader or listener, to become ‘a beginner, or learner or explorer’ (Greene 1995, p. 22). In using the literary tools of fiction, the vignettes are presented in a manner that ‘presumes an active audience.’ (Denzin *and* Lincoln 2011, p.5). Therefore, I invite you into the dialogic ‘space for give and take between reader and writer’ (ibid).

The vignettes present teachers and companions in fictional situations which I have created. They have been forged from sections of the novellas which were the interim research texts. Following secondary analysis these have been grouped thematically. The characters in the vignettes are splinters of the characters of the original participants. The stories remain true to the unique voice of each storyteller with quotations coming directly from the transcripts. In some of the vignettes the teacher/storytellers share a situation or conversation with ‘*Dorothy*’ as the composite character representing the interpretative bricolage and the main character in ‘The Triple Tale’. I invite you to listen for “talk that sings” and observe the use of poetic language and metaphors (Craig, 2018) as forms of expression that chisel beneath the ‘taken for granted assumptions’ of conventional qualitative research (Speedy 2008 p.62).

CHAPTER 8: THE SELF WHO TEACHES

Dorothy speaks:

“Phew! Well, here I am!”

I have been waiting in the wings for a long time.

I have worked hard to ‘pull myself together.’”

I am the composite character representing the ‘multiple I’s’ and thinking with theory which my alter ego Derbhile explored until she finally created the interpretative bricolage through which we come to know the companions I have met on my journey as I endeavour to escape the ‘yellow brick road’ and the power of the Great Oz.

The self who teaches (Palmer) is central to my interpretative bricolage and leads me to believe that ‘Knowledge is known- through the subjective experiences of people’ (Creswell 2013, p. 20).

I strongly believe that subjective personal truths may be built through narrative. Like Kearney, I differentiate objective knowledge and narrative knowledge and believe that truth and understanding are built through narrative. In exploring the stories of self which follow I hope to lead you to see the ordinary as strange (Bruner 1983) and encourage you to see the world as otherwise (Greene 1995).

In this chapter I uncover the self who teaches from the perspective of the teachers I met on my journey. The narratives go some way to exploring the self-identity and ‘the heart’ they brought to teaching and lead me to ponder the complexities of identity and integrity (Palmer). In exploring the various elements of ‘the self’, we begin to explore the ‘knowing’ of teachers as the knowledge about teaching and learning that individual teachers carry as a result of their lived experience.

The following vignettes ask you to consider how family background and the apprenticeship of observation influences the self who teaches; how identity is not fixed, how we may adapt this identity in our stories of teaching; and how motivation to teach and continue our professional learning journey is linked to our identity.

Finally, as an ethic of care is central to the present interpretative bricolage I urge you to consider whether this may be linked to ‘the self who teaches’, and if so, how it impacts the identity of the storytellers.



The kids - it’s all about the kids...

A crowded school hall.

Donnachadh put his hand on his father’s medal, which was inscribed, just as he’d remembered.

“Literally the first one I picked up was my father’s.”

Donnachadh’s father has recently passed away and memories of his father come flooding back. His immediate surroundings, the children, the noise in the school hall, fade from his consciousness.

He thinks, "*Why teaching*"?

After thirty years or so, the medal and the memories associated with it bring this question into sharp relief. Imagining he is speaking to his father, Donnachadh asks, "*Did I fall into it?*"

Then answering his own question, he reflects,

"I might have fallen into it because, you were a teacher, mam was a teacher, and granddad was a teacher! If it wasn't teaching, it was either the bank the army or the civil service, and you know, I didn't want to go away from home. So, I fell into the college which was nearest home, really."

The applause in the hall draws his attention back to the present reality. Donnachadh now sees a pupil with special needs present the visitor who brought the medal with the charcoal drawing she made.

This is one of those moments: a moment which helps to sustain Donnachadh's energy and enthusiasm for teaching.

"The kids," he thinks to himself, *"it's all about the kids."*

Just the little things...

A card from a pupil simply saying that he enjoyed every day at school with Donnachadh as his teacher;

Or a pupil brought back from the brink of serious mental health issues, finishing out the school year and taking his final exams.

Just moments.

And little things.



The Self who Teaches: "Where is the real me?"

A standing ovation! Rapturous applause! What a moment!

Linda's performance has been a triumph. Together with her fellow cast members, she takes a moment to bask in the glow of their wonderful achievement. Three performances. Three standing ovations.

The curtain falls on the production for the final time. In the midst of the excitement and celebratory mood, Linda makes her way slowly off the stage. She walks quietly back to the dressing room. In the stillness of the room she looks in the mirror and asks herself, "*Where is the real me? Who is the real me?*" She ponders this thought as she slowly begins the task of returning to "the self" she presents to the world. Removing her makeup, taking off the elaborate costume, a beautiful canary yellow, she thinks to herself

"I have parts in my life, there are so many people that I'm friendly with, I have work colleagues, I have theatre people and other people, friends from college... where is the real me in all that?"

In answer to the question she asked herself she realizes, "*My real self is on the stage.*"

Looking at herself in the mirror in the empty dressing room, she laughs, "*It's funny, because you just feel different in different places.*"

She thinks about school, about home and how she sometimes says nothing when people voice their opinions, even though she doesn't agree with them. "*Sometimes I don't agree with what other people are saying.*"

She thinks of her colleagues, "*I don't agree with what they're saying, and I just feel, not that I'm not strong enough... I couldn't be bothered arguing, I just let people say ... go on, whatever.*"

She wonders why she doesn't feel that way when she is involved in a production like the one which has just finished.

Remembering that some of the children in her class attended the performance tonight, she thinks how when she is in her classroom, with them she can be her true self - just like when she is on stage. *The children accept me.*" she thinks, "*They don't judge me; whereas adults, are constantly judging everyone. Not necessarily me, but they constantly judge. They have opinions.*" She knows children have opinions as well but thinks that you can do things in the classroom that adults might look at and go.... "She's nuts!"

"But I don't care" she thinks, *"because kids love it!"*



The 'Self who Teaches': A Monologue

*An empty stage. Black backdrop and tabs. A single spotlight.
Enter stage left.
Dressed in black, Eileen steps into the spotlight.*

'The self who teaches'? you ask.
Yes, I suppose I *will* talk about that!
I'll start with my background.

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

My mother died when I was a baby, so I was reared in an orphanage...
I was raised by Mercy nuns.

As a social experiment, it's unusual in that I was separated from my siblings.
I was one of four - I was the baby.

My father was twenty years older than my mother.
My mother died at thirty-six
and here was an old man with four children under ten.

It was an unusual set up, really.
There were other kids there whose parents were both dead or who had separated or whatever,
We were aware of our father, who loved us very much.
He came and visited us and all that.
Our home was very secure; and we went home for holidays.

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

My sister and I were reared in a convent
In a residential home, or an orphanage...
...whatever you want to call it.

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

But these nuns decided that nothing was beyond the bounds of possibility and that everybody should be
exposed to everything:
Music ~ Irish dancing ~ Debating ~ Drama ~ Everything!

Everybody should be given a chance and let those who flourish, flourish, and those for whom it's not...
am...find another.

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

But they were of the opinion that everybody should have a hobby;
Something they're passionate about.
And I have to say -
(and I know you hear horror stories about children reared in those situations) -
But it was the best possible thing that could have happened to me...
...which is an awful thing to say.

The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach and to pass on and share that.

I was taught piano; I was just given a whole range of talents and interests.
The teachers I had were so generous with their own time and talents.
That was my first exposure to teaching.
So, my inspiration for teaching and about teaching came from there.
I went on to do an excellent Leaving Cert.

It's ironic that I play a couple of instruments.

I don't say that boastfully - it's because they were *taught* to me.
And my siblings don't play anything.
Well, now, my sister does because she was reared with me.

But my brothers who were reared, one by a grandparent and the other in another institution;
It is a total proof of nature and nurture

Because people now see me, and ...

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

The house out of which I came didn't ever have a piano....

You know, it's an amazing story really when you think about it

I'm not telling this story like 'poor little orphan Annie me';
I genuinely am not.

I do not want to sound ungrateful to my parents.

But I know from the social environment from which I came that

But I had opportunities which I would not have got had I been reared at home -

In the council house into which I was born.

That sounds horrible....

but that's a statement of fact!

*The commitment, the love, the sharing, and the caring that I experienced as a young child made me want to teach.
I would sit down and play at wedding, wake or funeral; I would sit down and play at a party until the piano gets drunk!*

Shaking her head now, Eileen faces her audience:

*"I haven't ever told my story in public!
I really didn't want to be known in college as 'sure, god help us!'
I didn't want my colleagues to know.
Though there's nothing to be ashamed of..."*



What's Next?

Jane has just arrived.

Sitting in her car she takes a moment before stepping out into the carpark.

A big step.

She has just arrived at the college where she will begin her second postgraduate course, which she hopes will lead to her Master's in Education. Jane always knew she would continue her learning journey. She remembers clearly how on completion of her teaching qualification, a postgraduate diploma, her primary feeling was, "*What's next?*" Of course, there had been lots of other 'nexts' in the intervening years, but this was the 'big one'! Because Jane undertook her teaching qualification with a relatively new private provider

of teacher education, she has always felt that in some way her route into teaching has been different and that in some way her 'knowing' is different to her colleagues. She laughs to herself now as she remembers her colleague's reaction when she asked for support with the layout of her classroom; how she had her learning resources scattered all around the walls of her room and having asked for advice feeling embarrassed. "Jane, you're gas", her colleague said to her, though the generosity of that colleague in helping her take all her resources down and redesign the room in zones, with a Maths Corner, an English Corner and other such zones has remained with her, and perhaps been a pivotal memory in her choice to take on the role of mentor in her school.

There were some jokes made about this by other colleagues.

A bit of slaggin'!

In many ways my 'knowing' about teaching is different to the others, Jane thinks and wonders what if...?

What if she had gone straight into a college of education and done the B.Ed. as her primary degree? She thinks now to herself,

"Even though at times there have been moments where I wished I had gone the traditional route, when it comes down to it I think that having that extra bit of experience has made me a better teacher, at least I think so, because of who I am and the way I am and my teaching style".

Jane steps from the car and walks confidently into the reception area of the college - still feeling like an outsider - though because of her openness to learning, and her security in herself, she knows that a sense of belonging will develop over time.

"I could not wait to be a teacher!"

The first session of the postgraduate course begins, and when Jane and her classmates are asked to introduce themselves she explains:

"Well, I am teaching 10 years in total. I feel I was one of the lucky ones. I had done six months in a school, in a temporary position before I ever signed up to do teacher training. Then I had a choice. I was offered a place in two colleges. I was living away from home and I had to support myself. The principal in the school where I was working offered me a position for the next school year, so it made sense for me to take the place in the college that provided almost all of the tuition online. I could work while I was completing the postgraduate course."

"So, you worked full time as a teacher while doing the course. How did that work for you?" interjected the facilitator of the session.

"Well, it meant that I had four years teaching experience before I had to do my school-based diploma for full registration with the Teaching Council. I suppose we call that 'induction' or *Droichead* now. I saw two main benefits to this. Firstly, I had lots of teaching experience before I ever had to do school placement. I could see others on the course struggling. There were many highly qualified and experienced, solicitors, engineers, and other professionals, doing the course. They had to take annual leave for school placement. Because the only time in school they had was the observation weeks they found placement quite challenging. Secondly, we were constantly reading research papers and writing assignments and I was able to use practical examples to link with the theory we were learning."

One of the Jane's classmates asks, "What did you do before you became a teacher?"

"Well, I was a recruitment consultant for the financial services sector. I worked with applicants for positions, coaching candidates for interview and providing feedback on their performance at interview."

The facilitator interrupts, "Jane, how do you think this previous experience has influenced who you are now as a teacher?"

"I suppose the greatest influence of this time is that I am very secure and open and not afraid to ask for support or share ideas. For me this is essential...I am a sharer. This is one of the reasons why I chose to become a mentor in my school. The other reason is that, I met lots of very supportive people during my postgraduate studies. Many of my peers on the course didn't experience the same level of support. I suppose they didn't know any teachers and found it very difficult to secure placements. Sometimes you would be hyperventilating with the stress of not knowing where you would get placement. I suppose I felt that I would like to give back and that I wouldn't be embarrassed or shy about being observed. I just knew that my style and way of being suited mentoring."

The session continues and Jane really enjoys hearing her classmates sharing stories as they introduce themselves. Thinking about this driving home on that first day, her first day as a postgraduate student in THE teacher education college, Jane reflects on their stories and her own,

"I think the way it happened for me was the right way, I always think about that. I love that I have had other experiences in my life because I think that it's important to have other life experiences."



The Wall of Fame!

Mary is in the sitting room of her parents' house, waiting for the photographer. She has been preparing for this day for a long time. Nervous now, she checks her appearance in the mirror for the tenth time. She is delighted with how she looks and is very excited about the day ahead.

As she waits, she views her 'wall of fame'.

This wall of photographs and certificates in her parent's sitting room is a record of her professional learning journey. *"I am a serial offender for CPD"* she smiles to herself. She remembers the last time she stood in this room waiting for a photographer. She was preparing to accept her fifth scroll and a fifth photograph was added to the 'wall of fame'. A calmness surrounds her as she looks now at the certificates and photographs and as she waits for the others, she is transported back in time.

The first scroll is her initial teaching qualification - the B.Ed.

Mary didn't get the results she needed for entry to the teacher education course. The profound feeling of disappointment is still acute even after all the years. *"It was never going to be anything else, from a very young age...I was absolutely booked."* A vivid memory rises to the surface of the blackboard she got from Santa, and how her brother had to play school with her. *"I was like a mini-munteoir (teacher) walking around correcting copies and giving twenty out of twenty and little stars...I never wanted to do anything else"*. *"I was devastated after my first Leaving Cert"*. Remembering the year she repeated her leaving certificate, *"My life passed me by that year"*, she thinks now, but she is eternally grateful to her parents for their support. Mary studied for 42 hours a week and at the end of that year she surpassed her own expectations and was awarded a scholarship to cover her fees based on her results. While in college 'the practical side of things' was Mary's strong point. She had a very positive experience in her 'learning to teach journey' and remembers fondly the affirmation she received from a tutor on micro teaching who told her she was 'a born teacher'. She understands that the 'self' she brought to her learning to teach journey was enriched by her own upbringing and that this has enabled her to be 'very present' in the classroom. She invests time with both children and parents and prioritises building relationships. Contemplating 'her wall of fame' now, she firmly believes that teaching 'is a craft that has to be developed'. *"Some people"* she thinks to herself, *"are not willing to learn the craft."*

The second scroll. Her M.Ed.! Mary returned to the same teacher education college five years later; her first engagement with postgraduate study. The scholarship which she had received on the strength of her second Leaving Certificate results covered the first year. Thinking now about her most recent programme of study, she believes that *"you shouldn't do a masters that early, because your knowledge base isn't wide enough."* Remembering back, she realises at that stage, five years into her teaching career,

"I had only ever taught senior infants; I had no experience of working with children with special educational needs ... the whole journey of child development and growth that you experience when you move classes. I didn't have that. I've only ever taught in one school... an understanding of different contexts and different settings, I didn't have that."

She realises, with gratitude that her work as an Associate with The Special Education Support Service (SESS) has given her opportunities to see how teachers in other schools work. *"Not every normal is the same as your normal"*, she reminds herself. She thinks now of her growing understanding of the extended role of what it is to be a teacher today, the extended knowledge in practice and what that might have brought to her master's study. She recognises this now because of her recent course of study, the scroll she recently accepted at her fifth graduation.

She thinks again of the M.Ed., *"I suppose at the time I valued the process of a masters, the research and things like that."* She was disappointed when she was guided away from her chosen research question on phonological awareness and after that the passion for her final dissertation just wasn't there. *"I was given a list of topics that I could research, and I did it. But I suppose my heart wasn't in it, because it wasn't my question."*

Looking at the next two scrolls on the wall of fame, a postgraduate diploma in Special Educational needs and her Graduate Certificate in mentoring and teacher development, she recognises that both these courses set her on a very exciting career trajectory and ensured she continued to grow personally and professionally. This has given her opportunities beyond the classroom. *"I wasn't happy just teaching"*. Recognising that she experienced disenchantment and thought "is this it" after seven years teaching, she knows this was framed by her deeply held belief ... *"this is the right job for me, education is the right place for me to be."* Knowing this so deeply within herself is an element of what enabled her to take the next step to move away from disenchantment. That coupled with her professional confidence.

"I was quite secure in my professional standing," she thinks now. She says to herself. *"I think it comes back to confidence; I had enough confidence to say, Okay, I'm at this position and I know I'm here and I do this much well... What's the next step? That's the way my brain works."*

Mary always knew she didn't want to leave the classroom and being Special Education Needs co-ordinator in her school and an Associate with the SESS has given her leadership opportunities which she is relishing. She thinks now, *"My love of SEN continues to grow, I am still learning, and I have a lot to give."*

The fifth scroll. The fifth photograph. Thinking now about her professional development, she is very pleased to have done this course, *"there was phenomenal learning"* she thinks to herself. Acknowledging the 'heavy workload, Mary remembers assignment after assignment. Laughing to herself thinking of the new buzz word in relation to teacher learning 'impact', she recognises the value of the course.

"As the year progressed, my understanding of the leadership role developed. It's bigger than the person and what goes with it. I understand how difficult it is balancing all the balls and if you're a Principal and supposed to keep going between circulars and information and 2020 plans and the children and the teaching and learning! It just gave me a real appreciation for the job and I actually think it's the most undervalued job in Ireland!"

She thinks now how she sees her middle leadership role as being 'part of the school' and not just her work. It's about building a team, encouraging teachers to work in collaborative groups. The literacy team I organised; I even came at that from a different angle.

She also understands the need for school leaders at every level to be 'future planning' and remembers her obsession with the new model of Special Educational needs and how she was planning for last September. She wonders how her colleagues have been getting on and how the implementation of the new model went in her long absence from school. She had thought she would go in and keep an eye on things while she was on maternity leave. She thinks to herself now, *"that was before; before I became a mother."* She muses, little did I know how my life would change, how all-consuming my new role would be.

Noise outside the door startles Mary. She cannot believe the length and depth of her trip down memory lane. Smiling to herself, she checks her image in the mirror once more. Hearing noise outside as the photographer arrives, for one final moment she is struck by the appropriateness of her reminiscing, as today she begins a new life, the next stage of her personal journey. She is glad that her pursuit of learning has been rich and varied and that she will bring the richness this has provided with her forward in her life.

Her mother opens the door, followed by her father, both looking incredibly smart and glowing with pride. Her father carries her beautiful baby who is also dressed in an elaborate new outfit which befits this very special occasion.

The photographer follows. After much fussing and fixing the photograph is finally taken.

A sixth photograph for the 'wall of fame'. No scroll required, though there will, of course, be a certificate which will be stored safely in a file.

This family photograph taken on her wedding day will indeed be displayed proudly on the 'wall of fame' in Marys' parents' sitting room.



THE EARLY YEARS

Dorothy Speaks:

Having considered teacher identity and how biography and motivation to teach influences 'the self who teaches', I now invite the reader to wonder about teacher learning in the beginning to teach years; in particular:

-what the following stories tell us about young teachers' socialisation into teaching?

-how systems of power within societal institutions influence informal mentors, leadership, school culture, and the development of practice?

-the role of creativity and imagination in supporting teacher learning and the development of practice.

Moreover, note where and why the voice of my interpretative bricolage occasionally interpolates the stories of my companions.



Beginning to Teach: Colm's Story

It is lunch time and Colm is in the staff room after school with his younger colleagues who have been asking about his early years in teaching. *"I suppose I didn't start really teaching until I was ten years into it! Yeah. So there's a lot of learning that goes on, then!"*

Colm explains how he moved away from home and began teaching in a school some distance away. He met his first mentor, an Irish scholar, who is still well known in Irish cultural circles. Colm recalls, *"He was a great man for culture and a great mentor for me. He kind of boned and crafted me, well he awakened a thing about drama and the process of drama."* Because this Principal was a teaching principal he was a role model for Colm, *"he had the nasc...he still had the classroom-based practices and I learned an awful lot through that."*

Colm explains, *"I was a 'raw teacher."* He thinks now about the young teachers he has supported through the 'beginning to teach years' (Induction) and says, *"I suppose that's what you're looking at with NQTs... raw teachers and their first experience in a job will stay with them. Like, first impressions last, as they say, and their first impressions of a school, whether positive or negative will, I think mould how they work."*

Looking around the room at his colleagues Colm explains *"For the first five years of my teaching career I wasn't interested in the kids, right."* His colleagues look at Colm in a surprised, questioning manner. *"I was only interested in what I was doing. Was I being a 'good teacher' because I was teaching great stuff?"* "So, you were focusing on the teaching and the content," commented one of his colleagues. *"Absolutely, yes, it was all about my performance. There was nothing about what they were learning; I was being a good teacher; I was being popular."*

Colm only stayed a year in this first school, but he realises that this first-year teaching with an enlightened school leader and mentor really set the tone for his future career. *"He tapped into the educational drama experience I had in college and the concept of drama as process and a tool for learning."* Colm then explains to his colleagues. *"Like, I could have gone either way; like, I really could, because I was a raw young twenty-year-old."*

Continuing the conversation with his colleagues, Colm recounts how he then found himself in a new school in an urban area with DEIS status. In the early years, the school was growing very fast and he remembers that within a period of three years he was working with a total of 18 newly qualified teachers. He recalls, *"We were all young teachers together and we kind of grew together as a staff and I grew as a teacher there."*

In time Colm applied for and got a promotion. He explains that when he found himself being given more responsibility; as a result of which, he began to develop an understanding of whole school issues.

He began to *"see the things that were going wrong, or the hassles about running a school or the bigger issues of education in general."*

"In our school we found that the biggest issues were emotional, behavioural difficulties, a lot of the disabilities were environmental, rather than genetic or even intellectual."

Once again Colm remembers the influence of the principal (or 'The Boss', as he always says), he was very innovative, and he encouraged me to set up a unit in the school for pupils with emotional and behavioural disabilities (EBD). This was a long time ago when most teachers were unaware of the term EBD and when the concept of a special unit in a mainstream school was rare. Colm remembers now, *"We had a lot of kids who were environmentally disabled, their education was failing because of their behaviours and so we asked ourselves: 'How can we enhance their education? How can we make their engagement with the curriculum more effective?'"* 'The Boss' advised Tony and his colleagues to 'go off and find things'. I was always into drama and so I found 'Process Drama'." Colm was then supported in attending courses in process Drama. *"In process drama people can work through things without seeing their disability, work in in a safe environment and can learn through that environment."* Colm shares the burning question which has stayed with him throughout his career. He asks his colleagues now, *"How can we get other ways of teaching kids?"*

Thinking back Colm realises that the situation in the school was "not a ghetto, but a fort". This meant that teachers in the early stages of their career needed to be creative and develop new ways of teaching in or working through difficulties with children.

"And it WORKED," he exclaims emphatically, *"until the department pulled the money."*

(He chuckles away at the irony of this!)

Colm recognises this as a recurring theme as he reflects on his teaching career with his colleagues. He thinks of the value of home school liaison teachers, and how they were withdrawn at a vital time for the school community. The difficulties of staffing and the influence of the economic policy field are also evident when he acknowledges that the post of responsibility which he now holds in his current school only exists because of the determination of 'The Boss.'

Finally, Colm tells his colleagues, *"I had to go back to a mainstream class really, but that stayed with me, I wasn't settled in class after that, we had found something that was really working!"* Colm explains that this led him to apply for a teaching position in special education in the school he is now in.

When Colm and his colleagues are interrupted by the bell, they immediately get up and return to class. As they file out of the staffroom, he observes,

"It really struck a chord with me, because I can engage with people, and this is where my talents lie."



The Self who Teaches - the Early Years: Siobhán's Story

Siobhán has stayed late in school. She is engrossed in all the tasks left undone during the course of the school day because she has been working with the children on a project. Slowly she becomes conscious of the insistent ringing on the buzzer on the front door of the school. Then she remembers she is expecting her daughter, Mary, to join her in the school. How could she have forgotten? She had taken great care to bring two dinners from home for them both. They are planning to go for a walk on this fine summer evening before they finish work and head home. Siobhán's daughter is in the very early years of her teaching career. Another daughter took the 'scenic route' into teaching and is at present completing her Professional Master's in Education (PME). Added to this, is the fact that Siobhán's husband is also a teacher. Any wonder then that the talk at home is usually school related, Siobhán thinks to herself. She recognises that her family are her 'safety net'; particularly Michael, her husband, from whom she seeks advice on a regular basis. At the front door of the school mother and daughter greet each other warmly and make their way to the staff room.

Mary makes herself comfortable in the staff room. The school is very familiar to her, as she attended it as youngster and also visited her mother after school throughout her secondary school years.

A home from home: an extension of themselves.

This building: this school community.

Over their evening meal, the conversation turns to experiences of teaching in the early years. Prompted by a question from Mary, who is in the beginning to teach phase of her career, Siobhán shares her story.

She explains to Mary that when she left college, she could have had a job in any school run by the Mercy Nuns. This was at a time when teaching positions were scarce and Sheila chose to move away and teach in a school, in a community that didn't know her. *"I only stayed in that school for a year, and while I was there, I started straight away re-investing all that had been invested in me."* She recalls for Mary, how she had taught a senior class during this first year and how much she enjoyed reproducing a show with the pupils which she had done herself while she was at school.

"But you didn't stay in that school, long did you?", asks Mary. Siobhán then recalls the move to the school in which they are now sitting, where they have a history now, individually and as a family. She says, *"It just suited me down to the ground, I learned so much here and I gave so much, it really suited me."* She shares with Mary that the principal was interested in European languages and drama. Siobhán describes a very vibrant, small school where culture and the arts were celebrated. *"Chaos reigned; it was all about the kids."*

Thinking aloud, between mouthfuls of the re-heated dinner she had so carefully prepared the evening before, Siobhán asks herself, *"What did I bring to it?"* ... *"I brought my interest in the arts and all the talents that had been nurtured in me."* I loved it", she explains to Mary. *"I felt like a natural leader in that I could bring others with me."* *"The school grew bigger, other teachers brought more talent and I suppose, I began to co-ordinate that talent. I co-ordinated that effort."*

Mary wonders why Siobhán continued to be involved with the music and drama when other teachers, stopped being involved when they had children *"Yes"*, replied Sheila *"female teachers don't have wives and they retire from a lot of after school stuff"*. Nodding to each other they remember that Mary often had to stay late in school while her mother spent the late afternoons working.

Siobhán, thinks now of the concept of 'invitational leadership' which she read about during her studies for her M.Ed. She recognises that she invited people to be involved in projects, by first inviting herself. *"You need to be hugely committed yourself"*, she tells Mary, *"you need to be seen to be a doer, have so much invested in it yourself that people want to help you."*

Silence settles on them both, Sheila thinks back over her many years of co-ordinating arts projects in the school. She reflects on how, as the school grew and more and more talented staff came on board with these projects, she felt a little uncomfortable. She liked to be in charge. She shares this thought with Mary and

explains how she had to be open to new ideas and embrace and enjoy the energy and enthusiasm of her younger colleagues.

At that moment, the sun lights up the staffroom. This room, the room where Siobhán has her ‘office’ in the corner, rarely gets any sunlight. The sudden brightness of the room reminds Mary and Siobhán that they had planned a walk in the evening sun before going home.



The Magpie Instinct - Beginning to Teach: Kitty's Story

Kitty is sitting at her desk in her classroom on the day of the summer holidays. The week has been very busy and draining. All the end of year tasks are completed. Booklists, reports, preparing class lists, clearing and cleaning the classroom; not to mention actually teaching the children and ensuring they have a positive experience at the end of their time in her class. She takes a moment to rest before she packs her car to go home for the holidays. She thinks about the very early years of her career.

Kitty remembers how she began teaching at twenty and initially, ‘the self who teaches was ‘young and innocent.’ For Kitty, the early years were years of loneliness and uncertainty. She graduated with a very small class, in the mid nineteen-eighties and in her beginning to teach years there were very few young teachers in the system. Thinking about the social elements of learning to teach in the early years, she recognises that she *“learned to deal with older people.”* She learned a lot from her older colleagues and recognised very early in her career that different people have different talents. She recognised that many schools were very hierarchical and that some colleagues were quite territorial about things.

Employment for young teachers was very precarious at the time and substitute teachers were only paid if the Board of Management returned forms to the DES on time. As a result, many young teachers in substitute positions were seldom paid regularly. Looking back now, Kitty realises that acting as a substitute teacher in several schools provided a rich learning to teach experience. Thinking now that, *“no two schools were the same, different schools had different strengths.”* She enjoyed gathering ideas from the different schools in which she taught and her ‘magpie instinct’ ensured rich learning. Smiling to herself, Kitty recognises a similarity between her young self as a beginning teacher and the young teachers today who face uncertainty in employment and lower salaries because of the financial emergency measures of the economic downturn. For young teachers in the 1980s, a permanent job was a rarity. Teachers in the 80’s didn’t have opportunities to teach abroad, or the flexibility which younger people have at present. For Kitty, *‘the holy grail’ was....a ‘permanent pensionable position’.* Kitty’s first permanent position was in a well-established large convent school. She was the only young teacher in the school and found the all-female staff in a convent school to be quite false. There was *“a show put on in the staff room.”* Kitty knew that her friend Dorothy would say that her colleagues were building cover stories in the public places of the school.

Being young and progressive in a large school, there were plenty of opportunities for Kitty to grow as a teacher. She ran a specific speech and language unit in the school for many years. As the school was located very close to a refugee centre there was also a requirement to provide education in English as an additional language. Kitty found that she had a very different perspective to her colleagues whom she found to be very staid, with very little awareness of what was going on ‘out there’ in the broader educational landscape. She found the school very hierarchical in nature. The culture of teaching and learning was very territorial, and seniority was the main factor in allocating duties and responsibilities. There were very high levels of parental control and a strong academic focus. This meant that many decisions about teaching and learning were assessment-driven. In order to prepare these children for entrance exams to secondary school, the lion’s share of support teaching was allocated to the senior classes.

Change came for Kitty with the appointment of a new principal: a leader with a similar mind-set to Kitty. She thinks to herself, *“He had very progressive ideas he was into ‘portfolio learning,’ and understood different ‘styles of learning’”.*

Remembering her twelve years in this school, Kitty realises now that her personal life was moving a pace. She was the youngest in her family and her parents passed away during this time. Then came marriage and parenthood. During these years, Kitty was very open to initiatives, and involvement in activities outside of school ensured that she attended to her own learning and professional development. She trained as a graphic artist and began delivering professional development for teachers in the area of the visual arts.



Beginning to Teach: Sharon's Story

Sharon always felt that it was important to attend your graduation as a way to celebrate the learning journey. She has attended many graduations over the years and now she thinks back to her recent graduation for a postgraduate qualification. She remembers meeting her classmate after the ceremony. The conversation had focused on the final assignment, where the task was to identify key moments in the learning journey. This was done through the use of a reflective diary. Sharon explained to her friend, Dorothy that she found this very difficult, admitting *"it's the 'me' piece, I'm finding that very hard"*. Sharon had found it quiet unsettling to look back.

Remembering this now she reaches for her reflective diary which she always keeps close to hand. She begins reading her reflective diary by going right back to her first-year teaching. She explored what she could remember about her learning needs and where she found support for her learning.

Journal Entry #1

I was very, very lucky' to have a colleague, the Junior Infant teacher who had children the same age as me who understood what it was like to start a career and she supported me every step of the way. She wasn't exactly a mentor but there was no question too stupid, no conversation too daft. It was a very honest, open space where you could go and say... 'what do you do here?', or 'how will this go?'. I was the first new teacher in the school for nine years, so it has grown hugely since. But I was the first of a new influx. Everyone was very supportive.

I'll never forget my first dose of parent teacher meetings. There was only one staff toilet and that was for men and women, so that was taken. I was in the children's toilet trying to put on lipstick and my hand was shaking so much I couldn't put it on. There was a colleague standing beside me and she said; "Take three deep breaths. You know the children. It's going to be fine; the majority of the parents will be lovely. We'll all have one or two...". I can still see, myself in the mirror with the hand going. I was just so nervous at the thought of it.

Sharon's eyes are drawn to an entry in her diary about how she was so excited to have her own classroom and how she completely rearranged the classroom, even taking down the doors of cupboards in order to have open shelving.

I was left to find my own space and I suppose I was very naïve. I walked into the room and didn't even think about it, I just said, 'This place is mine now...I'm' putting it the way I want it.'

Reading back over this part of her reflective diary, Sharon wonders at the fact that she never thought about the teacher who had been teaching in the classroom. She is unsure whether her colleagues felt any negativity towards her, and writes, *"I was just so excited I had my own classroom; I was completely oblivious to it"*

Journal Entry #2

This entry in Sharon's reflective diary considers her learning at school with her colleagues.

"We would have the practice established that if somebody engages in CPD they would come back to the staff and they report on it or show other teachers, by modelling and allowing them to observe the new practice in their room. So, they were sharing the knowledge that they had gained and seen it in operation. This happened with all the initiatives as they came in. Our previous principal had established an hour a month when the children went home. Long before Croke Park or Haddington Road hours, we were having regular staff meetings. So then when Croke Park came we just increased the amount or made them longer. The practice was already established. So, it's a long running practice.

Sharon's learning to teach journey has led her to recognise that opportunities for teacher learning depend on the priorities of the school leader. The school culture and ethos they wish to establish influences this. For Sharon's key learning moments, this entry highlights the importance of school leadership in prompting opportunities for school-based teacher learning.



CHAPTER 9: THE COURAGE TO CARE

Dorothy speaks:

The importance of an ethic of care in the educational endeavour is a key element of the interpretative bricolage which I represent. In these stories we encounter some of the epistemological dilemmas teachers face as they navigate the sacred stories of the Wizard of Oz. These help us to come to know and understand teachers' struggle to reconcile their caring role with the culture of accountability and performativity that is central to the current sacred stories of the educational policy-field and to consider how the stories bear witness to teachers' struggles in reconciling the demands of this culture of performativity with their desire to create space for the uniqueness and individuality of children in their care. I encourage you to wonder if this ethic of care may be 'manipulated ...in the context where power is gendered and out of balance' (Santoro 2017, p.51). We encounter teachers' desire to build authentic democratic, trusting, and respectful relationships with children and parents alike and come to understand the importance of time for caring and building relationships through dialogue. The stories whisper teachers' struggles to maintain their own professional identity and spaces for their creativity and bear witness to their practical wisdom and educational virtuosity (Biesta, 2013). Following Foucault, I urge you to consider teachers' experience of false freedoms in their professional knowledge landscapes and how sacred stories may act as a form of disciplinary power through the use of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination.

Weekly Assembles: Getting your head up!

Celebrating uniqueness.

 Celebrating effort.

 Celebrating events.

 Celebrating success.

The whole school coming together as a community.

 To get your head up and say:

 Oh yes! It's assembly today!

 Whole school community together,

 from the smallest fella or girl

 to the oldest teachers.

 All part of the same community.

 At the end of the day,

 all working together towards something...

 Something positive

 and unique.



Relationships: Care, Energy and Exhaustion

Angela's teaching life is very busy. In addition to her duties as a class teacher she is on the Board of Management of her school. As a school member of the Professional Support Team (PST), she is the mentor supporting the induction of her newly qualified colleagues. Angela is also a member of the ethos committee in the school. This is important to her. The postgraduate studies she is undertaking are linked to the school ethos and the Board have agreed to fund her studies. In order to be allocated the funding, Angela is undertaking a review of her teaching experience, values, and approaches. Angela is a sharer, so she meets a colleague, Dorothy, who she has worked with through the induction programme in her school to discuss this.

Angela is highly motivated and has a strong desire to be 'a good teacher'. As a result, she is always anxious to do her best and be prepared. In the course of the conversation, Angela is anxious to provide the 'right' answers. She poses lots of counter-questions to clarify what Dorothy means and pauses regularly taking time to think and formulate her thoughts.

As it is very close to the end of the school year, Dorothy visits Angela in her classroom after school. To begin the conversation her colleague, Dorothy suggests they focus on the past school year and how Angela is feeling; where she is 'at', at this point in the year.

Angela: *Well, I have mixed emotions because I have become very attached to the children, especially 'the softies'. It's difficult at the moment because the books have been collected for the book rental scheme and we are winding down. We still have to get through the day and the busier they are the better. It was a lovely year, really. Challenging at times. Not with the curriculum, but more to do with children in the class and you learn different things...Not once did I have a parent at the door!*

Dorothy: I suppose that's to do with building your credibility and that comes with the length of time you're in a school?

Angela: *Yes. Parents come to understand your style: they get a sense of your style as a teacher. Parents are only interested in how school life impacts on their child; their family. Every teacher is different - has their things that they're stuck on, you know, your classroom style. I feel that the parents, the school community, are getting to know me. Or maybe I am becoming more confident, you know - this is me! This is the way I teach.*

The children have to adapt. I didn't realise that. Jane recounts a story about a previous class: "They were amazing, and we got on so, so well". She remembers how one child wrote about her experience in the school for their graduation in sixth class. It was amazing to read about her experience in my class." She wrote also about her favourite teachers, and I wasn't one of them. Now that didn't bother me. I know she had a lovely year. But it was interesting to see the different styles that children like. You forget that they're taking in an awful lot about the way you are with them, and another teacher might just have a better connection with them."

Dorothy: So you're questioning your style? You know you have to be true to who you are. It's a question of integrity, and children see that?

Angela: *I definitely have evolved, like I am very much true to myself, very much. Because the energy you put into the class, that energy has to come from your passion for the children, the way you are, your teaching style, but I have noticed how I have evolved over the years. That just comes with experience, it comes with, you know working smarter, understanding, confidence, dealing with parents.*

Dorothy: So everything is a learning curve and experience provides that?
Angela nods emphatically in agreement.

Dorothy sees this as an opportunity to move the conversation forward and support Angela in exploring some 'secret stories of practice':

Dorothy: This year overall, was there any time...? Have you been in a positive space *all* year?

Angela: *I have really enjoyed my class...Now they drive me cracked - but in a good way!*

Nodding encouragement Dorothy notes that Angela is trying to ensure her review stays positive while at the same time acknowledging the difficulties of the 'secret stories':

Angela: *Now there are some very challenging children, with behavioural challenges. The beginning of the year was toughest for me, from we'll say September to the beginning of December. We have our parent-teacher meetings in mid-November. I have found it very difficult and managing children with...you know...high energy; teachers can get very tired. 'Cause I am a very high energy teacher. So, there's a lot going on.*

It's a busy classroom and I suppose there were times that maybe...it wasn't always possible, but that's because I was exhausted. Absolutely exhausted.

Now the parents that I met in November; if I was to meet those parents again now, we would be having different conversations. I would be able to give critical feedback. But also, there were children that I really didn't get to know, that I didn't praise enough; and that didn't have as much positive feedback...That's why... you know, there's a lot of love in my school reports.

After a gentle pause to allow the previous conversation to sink and settle...

Dorothy: How do you manage that tiredness, then?

Angela: *Em...I sit on my stool and I tell the children... and I talk to them about it and say... and it's not kind of feel sorry for me... it's just like ... Listen, maybe you didn't have the best day today, but I'll tell you why from my side and if ye have any thoughts...* Angela then shares a story with Dorothy. She relives a story of a trip to the local college for athletics training and how the behaviour of her pupils almost brought her to tears. The children had been very difficult, fighting and arguing amongst themselves. They were very competitive and called each other names. This caused great upset and many children were in tears. Angela recalls how she handled this. "We came back, and we dropped everything, and we talked for about a half an hour and we never had that problem again".

"We do a lot of talking and a lot of sharing in my class!"

She explains her belief that sharing stories of herself with the children builds relationships.

Angela: *They love it!"*

She expresses her surprise that at the parent-teacher meetings the parents knew the stories of 'self' which she shared with her pupils. She is also very aware of the power to influence that teachers have.

Angela: *At the parent-teacher meetings, sometimes they say, 'she told us about...'. And you're like, 'God! The parents say, 'everything Ms D. says... she won't listen to me - it's whatever you say.'*

Dorothy interjects and explains to Angela that she is hearing the importance of trust and respect and democratic relationships with the children. Angela hadn't really seen this in herself and she is beginning to understand that in telling her teaching story she has come to know this about herself. Looking towards the challenge of the year ahead where she will be taking on a senior class who have a reputation for challenging behaviour she explains to Dorothy that she has chosen to engage in professional development over the summer; she wants to do something about building relationships.

Angela: *There's lots of things going on there and I need lots of strategies. I think good practical examples or a programme - maybe something like the incredible years. I feel that in 6th class a child wants to build a relationship.*

I'm kind of excited, I'm excited 'cause I have no fears about the curriculum, 'cause I love it. I love the senior curriculum. I love learning myself. And I love being in an adult conversation and telling stories...I love my own knowledge growing.



Care: The fella or girl who is not on the list!

"It's so frustrating...we want to care for the children, but sometimes it never seems to be enough." Seán hears another teacher speaking in the staffroom as he arrives for his mid-morning coffee. *"That's the frustrating part because we can only give them so much, like five hours a day."* Over a very quick cup of coffee Seán and his colleagues mull over the fact that the support systems from home are often very weak: even though many parents are interested and very loving, they lack parenting skills. The fact that the Department of Education has cut the Home School Community Liaison teachers has weakened his school's ability to support parents in this area. Seán and his colleagues welcome the re-introduction of some of these posts but wonder how long it will take to make up for the lost ground. Seán reflects,

"The benefit of it is that it engages parents with the whole school community. Parents can be brought along. You can run parenting classes and engage them with homework clubs and things like that... if you don't do that, we're all working as separate entities, and nobody meets."

Making his way his way back to class, Seán considers again the recurring theme in his teaching years. *"Teachers figure it out, make it work, use the resources they are given in creative efficient ways, and then the Department*

pulls it, time and again”.

His thoughts are interrupted by the immediacy of a child needing emotional support due to a personal crisis. He is pulled back into the emotional messiness that is an everyday, perhaps every hour, occurrence in school life. He spends the next hour ensuring the child in his care is getting support. The lack of support from services outside the school frustrates this. Pupils who are on the books of a support service are provided with psychological supports, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy. All the required supports but....

“You’re talking about the fella or girl who is not on the list: who has no supports within the school. And things can develop over the years as our children get older,: the EBD stuff gets more violent... So we’re trying to develop interventions at a younger age for the people who are not accessing the support services.”

While taking the time to listen and talk to support this pupil, Seán is all too aware that he and his colleagues are really on their own at times; and that they often have to rely on their own skills, creativity, and resilience to enable them to care for their pupils.



Culture of Assessment: “I’m a Smart Child”

Rosemary and Dorothy have been friends for a long time. In the course of their many conversations they have talked about how those in leadership roles in schools should ‘*know their people*’ so as to enable teachers to play to their strengths and take on leadership roles in these areas. Together they had debated the concept of emotional intelligence and its importance for teachers, and more importantly, for school leaders. They ponder over the fact that some people *just know!* They discussed being self-smart and people smart and the value of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for school leaders.

Telling Dorothy now about self-smart and people smart, Rosemary recalls with great enthusiasm a recent lesson which she did with her pupils. Integrating SPHE and religion, she wanted to explore the skills, talents, and uniqueness of her pupils. The lesson “I’m a Smart Child” explored Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences in a child-friendly way. Rosemary explained that she had been introduced to this lesson by a colleague and explains to the children “*you can be lots of smarts, but you can be really good at just one.*” It was clear that some children, particularly the children who achieved academic success and who considered themselves ‘clever’ had difficulty with this. Dorothy hears how Rosemary had enabled the children to explore which smarts they were really good at and which smarts they might find challenging. She also elaborated on how the children had asked Rosemary what her smarts were, and which smarts were a challenge for her. She explains how she modelled her thinking through the various intelligences for the children finally saying, “*I think I need to be better at this one’ self-smart... I think I need to work on that one because it’s about being confident in yourself and your abilities and I’m not.*” Rosemary pauses when she says this and explains to Dorothy, “*I might seem to be, but in my heart of hearts I’m not as confident as I may appear to be.*”

This discussion brings both Rosemary and Dorothy to consider the current policy regarding administering and reporting results of standardised tests and the culture of individualism and competitiveness which has grown around this, both at school level and system level. Together they explore the narrow perspective these tests have in terms of types of intelligence. This leads them to believe that assessment at second level values number smart and word smart above all others. They finish their conversation by voicing concern about the current policy narrative in relation to STEM education and their shared anxiety that this marginalises pupils and teachers who may be body smart, picture smart, or music smart.



Fiona’s Story: Knowing, Teaching and Learning Who You Are

Fiona and Dorothy are preparing for a presentation on School Self-evaluation (SSE) at a staff meeting and have engaged in a reflective conversation about teacher knowledge and the art of teaching. Dorothy reminds Fiona of the *Courage to Teach* and how Parker Palmer talks about teachers’ ‘knowing teaching and learning’, and asks Fiona what she thinks that ‘knowing’ means. In trying to articulate her response, Fiona says, “*Yeab, I know what you mean. Like, in the sense that there’s a difference. You can be a teacher but there are certain things that you’ll never find the answers to on paper. You just know the right things to do within you and it is part of who you are: part of what you learnt; part of mistakes you’ve made in the past; and by god, I’m not going to make it again.*”

The conversation turns to public perceptions of teachers and the fact that many people who have never taught think that it's easy to be a teacher because the content knowledge is accessible to all. *"That's why we get such a hard time from them"* murmurs Fiona, *"They don't really appreciate or understand...the high energy of a classroom, and the high energy of teaching...It's how you deliver; it's knowing how to talk to a child; it's knowing when to drop everything and read. It's knowing that I see someone who is sad - someone needs my help."*

Thinking about this and the demands of paperwork and standardised testing which are inherent in the current accountability context that teachers are working in, Dorothy asks Fiona if she feels there is enough time for this flexibility, "Do you think the current climate and environment facilitates us making space and time for that child who is feeling sad or being able to run with something that happens in your class?" Fiona explains to Dorothy that she understands this accountability in terms of market pressures and meeting targets like a salesman. She explains that she does feel there is some flexibility in the system; *"There's flexibility there, but I think that teachers are under severe pressure because they're trying to cater for children with a number of disadvantages, whatever way it might be. It might be their family life, it might be within themselves, because you're managing PEOPLE. People that cannot be fixed by a programme or plans."*

Fiona tells Dorothy that she feels teachers find themselves under pressure because they are 'so conscientious'. Alluding to the results of standardised tests and reaching standards she explains that managing 'diverse capabilities and abilities' in a classroom has its challenges. She recognises that some children may be 'feeling inadequate or have low confidence' as a result and that and she tries to get those children engaged in learning and doing things that will motivate them to get involved. *"But at the same time, you're under pressure to get a certain standard covered and sometimes you lose them along the way."* She recognises that sometimes the consequence of this is relationship difficulties that 'spill out into the yard' and that a lot of teachers' time is taken up managing relationships. She tells Dorothy *"I suppose I'm always trying to think of strategies that will get these children thinking about it."* She worries that she spends a lot of her time dealing with the difficulties and relationships with a few pupils and that some children are just pushed aside by the immediacy of some situations. She explains,

"I go home thinking about the child that sat there quietly while I gave time and energy to a group that seem to get it all day every day. You think then, about the little quiet child in the corner; that may not have had any engagement with you for a whole day. That's who I think about when I go home."

She knows she will always try to make the time to have a 'one-to-one' chat with this child.

Dorothy draws the conversation to a conclusion by returning to Palmer's assertion that the more teachers care about teaching the more heart-breaking it is. Nodding in agreement Fiona says, *"Yes, caring is innate in teaching, you won't get by if you don't care because you want that child to get the best of everything. The person is as important as education."* As the conversation draws to a close, they agree that, for them, care is at the centre of knowing teaching and learning. They wonder about this and consider how much caring is enough; at what point are you going to drop?" They finish their conversation by agreeing to endeavour to look after themselves. They hope to prioritise self-care in the future. On that note they return to the task in hand, the presentation for tomorrow's staff meeting.



A Facilitator of Learning: Supporting Pupil Learning

Donnachadh is delaying going home from school. He knows he needs time to debrief before making the gear change to family life. He takes a few moments to run through his day with his colleague, Dorothy. He and Dorothy have a shared history. They were in college together and their parents knew each other before Donnachadh and Dorothy were born. They also know quite a lot of people in common. This is a safe space for Donnachadh to talk. His main concern at the moment is supporting his students in the senior cycle of the Special School in which he is teaching. They are preparing to sit a version of the state exams which all students undertake at the end of their second level schooling. He talks to Dorothy about how he was preparing his pupils for these exams about managing their anxiety.

Donnachadh: *So, it's a very fine line between making them more anxious and affirming their sense of failure in their heads. There's a thin line between that, and maybe overachieving, because we correct the exams ourselves. The main thing to do is to get them to feel the anxiety; feel the panic in the exam - and be able to work through it.*

Dorothy: So they're actually learning a life skill?

Donnachadh: *That's it. That's the focus for me: that's the **only** focus for me.*

He goes on to say that the anxiety is particularly high when the pupils approach a maths exam. He explains that as soon as they see a maths paper, they tell themselves they will fail. He outlines how he worked through the paper task by task, walking each step of the way with the pupils, and how they began to see that they were able to do most of the tasks. Donnachadh uses highlighters encouraging his pupils to highlight the numbers and focus on the word which tells them which mathematical process to choose. The hope is that when they go through another exam they will have a strategy to scaffold themselves as they complete the exam. Dorothy laughs, knowing Donnachadh so well she exclaims,

Dorothy: Here it comes, here it comes... don't say it... It's all about the... 'process'.

Donnachadh: *Well, there you go. It's a shared experience. It wasn't a positive experience for them. But it was an experience that they went through - and they'll go through it better the next time. They bank the experience so that they will go through it with less anxiety the next time.*

Donnachadh and Dorothy sit in comfortable silence for a few moments.

Dorothy: Are you ever afraid you'll do the wrong thing?

Donnachadh: *Yes. Absolutely.*

He goes on to talk about how a healthy lifestyle programme he was working on with his pupils may have led a pupil to develop an eating disorder.

Donnachadh: *As you know, I'm big into fitness and taking care of your body. But this pupil just went completely overboard with it. And obsessed about it, and exercised, and not eating... And developed a disorder... So, was that my teaching, or was it his learning? And sometimes I'm afraid that you're teaching...like, I was teaching what I thought was best practice, but it was taken up in an obsessive way.*

Dorothy is moved by Donnachadh's concern.

Dorothy: I don't think we can hold ourselves responsible for where we sow the seeds.

Donnachadh: *Yeah, I know. But there is a power there, in one way. Not a power - but they see us as being 'all fixing'. But we can't do that.*



Time for Stories: The courage to Care!

Due to the increased demands in terms of planning, record-keeping and literacy and numeracy initiatives in the current climate of accountability, Ann-Marie has been struggling to find space for her own professional judgment and discretion in her classroom. She has been pondering this for a few days. Finally, she finds time to think about this in the rough and tumble of her personal and professional life: a life filled with family and friends, children and colleagues, mothering, caring, supporting, cherishing and nurturing. She reflects:

"I mean like you bring your family life with you into teaching. I think that hopefully anyway. I am extremely caring of the children in my class. If there's something wrong I try to help them even though it's the last thing you feel you have time for." This brings her to think about the pressures from the DES, from the inspectorate and from policy initiatives in curriculum; all the demands and expectations put on teachers which leave no time to 'listen'. She thinks of Monday mornings when the children want to tell their stories; when she would dearly love to listen to their stories and can easily justify the time spent in terms of oral, language, and social development. But, no... *"I have to get through my English, Irish and maths. I just feel that pressure, my science, and my history, my geography, my music ...and I can't listen to their stories. Actually, in their lives, they don't care about English, Irish and Maths - they just want to tell their stories."*

Ann-Marie thinks back to her early years as a teacher and realises that in the early days *"there was time, before the new Curriculum in 1999/2000. Now it feels like constant pressure to change how you're teaching."* Thinking of her class of twenty-seven, Ann-Marie, like many of her teaching friends and colleagues, recognises that many of the recommended methodologies just aren't possible with the numbers in most classes. She remembers a previous conversation with her friend, Dorothy, and recalls, *"If Dorothy was here now, she would be pointing out the gap between policy and implementation. She would be asking, 'where is the place for feedback to policy makers?' 'Where is the place for teacher voice and teachers' knowledge of and for practice in the policy space?'"*

Pulling herself back to her own experience, her own understanding of mediating policy in her classroom, Ann-Marie cannot help but acknowledge the very powerful feeling *"of never being quite good enough."*

Which, if she was being honest, she would have to admit is her constant companion. So, she asks herself; *"Am I a good teacher?"* Ann-Marie stills herself for a moment. This is a big question. Calling into question

her identity and self-image as a teacher. Finally rising out of her subconscious comes the answer.... *"Sometimes, I feel I am and sometimes I don't."* However, she thinks, *I do my best **all of the time**. So, I think if there were more hours in the day when I could be preparing lessons and having these marvellously fantastic lessons maybe I'd be better.* She asks herself now, *"what makes a marvellously fantastic lesson?"* This leads her to think of young teachers and student teachers who come to school with 'fearas' (Irish word for teaching resources) 'coming out of their armpits!'

The big question for Ann-Marie is, *"if I do my best all of the time why do I feel that I am a good teacher sometimes, not all the time?"* This brings her back to how the system, the policy space she finds herself in makes her feel. She thinks now, *I feel there is no space for me, for my choices and opinions in relation to my own teaching".* She sees that this impacts on her identity, and self-image as a teacher. Concepts such as accountability, responsibility and trust swim around in her mind.

Then she remembers her love of art and how an art lesson allows the space for children to bring their own ideas and express themselves.

"Where is the space for me? For my knowledge; for my creativity, for fun?" This stops Ann-Marie short.

Much to her surprise her eyes fill with tears.

"I find it very hard to think about all of this," she thinks. *"It must be affecting me because I'm getting upset and emotional about it, thinking about something I do every single day but obviously it's getting to me."*

She recognises now that teachers don't have time to absorb what's going on for themselves: how much they put into their work, and how much they care. She reflects, *"I think it's about how much I care, I do my best to put in as much as I can, but the system doesn't appear to value that, though."*

She wonders aloud *"At the end of the year, does the DES say, 'Will you evaluate your care for the children? In SSE does it ever ask, 'How did you care for the children? Were they happy?'"* She thinks of tangible examples of this: when a child's pet dies; when they lose a tooth and you spend a few minutes scouring the floor looking for it; remembering to celebrate their birthdays. Now she remembers that it *was* a child's birthday today. A quiet child... She must remember to say 'happy birthday' to her on Monday!

CARE?



The Question of Parents

Graham is spending two hours after school meeting parents. He has spent several hours during the week preparing for these meetings. As he waits for the first parent he ponders:

"Is there a link between the relationship with the children and the relationship we have with parents? How does it work?"

In fact, Graham knows the importance of relationships with parents. He is very caring and makes time for parents: making himself available at the end of the year to meet them. This is in addition to the annual parent-teacher meetings which take place earlier in the year. He makes every effort to be open and honest with parents; feeling that if they see a teacher cares, they will recognise that both parents and teachers are on the same side

He knows that having supportive parents makes things easier for himself and the children. Finally, Graham recognises that his approach to parents and the children in his care has been influenced by the fact that he is a parent himself.

Many teachers are also parents, and many parents are teachers!



The Same Side of the Fence! - A Monologue

I think it's very important to have
a positive relationship with parents so that they see.

Sometimes parents don't see.

They don't see the fact that you are
trying to do the best for their child.

They don't see that.

They don't see that if you've

corrected the child for some reason,
or if they're struggling,
you're not doing it for.....

Sometimes parents don't see that.

I think that if they see that you care about their children,
they'll understand what you're doing,
They'll accept that, instead
of coming at you and giving out.

Sometimes parents don't see that.

Can we influence that?

Or are there some parents who come with a chip...?

I don't think we can influence it, really,
because it's like life.

Sometimes in life there are people who have a problem.

They'll have a problem all of their life.

And, unfortunately they take it out on us!

Sometimes parents don't see that.

Sometimes a parent can grab you at ten past nine in the morning, and flatten you.

You think: do you not realise that I have to go in to my class now?

And teach them for the rest of the day;
after you have maybe been very nasty,
or accused me of something I didn't do?

Sometimes parents don't see that.

They don't appreciate that that's all on you now,

for the rest of the day.

And you have to try to go in
and teach their kids.

Sometimes they don't get that!

Sometimes parents don't see that.

CHAPTER 10: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Dorothy speaks:

I hear you wonder, “Why leadership?”

Well...

The narrative threads guiding the interpretative bricolage which I represent include an understanding of leadership as an invitation to others, (Stoll and Fink 1995) and a belief that the power associated with leadership should be channelled in the service of others.

Sinead’s and Orla’s stories from school have been lived out by school leaders while the remaining stories explore the impact of leadership on teacher’s professional knowledge landscapes.

I believe that school-based teacher learning is nested in the culture of teaching and learning of a school and that school culture is influenced by the understanding of power and the truth and knowledge valued by the school leader.

In coming to know the stories which follow I suggest that you consider how far school leaders embody an ethic of care by valuing democratic relationships and dialogue, and how the Pied Piper of neoliberalism and the sacred stories of the Wizard of Oz (the educational policy field) impact them.

Moreover, I urge you to salute how some school leaders conduct their work with creativity and imagination and support teachers as they negotiate the epistemological dilemmas they face as a result of the sacred stories of policy makers.



Sineád’s Story: Against all odds! Making School a Better Place...Everyday

Dear Sineád,

What a difficult situation you have found yourself in. If it wasn’t so serious, I would be laughing. Well, if you don’t laugh you would cry! In fact, the seriousness of the situation and the other events which you have navigated this year, have remained with me. I wonder how you have maintained your commitment, joy in teaching and care for the pupils...**against all odds.**

I wanted to share my thoughts with you.

What I hear from you is that you are actually doing something very, very important for your colleagues. You’re filling a gap, and I hear that there’s a humanity in you, and a connection between you and your colleagues, which can only enrich the school community and the culture of teaching and learning in the school. In one week alone, despite the ‘very difficult situation’, you have supported the Sixth-class teachers for the graduation. You supported other teachers with their summer play, and you also supported a whole school project and enabled pupils to be involved.

All this despite ‘a very difficult situation’...**against all odds...**

Despite all this, you made your school a better place every day.

I know you say you are at your happiest when sharing your joy in teaching and learning with the children

and colleagues. I can see you now, in my mind's eye, supporting sharing, caring, through your joy in learning. So, as the year draws to a close, this is what you need to know to keep safe....

The fact that you made your school a better place every day, despite everything.

From the heart of the school, you have been a listening ear and a guide to your colleagues. You have been at the heart of what goes on in the school. You have nurtured the heart of what keeps good teachers teaching well: a space for them to *be*; a safe space for them to bring themselves to school every day. In your role you *can* influence the overall culture in a school.

So 'a very difficult situation' – a secret story, a complex, complicated, sometimes nasty story, has been turned around. You have carved out a niche for yourself...**against all odds.**

Focus on what you have achieved and can achieve. You have carved out a role for yourself. You have carved out a space for yourself. Staff have connected with you: they know you're in their corner. You have made the school a more affirming happy place...**that's magic!**

It's magic, what you're bringing!

Despite everything, and the difficulties around the situation you find yourself in, that is *incredible!*

Maith thu!

Enjoy the summer break,

Dorothy



Every day is a good day!

It is late afternoon. Sineád is at her desk in an alcove in the corridor; surrounded by her teaching resources gathered over the course of her long career. Sineád stays in school until late afternoon/early evening every day. Her colleagues wonder what she does. She knows what she is doing. She is completing paperwork which she did not do during the day because she busies herself by sharing progressive ideas about teaching and learning with her colleagues and the children. *"I love that. It's as much for myself as for the children."* She realizes, *"I don't have a hobby outside of school..."* and wonders if this is a good or bad thing. *"This school is my social outlet!"*

She hears the 'ping' as a new email arrives. She is surprised to see the email from her friend Dorothy. She has been sharing a lot of the ups and downs of the school year with Dorothy. She met Dorothy quite recently and wonders why Dorothy has emailed her so soon.

The silence in the school at this time of day is deafening; only the ticking of the clock can be heard as Sineád reads the email from Dorothy. The contents of the email and the affirmation from Dorothy shows Sineád the positives of 'the very difficult situation' and how **against all odds** she has had a positive year and been a positive influence in the school community. In her new role as deputy principal, she vows to embrace the final events of the year with positivity and is adamant she will put the best side out; dressed to kill at all school events over the next week or so.

Though I suppose, looking from the outside in, I could be given more to do on a daily basis.

Sineád responds to Dorothy:

"Every day is a good day. I'm getting positive feedback every day. My new role gives me great flexibility. Every day is different. It means a lot to me to be valued - not over and above my colleagues. But teaching is very isolating, so it means a lot to just watch the way people are interacting."

Thinking about this now Sineád continues;

"What the year has done for me is helped me to value my colleagues. Getting to see them at work, I have been mindfully observing my colleagues. Younger teachers are very confident and many of them are very talented, but they still appreciate affirmation. I have tried to do that this year. My colleagues say that this is fantastic for them."

Though I suppose, looking from the outside in, I could be given more to do on a daily basis.

"You say that I can influence the culture of the school, and thinking about it now, I would say that I am. Do you know what, Dorothy? You have done wonders for me today? I love the new job, now when I think about it... and I do feel my colleagues support. I feel love from them. Of course, the other side of that is that they're coming to me with their problems and I don't have the authority to solve them."

Though I suppose, looking from the outside in, I could be given more to do on a daily basis.

The email goes on to explain that receiving Dorothy's email has caused her to think about the busy summer term, with communion and confirmation thrown in for good measure.

"It was busy, but good. There have been many happy days" despite 'the very difficult situation'...against all odds

Though I suppose looking from the outside in, I could be given more to do on a daily basis.

Thanking Dorothy, Sineád finishes by saying,

“I suppose I have had a chance to lighten things up!”

Have a good summer,

All the best

Sineád

Happy with the email, Sineád presses the send button smiling to herself.

Her conversations with Dorothy have been an unexpected and enjoyable source of support this year.



Orla’s Story: Leadership

An empty school. Late evening. The full moon clearly reflected on the sea outside the window of the staff room. The Christmas tree lights gently twinkling in the corner. Alone in the school, Orla is standing at the photocopier preparing for the Board of Management meeting. Thoughts are swirling around in her head. This is the last meeting before she leaves on secondment. She is excited about the move to the Teacher Support Service and very grateful that the Board of Management have released her at such short notice. She tries not to dwell on the fact that the Chairperson was reluctant to allow her take up the position. *‘After ten years of leadership and commitment!’* she thinks to herself. As she copies the documents required for the evening her head begins to spin. She thinks of her classroom, which needs to be organised for her replacement teacher. The stacks of paperwork in the office; some of which needs shredding, and the rest that needs to be organised and left ready for her colleague who will be taking over as principal after Christmas. This meeting is really important as Orla needs to leave a roadmap for the Board of Management covering school finances, special education, school building issues.....

The pressure thrums in her head.

She feels dizzy and lightheaded....

Falling...

Falling...

Into darkness...

Then nothing...



A Complete Shift in Perspective

A white ceiling. The gentle glow of fairy lights. The humming of the photocopier.

Orla gradually becomes aware of all of these things as she slowly regains consciousness following the blackout at the photocopier. Disorientated, she wonders for a split second where she is. Feeling the empty eeriness of the school around her, she realises she is all alone in the school on a dark December evening. Then, like a tsunami, awareness of her situation, the meeting this evening and everything she needs to do before the Christmas holidays, floods her mind. Cold now, she shivers and shakes herself back to full consciousness. First things first: the Board of Management meeting.

Standing up, she feels very uncertain on her feet and realises she needs a little time to gather herself following the blackout. Putting the kettle on, she remembers she hasn’t eaten since lunch time. Sitting in the empty staff room, with a cup of tea Orla allows herself a few moments to reflect on the school year and how she feels about her new position. Smiling wryly to herself she thinks that this year in particular has been a ‘rollercoaster’. *“Ten years”* she thinks, *“ten years as a teaching principal”*. She is very grateful for the chance meeting in the Education Centre where an old acquaintance pointed out that after ten years, one needs a change. As a result of this she this became involved in the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and also put herself forward for inclusion on a panel of candidates for secondment with two Teacher Support Services. She still feels surprised that her family advised her to take the new position despite the travel involved. She thinks to herself, *“Teenagers have a way of knowing what’s going on even when they are away at college.”* The stress of the last year or so has taken its toll at home, *“Even the dog had developed a skin disorder because of the stress!”*

Because of the difficulties she faced in leading the school community she was beginning to feel *‘very*

trodden...very ground down. Particularly since last year, when she had been ‘in the eye of a storm’ at school. She knew it was affecting her family. She had been looking for a new challenge. *“Any wonder then that they have encouraged me to take up this new position?”* she asks herself.

Acknowledging that she had found it very hard to return to school this September, she is pleased that she had the wisdom to change her mindset. To do this she has worked hard to remember that she cannot control things that are beyond her control and develop the wisdom to let these things go.

Her thoughts turn to her life drawing class which she is missing this evening. She loves the anonymity of the group. No one there knows she is a principal teacher. No one cares. The life drawing class is nothing to do with education and is all-consuming. When she is at the class she focuses completely on the challenge of life drawing and forgets the stresses and strains of her role in school.



Instructional Leadership

‘The lens of teaching and learning.’

Feeling steadier now, Orla returns to preparing for the meeting. She studies the outline of the whole school art initiative she has organised this year. She thinks again about her concern for Arts education in the curriculum, particularly since the Literacy and Numeracy strategy was launched in 2011. She believes that understanding children’s learning styles and ensuring children develop aesthetic literacy enables them to process and understand their lives. Orla has always held firm to her belief in the value of supporting children in the development of an aesthetic vocabulary to frame their creativity and wishes that more teachers and policy-makers would understand the opportunities within literacy and numeracy to do this. Her eyes travel to her precious copy of ‘Education Through art’ by Herbert Read, which she found in a second-hand bookshop. *“What a pity it’s out of print and so difficult to buy,”* she thinks. She believes it has resonance for us today as we struggle to ensure the Arts are valued in the curriculum.

Orla returns her attention to the Art initiative and studies the list of paintings that she has chosen for ‘looking and responding’ strand in the Primary School Art Curriculum. Smiling now, Orla gathers the laminated paintings into a folder and stores them carefully for her colleagues to use over the course of the next term.

“I’ve enjoyed my time as principal,” Orla reflects as she files the laminated paintings on the visual art shelf. Thinking of her imminent move away from school leadership, Orla is well aware the leadership role was often very difficult. In the beginning this was because of one colleague who felt they had a right to the leadership role and her colleague resented her appointment. This had a huge impact on the culture of the school and her colleagues tended to keep very much to themselves. Orla set about changing this ‘egg crate’ culture by making very careful choices in the appointment of personnel. This was very slow, however. In a small rural school, changes in personnel happen very rarely, so Orla made the most of maternity leave and temporary vacancies to employ new staff members who were open to change and willing to take on new initiatives.



Surviving the Leadership Years

Orla knows that her varied experience during her years of substitute work was a rich learning experience and brought a diversity of school experiences to her role as principal teacher. The fact that she was a teaching principal who always remained open to learning ensured that ‘the lens of teaching and learning’ influenced all her choices and decisions. She is particularly pleased to have confirmed the extension and upkeep of the building and excited about the next phase of the building works which will merge the old and new sections of the school. This reminds her to bring the Building File to the Board of Management meeting.

Orla prepares the staff room for the Board of Management meeting. As she lays out the carefully prepared folders, she wonders, *“How did I sustain my enthusiasm through the difficult times? The stress and strains of trying to be all things to all people; of managing a building; managing personalities on the Board; difficult staff members?”* She knows that postgraduate research for her M.Ed. came at the right time in her leadership journey. She enjoyed the M.Ed. in Catholic Education and was delighted to link her passion for the visual arts with spirituality in young children through the theme of children’s experiences of ‘judgement making’. She thinks again of her belief in the importance of developing the aesthetic in children. She smiles to herself when she ponders the

link between her Masters' research and the current focus on well-being for both children and teachers at a national policy level. This leads her to think about her engagement in induction over the past few years.

Her involvement with the National Induction programme (NIP) from the very early stages was such a powerful rich learning experience for her. She knows she was fortunate to engage in very high-quality professional development through the NIP. She was able to bring much of this back to her own school community and recognises how being involved in the 'bigger picture' can enhance and enrich both the individual and an entire school community. "Granted" she thinks, "I was in a leadership role." This leads her to think that with the right leadership approach, teachers can be supported in sharing learning with their colleagues. She believes and hopes that others have seen that she has created an environment where the creativity and talents of her colleagues have been nurtured.

The members of the Board of Management begin to arrive. Orla invites them to make themselves comfortable in the Staff Room while she goes to the office to collect the final documents for the meeting. Taking a quiet moment in the office to prepare for this important meeting she considers her priorities as a school leader. She recognises again her deeply held belief in the value of art in children's lives. She is concerned about the current popularity of STEM education and believes that seeing the purpose of education as serving the needs of the economy as quite a Victorian, industrial way of looking at the role of education. She believes that this emphasis on science, technology, and maths is entirely driven by the economic needs of society. She laughs and is grateful that in some quarters this acronym has now changed to STEAM and that some countries are recognising the vital importance of the Arts for developing creative thinking and positive approaches to problem solving.

"Could I have done a better job as a school leader?" she asks herself. She believes that she has done a good job despite the constraints placed on her efforts by the system by the current culture of accountability and performativity. She sees class size as a major impediment to achieving the quality of teaching and learning she aspires to. She is adamant that 'the magic number is 20 pupils per class.' She has discussed this with teacher friends over the years and many would say the same. This leads her to think about the new model for the use of Special Education Teachers to facilitate inclusion in classes rather than withdrawing the students. "Hah!" she thinks, "here I am again, thinking ahead of the system: often one step ahead of the policy-makers." She has always felt that in-class support and the inclusion of pupils with differing needs in the classroom should be a priority. She wonders at teachers' ability to develop creative solutions to the limitations in the system in terms of money and time and recognises that teachers' commitment to providing the best possible educational experiences for the children in their care drives this.

A gentle knock on the office door breaks her reverie. The Chairperson of the Board of Management has arrived for a briefing before the group convenes. Orla outlines the tasks she will complete over the Christmas holidays to ensure a smooth handover to her replacement. Satisfied with her outline, they make their way to the Staff Room and greet the other members of the Board.

The final meeting of the term gets under way.

Orla wonders if this will be her last Board of Management meeting in this school...



Kathleen's Story: Teacher Learning and Planning - "taking the person out of teaching"

Early morning in County Kerry.

Cup of tea in hand Kathleen sighs.

She feels herself relaxing gradually.

This is her treat.

More like a *re-treat* really, she thinks to herself.

Going to Kerry for her summer course combines holiday and family time while at the same time facilitating her own learning. Two of her children still sleep overhead before they begin their day. One is completing the same summer course for teachers like Kathleen, and the other is working at the Irish dancing summer camp.

Over breakfast, as they look out the large window at the mountainous landscape of county Kerry, the sunlight filtering through the clouds, the talk turns to school and the end of year tasks. Seán talks about finishing his plans and his monthly reports. Kathleen, the voice of experience chimes in, "*The fortnightly scheme, that bloody planning-grid killed the flexibility and the creativity, the going off on a tangent*". Seán looks in surprise at his mother because, for young teachers 'planning' is the 'holy grail'. At least this is what they have learned

in college and through the National Induction programme for teachers. Kathleen sees it differently saying, *"it's as if it's trying to take the person out of teaching."* She continues *"it's like we are being told ...here's a scheme of work. It doesn't matter who is doing it, This is the work!"* Kathleen continues on her soapbox, her children wide-eyed, listening carefully. *"There's no allowance for the children. They are people too!"* "I suppose", ventures Seán, *"It's like operating a machine and teachers just follow the instructions."* "Yes," replies Kathleen, *"but it's not like that at all. We should be building resilience. We should be building hobbies. We should be building skills as to how to access information; building confidence. The 'division of decimals'? I mean, I wonder...I really do!"*

Sighing, Kathleen remembers the principal of her school at the beginning of her career. She thinks now about how much she learned from her. She remembers how she cherished children and how visionary she was. Indeed, many of the projects and ideas which this school leader put in place such as teaching the children a European language are now 'flavour of the month' thirty years later. Reflecting now on the difficult situations she faced over the years, she acknowledges that when things go wrong at school in terms of staff relationships they can have a devastating effect on a teacher. Difficulties at school affect every aspect of your life.

Leaving the table and bringing her breakfast dishes to the sink Kathleen says, *"We seriously need to consider leadership and management of schools. We need to look at the preparation and selection of school leaders because they impact all aspects of school life."* Her children have heard this so many times over the years. So, taking the signal from their mother, and looking forward to the activities of the day ahead, they prepare to leave the house.



Leadership: A Secret Story

Shane is in an empty house. His family home. His fathers' house. He likes to ensure that the house is cared for while he and his siblings gather themselves to deal with possessions accumulated during a 'life well lived'.

In the quiet and solitude of the empty house, thoughts of an untold story seep into his consciousness. Shane understands that his stories from school fall into two narratives. Now in the calm stillness, with the essence of his father surrounding him, Shane allows himself to see the 'understory'; the secret story. His heightened awareness of the gentle peaceful energy in the house, leads him to ask himself, *"So what is the energy in school like at the moment?"* He admits to himself that the energy in school is very bad: that as a staff they are struggling. He thinks, *"We are dealing with an autonomous state really."* Decisions are made at the top, and the middle management team are advised by memos of the decisions. Shane and his colleagues have been trying to make inroads, though the cluster structure for staff meeting. He concedes that despite their best efforts, and the fact that they've had meaningful meetings when 'the Boss' wanted policies developed, it really is one step forward and two steps back. He thinks now, *"We had six meetings in eight weeks. Since Easter we had none because he is making big decisions, and giving us little memo's saying, 'this is the decision for next year.'"* He laments the loss of middle management posts as a result of the austerity measures implemented during the economic crisis. He thinks now, *"there are five of us and we are ploughing a lonely furrow."* He understands that some decisions have to be made at senior management level but still maintains, *"It's about balance, it's about respecting each other. It's about having a voice, having the sense that you have a voice, there has to be **some sense** that someone feels worthwhile."* These thoughts lead Shane's recognition that of the worthlessness of middle management in his school. He is shocked by this realisation as he knows he brings a wealth of experience, commitment and energy to the school. *"I recognise it,"* he thinks, *"and I always will do it. And I think that maybe the 'powers that be' see that people that are in middle management or the people that are working hard will do it anyway. Whether their voice is heard or not. Because I'll do it for the kids, and maybe they kind of abuse that."*

Shane summarises his thoughts for himself; the unseen story which has risen to his consciousness. He feels the lack of democracy and the lack of teacher voices which has a huge effect on staff morale and the culture of teaching and learning in the school. He wonders why this happens in schools and ponders about leadership traits and styles.

"I suppose it's something that has to be built into the being of a person, to facilitate leadership in others, you have to have that built into your bones, you can't learn how to do that. It's about a way of being in the world. Certain people want their finger on every single thing, and you can't do that in school. I don't think any principal can do that in a school. You have to delegate. You have to facilitate others to lead. If you want your finger on everything it's all going to fall apart because you're micromanaging."

In the course of his musings Shane has made his way outside. Now in the garden shed his eyes focus on the old bicycle at the back of the shed. He thinks that leadership is like the wheel of a bicycle: the leader is

the hub and the spokes radiate from that hub. Continuing the analogy, he *thinks*, “If you look at a bike, to micro-manage, if you can’t control everything that’s happening on the bike, then you just go off and polish the bell.” Shane feels this is what is happening in different schools.

“The whole bike is rusting away but the bell looks lovely, and makes lots of noise, it’s lovely and shiny and the focus is on making the bell work properly. That’s micromanaging stuff, and all around is falling apart. Which is terrible! That’s the wrong way to manage.”

Realising that thinking about the clutter in the shed should be left for another day, Shane makes his way back inside. Cold now, he makes a cup of tea and sits at the kitchen table of his childhood. The setting and the warm sweet tea bring him back to his early years as a teacher and he thinks again of his early experiences of school leadership and how this contrasts starkly with the story unfolding in his consciousness today. He acknowledges a growing understanding that the style of a school leader can be enabling or can drag people down. He recognises the two narratives running side by side in his stories from school. The narrative of the individual teacher, and the story of a learning community; the collective narrative.

The individual, Shane, who leads learning in his school, using his emotional intelligence and highly developed interpersonal skills to support both colleagues and pupils. He thinks of the emotional toil which he continues to invest in his pupils. The care and the attention to the uniqueness of each individual, because *“They turn up. They get on a bus and travel for two hours to come to school. It’s the least I can do to turn up and be there for them, and do my best.”* He recognises that he places the pupils at the centre of everything he does.

The collective narrative is another matter. The hierarchical management style, lacking in care for the individual voice and uniqueness of each teacher is very different. Realising that he could never ‘go there’ with ‘the Boss’ Shane sighs and admits, *“It’s just sad: it drags everyone down.”* Standing up, shrugging off the negativity, he washes and dries his cup, puts on his coat and pulls the door on the empty house leaving his thoughts...

His ‘stories from school’.

Stories of care, of tragedy, and trust...

Stories of disappointment and isolation...

Stories of triumph over adversity...

Stories of creativity and resilience...

Gently settling and mingling with the stories from his childhood; his father’s stories.

Melting together in the calm peaceful gentle space that was his childhood home.



CHAPTER 11: SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

Dorothy speaks:

Finally, we come to school-based teacher learning.

I have accompanied you through your exploration of stories of the self in teaching, stories of beginning to teach experiences and stories which may lead you to consider the centrality of an ethic of care in the educational endeavour.

Together we have wondered at stories of school leadership and the effect this has on school cultures in which school-based teacher learning is nested.

Now, as you come to know stories in relation to teachers' experiences of facilitating student teachers learning on school placement (Initial teacher education) and the learning of NQTs in their beginning to teach years (induction),

I remind readers of the exploration of relationships and dialogue which is an element of the interpretative bricolage which I represent. I invite you to wonder what the stories tell us about teacher education as qualification, socialisation or transformation (Biesta 2013)



School Placement: Anne's Story -Time for the Conversation to Happen

Anne, who always tries to catch up with friends before returning to school after the summer holidays, meets her friend Dorothy for coffee. They know that once the term starts there will be no time to meet. They are in Dorothy's house; as Anne often says, *'The best teacher learning happens in someone's house over a cup of coffee.'* Dorothy and Anne, both with over thirty years teaching experience, chat about their summer holidays and the events of the previous school year. They enjoy socialising and, of course, they have a shared 'knowing': a shared knowledge of the 'landscape of practice.

Inevitably the conversation turns to talk of teaching and the year ahead.

Dorothy is a School Placement Tutor and will be supervising 4th year B.Ed. students for the first time in the coming term. She is very aware of Initial Teacher Education policy; the increased emphasis on school placement and the role of the co-operating teacher in facilitating school-based learning for student teachers. She is keen to hear Anne's experience as a co-operating teacher.

Dorothy wonders how the school facilitates school placement, and whether Anne sees a role for teachers in supporting the learning of student teachers. *"I would consider that there is."* Anne replies, *"It's like being an apprentice like in any other trade or job. If you see someone working on the job you learn from what they do and what they don't do. You learn from observing the things that work. I mean a young student teacher coming out to the school is going to have their own ideas about what is a good idea and what's not. But in the school they get to see the way others are working and take the best of it as they see it and try new ideas. I think there's a lot to be gained from the school placement."*

Anne goes on to explain that as a result of the new extended placement she sees student teachers *"all over the building,"* where they *"experience every aspect of the job with teachers of varying levels of experience."*

Dorothy interjects to explain that this aligns with the 'whole school experience' outlined in teacher education policy. She elaborates that the policy on school placement suggests student teachers should become involved in the aspects of school life which go beyond direct class teaching. Anne confirms the value of this saying *"I think that has to be beneficial."*

Wondering yet again about Anne's personal experience of being a co-operating teacher, Dorothy questions whether she felt that there was time and space for co-operating teachers to support student teachers learning. Anne explains, *"Well, I would have made the time. I would start by giving them my phone number. I would have chatted with them on a Sunday night, or whenever. But the Department doesn't give the time... or any... and I'm going on now as if I'm looking for financial reward for everything, and I'm not! But I don't think they're supporting the school"*

community in doing that.”

Anne goes on to say that time is the main concern, *“If there were a couple of minutes where you could sit down and say ‘well, look let’s assess what worked well and what didn’t work’. I feel the Department isn’t making the time for that conversation to happen. They’re not making the space and unless teachers voluntarily give up their own time...”*

There is a pause in the conversation as they both ponder the level of systemic dependence on volunteerism. Anne thinks about Boards of Management and the level of responsibility they take on in a voluntary capacity and Dorothy considers the *Droichead* induction process reliance on the goodwill of the mentor and those acting on professional support teams. Their thoughts are interrupted abruptly by the ringing of a mobile phone. This time it’s Dorothy’s daughter, also a teacher, who is looking for advice in relation to *Droichead* for a friend who is a newly qualified teacher. This prompts them to finish their chat.

They make their way to the front door and hug goodbye, both vowing to keep in touch over the course of the school year.

They both know this probably won’t happen.



School Placement: Deirdre’s Story

Theory, Policy and Practice: Learning in the Landscape of Practice

The school where Deirdre works has had a long history of facilitating student teachers on school placement. Many of Deirdre’s colleagues have an implicit understanding of how this works because many of them are graduates of the local College of Education. As Deirdre attended a private teacher education college as a postgraduate she feels she does not share this implicit understanding.

Over the years the number of placement requests for Deirdre’s school have risen significantly. Students from other colleges are now requesting placement and the Principal raised the issue with the Board of Management. Being aware of Deirdre’s interest in teacher learning and her involvement with the induction of the newly qualified teachers in their school, the Board has asked Deirdre to share her thoughts on school placement. Deirdre commits to preparing a brief report of her experience and observations on school placement for the next board meeting. In preparation for this, Deirdre records her thoughts and reflections on school placement over the next few weeks. She is happy to do so as she knows it will link in well with her postgraduate studies for her M.Ed.

Deirdre’s Reflections on School Placements:

I hosted a 4th year student on the extended placement. I think it’s important that the class teacher and the student teacher have an opportunity to meet properly. Not just a hi/bye interaction. I see my role as facilitating the placement and providing support with classroom management. I have very little input with planning other than a discussion around areas/topics to be covered. I did receive some planning documents for my monthly report.

Following this reflection Deirdre wanted to know more and when she looked at the Teaching Council policy documents, she was shocked to discover the School Placement Guidelines. She had no idea that they existed. As she wondered whether her colleagues were aware of them, she selected ‘information’ as the topic for her next reflection.

*Information: I think that teachers turn away from school placement because they don’t have enough information - although we do get some details from the college. Because of our lack of awareness of policy documents, we don’t really feel our role goes beyond facilitating. There needs to be time for conversations with student teachers; this needs to be woven into the programme with time allocated during the school day. **“If it’s not scheduled, it won’t happen.”***

This is because teachers are running out the door at the end of the school day. I think it’s so important because if you’re in a teachers’ classroom for five weeks, or even one week, they are the person that will have the feedback on you. This is important because I am the one that is there in the room and it is very obvious the lessons that worked and the lessons that were challenging. But discussions afterwards don’t often happen. ... Where do you have the time? We don’t really have the time to connect with them. But this is really very important because the co-operating teacher can provide the most feedback.

I think that some student teachers may have finished with me without knowing the level of interest I had in supporting them. I wonder why I didn’t help more...? I suppose I was afraid of being overbearing or critical. There are teachers who will advise and who will intervene, but I think you need to have a conversation and it needs to be formalised. I am someone who is very happy to do it. Some people are shy/reluctant to take that stance because maybe they don’t realise that is it part of their role... If it was formalised, they would know. The role of the teacher is very unclear.

Following on from this reflection Deirdre goes on to consider the role of the school placement tutor in her next entry.

Tutor: The tutor will not have the full picture. I have had very little interaction with the school placement tutor. I don’t really

connect with them. They came in, observed, and left; and didn't really engage with me at all. I know that this year the person who is coming in for the first years is asking the teachers how the students are getting on. I heard them talking about it, but I don't recall being asked. The students just want to impress the 'cigire' (Inspector). They're the ones they need to impress: the ones they need to make sure everything is okay for. Someone from the college who comes in to observe a lesson might get a good idea, but they will not get the full picture.

Mulling over this Deirdre wonders if the College of Education (or Teaching Council) should provide some professional development for co-operating teachers.

CPD: I wonder if the college provided CPD for teachers around their role and the relationship with the placement tutor, would this solve the problem? But there's no point offering a two-hour course on a Monday, Wednesday or Thursday in the Education Centre from four to six: because, it's like, anything... I don't think teachers will go., I honestly don't think they will. I think that if you are taking a student teacher in your classroom that there should be a formal schedule once a week where the student teacher and class teacher sit down to discuss positives, negative and everything in-between. They could identify areas for development in going forward to next week or their next placement That's where knowledge is going to be learned. I think it needs to be a professional conversation. But it needs to be scheduled: it needs to be during the school day; and it needs to be part of the structure of the school placement experience.



School Placement: Ciarán's Story: Relationships and the Matter of Consistency

Ciarán has been hosting a student teacher. Today is the last day of the placement and Ciarán is reflecting on the experience. He has some awareness of the extended model of placement and his own role in supporting the student teachers learning because he has read the documentation shared by the college of education. Having participated in this new model he believes that the learning experience really depends on the student teacher. He thinks now, *"The extended activities are fantastic exposure to school life but it's nothing like being in control of your own class; being one hundred percent in charge of teaching and learning."*

Ciarán accepts that for student teachers, the focus is purely on their teaching. *"Their focus on pupil learning is bit and miss."* Student teachers lack skills in differentiation in that they *"teach to the middle and forget the two sides."* For Ciarán, working with student teachers who are less than committed to their own learning is frustrating. He has seen some student teachers who *"put on a show for when the visitor is at the back of the room"* but is very supportive of students who make an honest effort and show an openness to learning.

This leads him to consider the nature of the relationship between the co-operating teacher and the tutor, and indeed between the school and the College of Education. Ciarán is very conscious of linking in with the school placement tutor, though not all tutors ask for his input. His consideration of school placement concludes with his recognition that the extended school placement is not as effective as it could be because 'schools differ'. School life varies across different schools. He maintains that if more 'learning to teach' knowledge was shared with schools by the colleges, it would forge a stronger link with schools and a more consistent school experience across schools.



School Placement: Michaels Story: a Safe Space for Teacher Learning

Thinking about the concept of 'a safe space for teacher learning?', Michael ponders how the school facilitates placement for student teachers. He acknowledges that their school does not host student teachers for formal teaching practice but given the school links with HEIs, they do host PE teachers, student social workers, and B.Ed. students' Alternative Educational Experience in Special Education Settings. Michael is amazed at the sheer numbers they manage to facilitate and concludes that they must be doing a good job because most students that they host "go away happy." Trying to pin down what it is that they learn on placement, Michael thinks, *"Really, it's our modelling that supports their learning. It's not as structured as it should or could be, but I think the way we deal with them does facilitate their learning."* Asking himself what it is they learn he thinks, *"We show them the different styles of learning, we show them differentiation."* Michael firmly believes that differentiation does not mean making things easier: it means making things easier to learn. He believes students on placement also learn empathy, tolerance, and how to be better facilitators of learning. Michael maintains that these are aspects that cannot be learned in college. *"You have to get down and dirty,"* he thinks to himself. *"You have to experience it. Even small things; like trying to teach a person how to cut something in a cookery*

class.”

He recalls a conversation he had with a student teacher on placement where he pointed out the need to understand that pupils have different learning styles. He had asked the student to consider, “*How is the person who has dyspraxia going to do it? How is the person who can’t understand your language? The person who can’t hold a knife properly...?*” The student had replied, “So you’re saying you have to teach things in different ways to different people.” Michael had agreed and said, “*You can’t do that unless you see the people in front of you. You look, you see, and you assess. And then you understand the person who is a visual learner; the person who is a kinaesthetic learner, or this person is an auditory learner.*” Remembering the look on the student’s face, he recognises now that this concept was a little overwhelming for the student. He understands that understanding differing learning styles takes years and years of practice. However, he knows that teachers need to learn this early in their careers and sees it as his role to make time to unpack the learning with personnel on placement with him. “*They need to build a rapport with the pupils,*” he thinks to himself. He believes that the way he builds ‘time to talk’ into the placement supports student teachers learning. He recognises that the pupil review meetings and subsequent action taken to support pupils, facilitates the learning for the placement student. Michael is quite surprised that this reflection on school-based learning has led him to see the level of learning he facilitates and that is facilitated by the wider school community.

Some days, when you’re in the middle of the cloud, you don’t see it, I suppose.” he thinks to himself.



Patrick’s Story: Shifting Attention from Teaching to Learning

Patrick has been hosting a student teacher on extended school placement. He has had considerable experience of hosting student teachers over the years. It is Friday evening now; the last day of placement, and the student teacher has just left the school on her last day. As they prepare to leave the school for the weekend, Patrick and some of his colleagues discuss how they can support student teachers. The conversation takes place in the corridor. They have been in school for over an hour since the children left and they all have paperwork, copies, and such, in various bags and boxes, to take home to continue working as soon as they have fulfilled their family commitments. Patrick opens the conversation by explaining that he has tried to support student teachers over the years; mainly in the area of classroom management. He explains how he guides them, giving them tricks and tips and games to gain and keep the children’s attention. He laments the fact that some of the students are not open to his support.

Fiona, recently qualified, then tries to explain the students’ perspective to her colleagues. “*They really just want to get through the teaching practice. It’s like tunnel vision. They don’t really focus on their own learning, or how to deal with children. A lot of them just want to cross the line. Tick the box!*” John joins the conversation, “*It’s really about building relationships, focusing on the children’s learning rather than their own teaching. They could do this during the observation days, but I wonder how many students really engage properly during the observation days?*” *They should be focusing on the children’s’ learning*”. The fourth teacher, in the group describes how she sometimes has conversations with student teachers where she reviews some lessons; highlighting what went well for them, and how she then goes on to offer something that might make the lesson go better. Patrick and his colleagues all nod in agreement; they have a good understanding of the needs of student teachers and an awareness of the importance of helping them focus on pupil learning rather than just their own teaching. “*Well, last year, I had a student in my room for six weeks. She was a mature student and was very co-operative and open to learning. She was a real help in the class during the observation days,*” remarks Patrick. He goes on to say, “*I think it was a good experience for her and the school placement tutor did talk to me about her, and I was happy to explain how well I thought she was doing.*” They say goodbye and walk to their respective cars. As Patrick and John are walking to the cars they talk about the student teachers with whom they have worked in recent years and both acknowledge that they were really on top of their game. “They really knew where they were going,” John remarks. “Yes,” agrees Patrick.



Shane's Story: Induction - A Deer in the Headlights!

Shane is a member of the middle management team in his school. Responsibility for the induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) is an element of his role. He has invited his colleagues who are interested in supporting NQTs to an informal meeting. They begin by considering the new induction policy recently developed by the Teaching Council (*Droichead* 2017).

Based on the reluctance of many members of the profession to engage with the induction framework there are mixed feelings around the table. Siobhan, Shane's colleague, has all the soundbites from social media: "The principal has to sign off on the performance of the NQT ; "Why should we do the job of the inspectorate?" "We need more time and resources." John, the staff union representative refers to the recent directive from the Union and explains that the directive has been lifted but that there is still some unrest about the induction programme. John informs his colleagues that there will be a special conference to discuss motions in relation to the induction programme.

Meanwhile, Sarah is very quiet. She has recently completed her Masters and has read teacher education policy documents in detail as part of an assignment. She has tried her best to stay silent but eventually feels compelled to speak because of the misinformation swirling around the room. She, and many of her friends, who see the benefits of the induction programme have remained silent for too long. They whisper in corners on professional development days. They speak quietly to presenters about their involvement in *Droichead* the new induction policy. They are afraid to speak out; silenced by those who shout loudest. Sarah finally finds her voice. Her voice shaking; her tears of frustration the result of her passion for the profession and her belief in the new induction programme. The room falls silent, and for a moment the negativity is silenced. Sarah outlines her belief in the induction programme. She explains that the key elements of *Droichead* observation and feedback support NQTs learning over time. She explains due to this, NQTs can focus on their learning and developing professionalism rather than constantly waiting to perform for the Inspector. She explains the value of structured support, of modelling, observation, professional conversations in supporting school-based learning for NQTs.

Another teacher Mary, who underwent *Droichead* as her induction pathway for full registration with the Teaching Council in another school, joins this note of positivity. In a halting voice, and beginning to blush, she quietly explains, "I felt really supported by the teachers and the reflective portfolio which I developed was a great way for me to record my learning. And, really, in the end there was no big drama about signing the form which is necessary for full registration with the Teaching Council." Pausing for breath and encouraged by Shane's facial expression and demeanour, she continues. "I knew where my challenges were, and the professional support team were always on hand to support my learning."

During all this time, Shane has remained silent. He is highly aware that he is the most senior teacher in the room and that his handling of the unfolding conversation will be pivotal as the school moves forward in supporting NQTs through the *Droichead* induction programme. He explains to his colleagues; "*NQTs are like deer in headlights, like I was myself, when you come into a school.*" He goes on to explain that this has changed a lot over the years. He talks about when he qualified and how the goal was to get a permanent job and begin your career as a teacher. He thinks to himself now how young teachers have changed. "*People are dipping in and out of teaching now (he laughs to himself, thinking about the philosopher Buber and his concept of I-it and I-thou relationships!) They're not really investing as much; they are not investing as much in the whole school ethos. They get a job, save some money and then head off to see the world. They're getting through the day (like I did myself I suppose) ... 'I'll amass some money and I'll go away and find myself and I'll come back then.'*"

This however is rooted in the uncertain employment prospects that young teachers experience. Shane remembers a conversation with a friend from college, where they discussed the unequal terms and conditions experienced by young teachers, and the fact that many teachers have found securing long-term employment very difficult. This means they can never put down roots in any school. Perhaps this is why young teachers move around so much and go abroad. He does recognise that things have changed and that at the moment there is a shortage of substitute teachers.

Shane shakes his head, returns his attention to the present and begins to outline his experiences of supporting teachers in the 'beginning to teach' phase or induction as it is now called. He explains to his colleagues, "*The way we're dealing with NQTs has changed. I was always aware of NQTs because I was one myself.*" Explaining about the very challenging DEIS school he had worked in where they were working with children from very challenging socio-economic backgrounds, he tells his colleagues that they had at least five or six newly qualified teachers every year.

Remembering his own beginning to teach days, Shane thinks about how it was all about his performance. He explains, "*NQTs don't want to change the world, they don't want to do anything wrong and it's all about their own*

performance and being a success, so we have to tap into that.” Again, remembering how he was as a young teacher Shane continues, “*With me it was all about what I’m going to teach, not what they’re going to learn.*” Agreeing with him Sarah says, “Yeah you have to recognise there are other people in the class too.” “*You’re right,*” he replies, “*you eventually begin to think, ‘oh right, so he’s not learning the same way as she is learning’, and think they’re learners and rather than me... I’m not a teacher. I’m a facilitator of learning.*” Sarah agrees that “*we have to model for NQTs’ because they think it’s all about themselves.*”

Shane has been teaching for over thirty years and going back to his experience in the early days, in a recently established urban DEIS school, he tries to explain what it was like for beginning teachers. “*I think it was very haphazard. A lot of teachers were at sea and they were flailing around in the water; and some of them were sinking and they weren’t surviving.*” Encouraged by Sarah and Mary nodding, Shane ignores the negative body language from John and he goes on. “*We eventually came together as a group and we did start to support young teachers. I suppose it was mentoring, but we didn’t call it that. We used to meet the young teachers regularly. I was in charge of three.*” Putting this in context, Shane says, “*Bear in mind that this was at least twelve years before the establishment of the National Pilot project for Teacher Induction, (NPPTI). Before induction was recognised as a distinct phase in learning to teach, and before we ever used the word ‘mentoring’ in our talk about learning to teach.*”

Shane realises as he is speaking that he and his colleagues were ahead of their time in this. He realises that they had to come up with something to support their younger colleagues because so many were employed on an annual basis, but also because of the challenging environment and context of the school. He remembers fondly how many of his colleagues at the time had been within one or two years of each other in college.

“*We would have known each other. We were very tight-knit, and we had our own little attitude among the staff. Not a ghetto, but a fort! We were protecting each other. There was safety in numbers. Then when the next crowd of young teachers came, when the school was extended, and we went to four streams of each class, we felt responsible.*”

Returning from his musings on the past, Shane turns to his colleagues and repeats, “*we felt responsible*”. John, from his negative space in the room asks sceptically, “how did you do it?” “*Well,*” *two or three new teachers would be placed close to the more senior teachers, on the same corridor and I’d be up and down all day and they could come into me at any time. Or I’d go in and say ‘how are you getting on today?’, ‘what do you need today?’, and then there’d be a list.*” Listening carefully Mary joins in and explains that ‘the list’ sounds very like the needs analysis and action plan that she worked on with the members of her professional support team at the beginning of the *Droichead* process the previous year. She explains this to Shane.

Encouraged by her input Shane continues, “*We’d meet them then formally once a month, we’d go into cluster groups, where you’d have me, and the Boss or the deputy principal would be with me and the NQT. And we’d go through what they needed. This was important coming up to parent-teacher meetings or events like communion and confirmation or Christmas concerts.*” Sarah interrupts saying, “yes that sounds like how *Droichead* is. Did you talk a lot about planning for teaching and learning?” Shane stops short and thinks. “*No, not really,*” he replies. “*You see at this time, when the Revised Primary Curriculum came in, we had an awful lot of in-service. After two or three years we stopped and then the teachers I had been working with began to support the new teachers who came after them. Then with the New Curriculum we got nine or ten days a year to talk about teaching and learning and the implications of implementing the new curriculum.*”

Getting back to Induction and *Droichead*, Shane wants to review current practice in the school and so he steers the conversation by saying, “*I think we should have a welcome pack; I’ve been saying this for years. A welcome pack for new teachers with all the details: like taking attendance; who the secretary is; procedures for photocopying; where to get paper; how to bring the pupils to the hall. At the moment we could have a teacher who takes over a class and they literally haven’t a clue about what to do next.*” Sarah says, “So you’re talking about ‘procedures and practices?’” John interrupts saying that he thought it was part of Siobhan’s post. “*Siobhan, didn’t you do some qualification or other in mentoring?*” he asks. Siobhan remains silent, but nods her head. She has felt very constrained in developing her role as mentor because of the negativity surrounding *Droichead* to date. Based on her postgraduate studies in Mentoring, Siobhan is aware of the extended understanding of mentoring in the literature where the focus should be on critical co-inquiry leading to new knowledge and understanding about teaching and learning. She thinks of Wang and Odell (2007) and their understanding of mentoring as reform minded practice, the critical constructivist approach to enhancing teacher knowledge. “Don’t go there”, she thinks. “safer to stick to procedures and practices; the apprenticeship approach (Wang and Odell 2007) to mentoring is where her colleagues are at. Her thoughts are confirmed when Shane observes; “*But we need to think about how this filters down into practical stuff for new teachers.*”

Grudgingly, John acknowledges that they do have an informal practice where teachers in each section of the school take responsibility for the new teachers in their section. While conceding this he nonetheless stops short the discussion about *Droichead* by asserting, “Yeah, but we’re **not** doing it, we’re not **allowed** to

do it yet!” Sarah and Mary speak together, enthusiastically outlining that the Directive from the Union has been lifted. Once more Shane attempts to steer the conversation into a positive space in order to circumvent the negativity around what the Teaching Council call “shared professional responsibility” for induction. *“I think it’s a good idea. I think every professional has to have some form of induction, and that the people who are there the longest have to show the ropes to the new people.”* Siobhan sees this statement as confirmation of the apprenticeship approach to mentoring amongst even her senior colleagues. Shane goes on to say, *“It’s a need: a responsibility.”* Muddying the waters once again, John chimes in, *“Now I hear there’s moves afoot for us to do the supervision and assessment or grading for student teachers.”* And again, determined to calm the discussion Shane responds, *“Well, now, I wouldn’t go there. The actual assessment of student teachers has no place, no place for teachers.”*



Anita’s Story: Droichead:

It Could and Should be a Great Thing - “Free *Gratis* and For Nothing!”

Dorothy and Anita are walking to their cars after school. It has been a long busy week and they have just left a staff meeting where the final topic for discussion was the induction of NQTs. Dorothy is anxious to know Anita thoughts on *Droichead*, the new induction policy of the Teaching Council of Ireland, as she has heard a lot of positive things from her daughter’s friends. She asks, “What’s your understanding of the new induction programme, or have you heard about it?”

Anita puts her bag full of books on the ground beside her car and says.

“Well, I’ve heard all the arguments in favour and against, and I have read a lot about it. I think, without meaning to sound cynical, it is the Department’s cost-free solution to the probation of NQTs. Like, you know, asking a Board of Management to run a school. It is the Department’s solution, to run a cost-free way of supporting young teachers.” Dorothy urges Anita to continue.

“I suppose the other side of it is it could, and should, be a great thing, in that it’s a great way to welcome somebody onto a staff. You know, to be there for them, and to teach them in a kind of familial collegial way, the different practices of the school, or the different facets of teaching which somebody can’t learn in college.” Anita continues, *“That said, I think the Department is blackguarding us. Particularly classroom teachers, or even learning support teachers, because of the investment of time. If only to have conversations like you and I are having now. They expect us to do all that in addition to our normal teaching duties, **free gratis and for nothing.**”* Anita pauses for thought.

She elaborates her thoughts now by giving an example from her friend’s school this year. The school is a *Droichead* school but because of the directive from the INTO, they could only engage in ‘school-based induction activities’ like observation of the NQT and reflective conversations afterwards. The school could not engage in the process formally in terms of recommending the NQT to the Teaching Council for full registration. This was to be done by a visiting inspector. Anita’s friend was the mentor teacher and she had a ‘file *that thick*’ outlining the school-based activities which she had organised for the NQT. When the Inspector arrived for her unannounced visit, the mentor teacher endeavoured to share the detailed file of the induction activities and the challenges they had identified and how they had gone about resolving them. Explaining what happened to Dorothy, Anita recounted,

“When introduced to the Inspector, she said, ‘Thank you that will be all.’ “You can imagine Dorothy, that this was very disheartening for my friend, who had done so much work.”

Finally, Anita wonders how principal teachers can be required to recommend teachers for full registration with the Teaching Council, when it has been a function of the Inspectorate for so long. She concludes by saying,

“So much has been foisted on schools and the staffs within them, to be done in a voluntary capacity, that I can see both sides of the argument. But I do think, if the time were made, that it could, and should, work very well.”



Helen’s Story: Droichead - Magic Wand or Lightning Rod?

Helen is a principal teacher. In addition to this she is a part-time Staff Associate of the National Induction Programme for Teachers. (NIPT) In this role she facilitates the workshops which the NIPT run for NQTs and is driving to an Education Centre on the East Coast for facilitator training. She interrupts her journey to catch up with her friend, Dorothy. They have worked together as associates with the NIPT. Helen is looking forward to telling Dorothy about her upcoming move to the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). She worries that she will miss her work with the NIPT and the many colleagues, and

indeed friends, she has made through this work.

The motorway service station is quiet today and they bring their coffee to an empty corner. Talking over each other, they quickly catch up on changes in their personal lives; exchanging stories of a busy Christmas filled with family and friends. Dorothy asks about Helen's new role and observes that there is a light and a brightness in her face which had been absent in recent months and years.

Inevitably the conversation turns to their work with the NIPT and *Droichead*, the new induction policy for teachers. Both are very disappointed with the fact that the Union had issued a directive against engagement with the new policy. Dorothy is aware how the discontent in the profession with the induction policy culminated in this, and also the subsequent negotiations at national level which now means that the directive has been lifted. The policy has been changed and now the NQT declares that they have participated in school-based activities. Members of the PST are no longer required to make a judgment, or 'sign off' on the NQT's eligibility for full registration with the Teaching Council. The way is now clear for schools to participate in the *Droichead* process which includes school-based induction activities.

Helen says, *"It's very disappointing that there isn't a decision made at school level. I think it's a lack to the teaching profession."* Dorothy nods her head gently to encourage Helen to continue. *"My way of looking at it was that this allowed schools to regulate those coming in to teach in their school. So, I mean, if people are going to start complaining in five years' time about the standard of teachers, well, they've lost their opportunity to have their say. For a profession to be self-regulating, this is the step that needed to be taken."*

Helen has spoken publicly in favour of the new induction framework and has felt intimidated by *"certain groups of teachers who wanted to make a name for themselves."* She explains to Dorothy that the atmosphere conjured by this particular group was very negative. Dorothy wonders if events could be considered bullying as she has been approached by teachers on the side-lines of various CPD events who said they were afraid to admit that they were involved in *Droichead* in their schools.

"A golden opportunity lost," sighs Helen. *"A knee jerk reaction to the discontent in industrial relations. Droichead was almost like a magic wand that could be brought into schools if people would open up to it."* They both believe that *Droichead* builds a mentoring culture, which, in turn, influences the culture of teaching and learning in a school. They see the building of professional relationships and openness to learning from peers as another benefit. Helen tells Dorothy that she believes that being involved in the induction of younger colleagues as a mentor and a member of a professional support team provides opportunities for professional growth and development for experienced teachers as *"mentors become involved in management in a caring, pastoral role."* She also asserts that the *Droichead* process gives teachers a voice and structure to support their younger colleagues. *"Mentoring, when it became embedded, stretched to teachers teaching in a substitute capacity. I suppose Droichead created a level of professionalism which has been needed in teaching. Teachers with ten - or fifteen-years' experience who felt unacknowledged within the school because schools are very hierarchical, and not very inclusive, now have a role."* Dorothy wonders whether Helen is thinking back to the pilot programme which preceded *Droichead*. Helen agrees that, *"It allowed people to train up and become a mentor, to get access to readings and information; and establish professional relationships with younger colleagues."*

Helen also acknowledges that becoming involved in mentoring and the development of a mentoring culture in schools gave teachers a language to talk about teaching and learning. Helen explains, *"Mentoring also enhanced curricular learning. It put an onus on people to research their own practice and opened up avenues of interest in other areas."* Dorothy agrees that for her, wise school leaders can enhance opportunities for school-based learning saying, *"when you go with someone's interests and support access to learning opportunities outside the school."* Both Dorothy and Helen agree that mentoring and school self-evaluation were "two empowering tools" which have fallen foul in the industrial relations space.

"I wonder, if we think this because we are so closely involved?" asks Dorothy. Helen replies by recounting her recent experience where an NQT was working towards full registration with the Teaching Council with the inspectorate. She explained how, even though the Union had directed the school not to be involved with *Droichead*, they still provided structured support for the NQT in terms of observation opportunities and feedback. The Inspector was very impressed with the progress of the NQT and acknowledged that the NQT's professional learning had progressed further than peers who were not receiving this school-based support.

Dorothy and Helen get up to leave the motorway services. As they walk to their cars they consider why teachers become so entrenched and resistant to change. Helen blames it on a lack of mobility and/or opportunities for promotion. Citing the Civil Service structure as an instance, Helen explains that teachers should have different levels in their career trajectory, *"That the idea of a little girl going into school at four and not coming out until she's sixty-five is crazy."*

As she gets into her car, Helen acknowledges that the value placed on seniority influences this and that she feels that everyone should have five years “solid teaching experience” before they can apply for other roles in schools, the support services, or teacher education.



Amanda’s Story: The Birth of *Droichead* has been Torturous

Sitting at her desk in the attic room, Amanda is staring out the window at the children playing in the bright sunshine of a May evening. Journal articles and open books are scattered on the floor and she is deep in thought. She is working on the last draft of the final assignment for the course she has been doing: a postgraduate diploma in school leadership called *Toraiocht*. This is a reflective diary which is a log tracing her learning journey during the course. As she re-reads the section on mentoring and school-based teacher learning she considers the national roll-out of the induction policy developed by the Teaching Council.

“It was beginning to grow.” Amanda thinks, *“But why the rush?”* In the past year, the information sessions organised by the NIPT have been oversubscribed. The INTO have recently lifted the directive and the phased roll-out is becoming a reality. This is not without its difficulties. Amanda and her friend Dorothy have been aware of principals and deputy principals meetings organised to discuss the ‘*Droichead* issue’. Clearly *Droichead* is still ‘a lightning rod’ for discontent. Looking again at the reflective journal, Amanda leafs through the pages to re-read the numerous entries which recorded her thoughts on *Droichead*.

I heard that Droichead took a bashing... People are very concerned; I think it’s going to be hugely difficult... It’s a huge undertaking for a school that haven’t had their hand held to this point in terms of mentoring, observation, and reflective practice. It would have happened. The whole self-regulation piece. We were getting to it, but I think, and I know its policy now, but it’s watered down now, because the NQT signs a self-declaration in relation to participation in the process. I would have huge concerns as a profession going forward of who actually signs the form recommending full registration with the Teaching Council. The current model definitely had huge difficulties with it, but there was still the back up (Inspectorate). There was still that external person coming in and saying ‘no, not at the moment’. or, ‘I’m recommending a further period of professional practice’. I think under the initial Droichead proposal where PST members were going to have to sign and say, ‘we recognise that this person is ready to join the profession,’ that had a different element to it, and I don’t even think it was evaluative... That bit is lost; and I suppose, I would be concerned about that.”

Revisiting this reflection through the lens of her long-term involvement in mentoring and other NIPT activities she redrafted her work, now concluding that,

“The richness of the pilot programme has stayed in the schools that were involved but schools who hadn’t engaged in the mentoring process prior to their involvement with Droichead will be at a disadvantage. The process is very new to some schools where there is no history of mentoring and the culture this enables.”

She realises the importance of the establishment of a ‘helpful culture’ which comes with an ‘open door’ and ‘sharing’ culture. She jumps up and scrambles through the articles on the floor as she knows she read something to the same effect somewhere...

Her eyes light on the ESRI research report and she is amazed with the similarity between her own thoughts and the conclusions of this research.

She adds Banks *et al* 2015 to her list of references.



Niamh’s Story: A Shared Learning Experience?

Niamh is very busy. She is a class teacher and having been a mentor to an NQT in her own school the previous year, she has applied for and taken on the role of Associate with the National Induction Programme for teachers (NIPT). She has been thinking about her involvement in induction and her journey to this point, and links this to a recent online tutorial on school-based teacher learning. She thinks now that the teachers who self-select to work with the NIPT have a certain caring stance and that *“the people that I have encountered in this programme are amazing.”*

As an associate with the NIPT, Niamh is on the road quite often. During the next few weeks, she uses the time in the car to reflect on this. Niamh’s train of thought in the car begins like this:

“Droichead very much excited me. We did the professional support team (PST) training and we signed up as a Droichead school. I enjoyed the process and enjoyed working closely with the principal. Of course, the process worked well in our school. There were very few problems because of the NQT we had and the fact that she had been in the school for some time and lots of the initial mentoring had been done. The NQT was a fabulous teacher and was already established in her role”.

Her thoughts continue...

*“My colleagues always supported our NQTs particularly the teachers whose classrooms were close to the NQT. Because I have undertaken the PST training, I see now that there was still a lot that was **not** happening. Though I was very enthusiastic about Droichead and my colleagues were supportive of NQTs, several of my colleagues were reluctant to get formally involved in school-based induction activities. What a pity that we had to work with only two members on the PST rather than three because of this. I suppose the other teachers didn’t want to leave their classrooms. They were under huge pressure with other things, especially with the new planning templates which were recommended following an incidental visit from the Inspector and the roll-out of the New Primary Language Curriculum. Not to mention, School Self-Evaluation! I suppose, they didn’t really understand Droichead and the fact that there was confusion about the evaluative element didn’t help”.*

She thinks about the tutorial and the concept of school-based learning and about learning from shared experience: *For me mentoring is really a sharing of ideas. I don’t think it should be bureaucratic with an over-reliance on paperwork. It is support, not evaluation. For me, I believe that Droichead can build a culture of mentoring and this can have a ripple effect. Though this didn’t really happen in our school, the staff left me to it, and we didn’t really discuss it in the staffroom. I really felt I had to play it down, as I was working closely with the principal, and I was conscious of ‘going above my station’.* Sighing now she thinks:

“Well, nothing ever stays the same. Even though Droichead placed induction and mentoring in a formal space in the school as a landscape for learning, there was that vote! The directive imposed by the Union meant that no union member could engage with the Droichead process. I really hope that the informal mentoring where I acted more like a supportive colleague’ for the NQT will ensure that the expected inspectors visit will go well. It was so much more difficult to arrange observation for the NQT because colleagues misunderstood the approach I was taking, in terms of an informal induction for the NQT with no evaluation. There was a lot of resistance.

If the directive wasn’t bad enough, the severe shortage of substitute teachers meant that it was very difficult to arrange release time for the NQT or for myself. I had to depend on the goodwill of colleagues and this was very difficult because of the negativity around Droichead, the directive and overload issues in relation to the new planning, the Primary Language curriculum and School Self-Evaluation. I am truly amazed that the teachers are still so supportive of our NQTs. I suppose this happens because many of my colleagues are so caring.”

This reminds Niamh of a conversation with her friend, Dorothy, and how their discussions had led them to believe that for many teachers caring is at the core of teachers knowing in their landscape of practice.

“Hab!”, she thinks now, *‘I will have a lot to say on the online discussion forum next week,’* just as her car pulls into the Education Centre carpark. Before gathering her bag, books and laptop for the meeting she waits a moment for her thoughts to settle and she recognises that she is still very enthusiastic about the induction policy: *“I still think it’s great. Signing the form for full registration to the Teaching Council for the NQT wasn’t a big deal for me. I still wonder about the drama around the evaluation. The change from recommendation by the professional support team to a declaration by the NQT has eased the concerns of many teachers, but I still feel that some form of evaluation or sign-off should form part of the process.”* As she walks in the front door of the Education Centre, she sees the by now familiar faces of her colleagues in the NIPT and accepts that being able to make a hard call is part of being a professional.



Niamh’s Story: From Teacher to Mentor Teacher - Questioning Yourself!

Niamh is tackling her last tasks for the day. It is late evening and she is trying to clear her list before taking an hour or two to relax. She hopes she will be finished her work by 9p.m. at the latest. As a trained mentor, her principal had approached her and asked her if she would undertake Initial Mentor training (IMT). This was during the initial pilot phase when the induction programme was called The National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI) and IMT was undertaken over four days. She had jumped at the chance as she had been teaching for seven years, and although she knew she wasn’t ‘finished in the classroom’, she felt she needed something more.

Niamh believes that the model in place at that time was very supportive as there was also professional development provided for mentors each year and this provided a safe space for professional conversations about the challenge of mentoring. She is responding to her colleague, Dorothy’s email question about their shared experience of school-based induction and the NIPT.

She begins, *“At the time there was huge help and support there.”* Niamh goes on to outline how the first year after she received professional development, she had the opportunity to mentor an NQT in her school. Niamh explains to Dorothy that an ‘open door culture’ and a sharing of practice already existed in her school and that this ensured there was a willingness and openness amongst her colleagues for induction activities.

They were open in providing observation opportunities for NQTs and engaging in professional conversations about their practice. She goes on to say, *“I think for a school that hadn’t engaged in the mentoring process, well, say, before Droichead, I think that was something they missed out on; the establishment of that ‘helpful culture’... that sharing.”* She recalls now that during one particular school year, she had three NQTs. She explains now that she found it interesting and challenging and that she believes that success is highly dependent on the personal relationship built up with the NQT. *“It can be tiring; a lot of work goes on in the background. One year I had three NQTs. I thought I would never get to June.”*

Dorothy had asked Niamh about the influence being a mentor had her own practice and learning. Niamh explains in the email that mentoring a colleague really makes you reflect on yourself. *“Oh, it influenced me hugely: what you get to see; to reflect on yourself. You think, ‘I’m going in to co-teach now’. I never looked at myself to see how I do it. You wonder about your classroom management style. You consider how you work with someone closely. How do I take on the co-teacher role as opposed to the lead teacher role? It also made me question, question myself: question the way we do things and question policy?”*

Niamh rereads the email and decides she is happy with her response to Dorothy. She presses send and finally shuts her computer down for the evening.



Seamus’ Story: A Professional Conversation: Thoughts of an NIPT Associate

In order to continue as an associate with the NIPT, Seamus must participate in a performance review. Euphemistically known as a ‘professional conversation’ within the NIPT, this is an opportunity for associates to revisit their work for the year and provide feedback to the organisation.

Seamus and Dorothy have met before school to share experiences and prepare for their individual professional conversations. One of his particular responsibilities is to carry out non-Droichead school support visits. He visits schools who are not yet participating in Droichead to provide support for NQTs and to provide guidance for the school as to how they can do so. Dorothy asks him, *“Do you get a surprise sometimes when you go into schools?”* Seamus replies, *“Yes. You forget that not every normal is the same as your normal. You go in and you think, ‘Gosh, this person is really on their own in the room!’. In fairness to principals and staff members, they’re so supportive. But again, it comes down to the training. If you haven’t had the training on how to be a mentor; how to build up the relationship; how to deal with a difficult conversation; how to get into somebody’s room; then you may be floundering in the dark.”*

Silent for a moment, they both think about the changes in the level of mentor development available in the current model. Both have reservations about the limited mentor development now included in PST professional development. Both are concerned that the emphasis will be more on the process of induction rather than on the personal and professional development of the NQT. Both recognise that in the early years of induction, in the course of the initial pilot project, the NQT was very much at the centre of all endeavours. *“I know I’m privileged to be in the position I’m in. To get to see colleagues and other members of the profession in their schools. It’s given me an opportunity to question, to research. But I sometimes wonder if I’m one of that small percentage of people who do engage long term in professional learning”.*

Returning to the topic of non-Droichead school visits, Seamus explains, *“You have experiences where you go to a school and you can ‘bring the horse to water, but you can’t make it drink’. Staff are so supportive. They’re doing their best to get things moving in the right way for the NQT and... It’s just not working for them. Then you’ll have other situations where there’s no support and probably through no fault of the schools but just... there you are, you’re in charge of the children in this room, off you go’. That’s still happening.”*

He explains that many NQTs find themselves without suitable support in difficult situations and that their default position is to teach the way they have been taught. *“Ahhh”,* replies Dorothy, *“the apprenticeship of observation!”* This moves the conversation to a consideration of the new model of Droichead (Teaching Council March 2017). This final model was altered to appease the Union following the yearlong directive. Seamus says *“The new model of Droichead, where the evaluation piece is gone completely - that is one of my fears. That it won’t happen that the support won’t happen to the same extent. If you’re going to sign on the dotted line you will make sure. I know it’s probably a little cynical, but if I have to sign on the dotted line...”*

The conversation continues in this vein and they consider the whole concept of the conclusion of the Droichead process which some consider to be ‘signing off’ on the NQT. As both Seamus and Dorothy have been involved in mentoring at school level, they understand that an NQT going through school-based

induction activities as part of the *Droichead* process will be very aware of how they are progressing. The concept of ‘no surprises’ throughout, but particularly at the end of the process is clearly understood by them. As the bell rings for the start of another school day Seamus concludes,

“I suppose a very cynical part of me wonders how much learning will actually be involved if you’re taking the accountability part away from schools. I know they’re still, saying ‘you have engaged in x and y,’ but that whole Your career is not dependent on me signing this, but I’ll just sign it anyway to say you were here as opposed to you were at ‘A’ when you came and we moved you to ‘B’, or we moved you to ‘E’, but we took you on a journey.”



Dorothy Speaks...again:

I have returned to speak with you a second time in this chapter to consider the quest of our journey together. I remind you now that this was to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the light in the hope that we might together come to know subjective insights and understandings of experiences in relation to school-based teacher education rooted in the site of policy enactment, the school. The consideration of knowledge and truth which is an element of the interpretive bricolage leads me to say that I understand that the knowledge produced through engaging with the stories is individual, contextual and always in process (Craig 2017).

What have you come to know? What new understandings do you have about teachers’ experiences of school-based teacher learning and the influence of the current policy context on this?

I wonder about relationships: relationships between providers of initial teacher education and schools; between school placement tutors and co-operating teachers; between NQTs and mentors. This leads me to think about I-thou and I-it relationship (Buber) and the space and time required to build relationships which support school-based teacher learning with imagination and creativity. The stories lead me to wonder about the importance of communication in relation to school-based teacher learning and clarity around the new roles articulated in teacher education policy (Teaching Council 2013). The interpretative bricolage which I offer leads me to believe that this should ideally take place in a democratic manner through dialogue. I remember Freire’s question, “How can I dialogue if I am closed to – and even offended by ... the contribution of others (Freire 1970 p.71).

I think about power: the power of societal institutions; and their effect on the stories of teaching which are lived out in teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes. The stories create anxieties that the influence of the Pied Piper of neoliberalism is gaining ground and that the concepts of accountability and performativity and associated emphasis on procedures and processes may reduce school-based teacher learning to a technical activity. Could this be a form of moral violence (Santoro 2017) as teachers are not afforded the power to voice their experience of policy which may never be known by policy makers (ibid).

I ask you now: Is there a move towards a focus on meeting requirements rather than a focus on the formation and transformation of the person’ of our young teachers? (Biesta 2013)

I ask you now: What do the stories say to you about this?

CHAPTER 12: TEACHER LEARNING

Dorothy Speaks:

The following 'stories from school' tell us how teachers view their own learning. The stories explore the third phase in the continuum of teacher education; 'in-career professional learning.' Formerly called 'continuing professional development' this changed to 'teachers' learning' in the current Cosán policy context (Teaching Council 2016).

As you come to know the stories you may consider their relevance in terms of building new understanding of teachers' thoughts on their own learning and how this impacts on their professional knowledge landscapes, their sense of 'the self who teaches', their stories to live by (Clandinin and Connelly) and their sense of agency in shaping their work and conditions (Biesta et al 2015)

You might also consider what the stories tell us about teachers' understanding of how and where their learning takes place and identify incidents where they use their imagination and creativity to create their own learning opportunities. Since the interpretative bricolage which I represent points to the importance of relationships, democracy, care and dialogue in ensuring that schools are safe spaces for teacher learning, you may consider whether the stories indicate that school-based teacher learning is also a possibility for teachers in this stage of the continuum of teacher education (Teaching Council 2011). Moreover, issues of power and control in terms of what topics are valued by societal institutions may also come to light as you engage with the stories.



Margaret's Story: Teacher Learning and Curriculum Change

The summer holidays have begun. It is the first Monday in July and Margaret's head is still in a spin after the madness of last week of term. Like many teachers around the country she is beginning her summer professional development course today. She is sitting with some teachers in the local Education Centre and they are discussing the guidelines for the summer courses set by the Department of Education and Skills. The topics of Literacy, Numeracy and School Self-Evaluation must be addressed in all summer courses for Primary teachers. "*Literacy and numeracy and school self-evaluation in a summer course on Irish heritage? Seriously?*" Margaret thinks to herself.

In the course of the first morning, as the facilitator attempts to include these in the morning's work, the conversation inevitably turns to the New Primary Language Curriculum. The teachers on the course echo what Margaret has felt and heard from her colleagues. Her friends, Linda and Jane, have voiced the same frustrations to her throughout the school year: frustration about the lack of consultation, limited piloting; and the extensive planning required.

Margaret notes that she is the eldest on the course 'by a longshot'. On hearing talk about the limited professional development and plans to limit this CPD further, she launches into the debate; "*The revised curriculum?*"; the 1999 primary school curriculum. One of the participants attempting to pre-empt Margaret's soliloquy says, "Yes, but that curriculum was child-centred wasn't it?" Margaret nods in agreement but questions how student teachers, educated in settings of 400 students to one lecturer could possibly be learning how to facilitate child-centred education. She admits, "*I found the new curriculum (1999) very challenging. It gave children a level of freedom for which I was not trained. The resources, money and equipment to implement it were not*

there.” Running out of steam now and feeling she has said too much, Margaret decides to remain quiet for the remainder of the morning. She tunes in and out of the conversation of the young teachers as they discuss the New Primary Language curriculum. Margaret has seen so many changes and her thoughts lead her to recognise that

“The whole thing is a series of contradictions really; we never embraced the curriculum to the same extent as other schools. Now the whole thing has come full circle. Now we’re flavour of the month with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and turning children away from our school. That’s why we have classes in every available space in the school.”

This brings Margaret back to thoughts of her own school. She wonders if the new school will be ready for September. Conscious that the summer break will end all too soon she vows to make the most of her summer holidays.



Michael’s Story: Distributed Leadership/Leading Learning

In the ‘austerity Ireland’ of 2008 the Government placed a moratorium on teacher promotion to the middle and senior management positions which are considered to be essential to effective leadership in schools. At the same time, as a result of PISA 2009, the DES decided to develop and implement a range of policies at school level. These included curriculum reform, School Self-Evaluation and the literacy and numeracy strategy.

Michael’s school, like every school in the country, had therefore lost a raft of middle management positions. At the time, *“the Boss trawled the corridors of power and gained a concessionary post for the school”* and Michael was appointed to the post of assistant principal and assumed responsibility for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) throughout the school; *“I get Croke Park time for SPHE, where I can work with staff.”* He works with all the staff and they utilise a cluster structure for meetings.

“We practice the stuff in clusters. We split the SPHE curriculum into sections and we bombard the children with emotional literacy: emotional resilience and anger management at the start of the year; and then we do a well-being week at the end of the year.”

When Michael is leading cluster meetings or supporting his colleagues in developing their practice, he likes to think that his colleagues can share the knowledge and expertise they bring. He hopes he is creating a ‘safe space for teacher learning’ in his school. Michael has a formal leadership role in his school, but he is not ‘the Boss’. With strong views and convictions about his own approach to leading teaching and learning in the school he realizes there is a mismatch between his approach and the values, priorities, and leadership style of his principal.

Well-being is now a priority learning area at policy level. Michael wonders whether this is a ground-up or top down development because he has always made decisions, and gone along with programmes and initiatives, based on the needs of the pupils in his care. He remembers back to earlier in his career, in the early years of the new century, when the revised primary school curriculum was being implemented on a phased basis, when teachers in his school felt *“fairly isolated, we were ploughing a lonely furrow, looking for ideas, looking for help and it wasn’t really out there.”*

He recognises a prevailing disconnect between policy and his particular school context throughout his career. His guiding light has always been the needs of the pupils; hence his commitment to drama, pupil well-being, and resilience through the SPHE initiatives he leads in his school.

Michael and his colleagues take a whole school approach, where *“everyone goes off to their class and does different programmes, like friends for life and the anger management programme ‘stamp’. Then we hit bullying and cyber bullying...because we take a whole school approach and compartmentalise the themes, its working at the moment.”*

The cluster group arrangement facilitates this ‘safe space for teacher learning’. The small groups offer NQTs, teachers who are new to the school, and shyer teachers with expertise, a safe forum to speak. He recognises that, *“new teachers voices are often lost in the big group, because ‘the Boss’ will come in... and talk about where cars are parked, or Health and Safety. So there’s all this housekeeping stuff done first; and housekeeping can often take over.”* His thoughts then turn to his colleagues and he wonders if and how their learning is facilitated at school level. He hopes that the longer times allocated for the small group cluster sessions at staff meetings will afford richer opportunities for teacher learning. He believes that colleagues who have attended off-site sessions for professional development share this learning by presenting to the staff supports teacher learning. Acknowledging that they work on both policies and on curricular areas, he wonders about the level of learning this supports and thinks to himself, *“If only ‘the Boss’ would loosen his hold. If he could hear the ‘voice’ of the staff...”* Of course, staff meetings are taken up with the ‘nuts and bolts’ a lot of the time. He remembers the lengthy discussion around organisation for the graduation during the previous staff meeting

and thinks to himself that sometimes there is no place at staff meetings for teacher learning. Michael wonders when and if the powers that be, the policy-makers and the DES, will come to understand the value of time during the school day to facilitate professional collaboration for teacher learning. This leads him to think of School Self-Evaluation and he wonders if they will ever get to it, both in terms of the industrial relations space (there was a directive in place against co-operation from the teacher union) and in terms of having time to engage in the process in a meaningful way.

A way that will genuinely support school improvement and teacher learning rather than a 'box-ticking' exercise.



Sheila's Story: Learning in the landscape of practice

Teacher Networks or a Cup of Coffee? - "Every Day Teaches You Something; It's Not Over"

Sheila has made the most of the summer break. Along with prioritising the usual household tasks which as always are held over to the summer during the busy school year, Sheila has made time for family and friends. Now in the final week before she returns to school the week before her colleagues, she and her husband Pádraig have taken their annual break to the County Wexford town where they go each year to enjoy the local Opera Festival.

Relaxed and with the applause that greeted the end of the opera ringing in their ears, they walk back to their little rented cottage. Silent now, they are both aware that thoughts of school are gaining attention in their minds. On reaching the cottage they open the nice bottle of red they have been saving for the last evening of the break and the conversation about school begins; haltingly at first. Neither really wants to go there, but both realise it is inevitable. So, in the glimmering candlelight in a small cottage in County Wexford the re-entry to reality begins... gently at first.

Sheila is the first to speak and begins by talking about her first year in her new role as deputy principal of a very large urban school. *"I suppose I learned most this year from connecting with others"*. Pádraig nods in agreement: he knows that Sheila has had huge support from other teachers in the same role as herself. They have been very generous with their time and advice, sharing documents, policies, and the like. Pádraig also knows that Sheila has been equally generous in sharing her knowledge and expertise with them, though he can hear what Sheila would say to this, *"But sure, what would you have to give them says you?"* He smiles at this thought, recognising that experienced teachers have a lot of knowledge and expertise to share with each other and how important networks are for teacher learning, both formal and informal. He remembers now that in addition to the support of her network of colleagues in the same role, Sheila undertook a professional development course to prepare for her new role.

As if hearing his thoughts, Sheila continues *"I enjoyed the course, I enjoyed the fact that I had to travel to attend the course and that this meant being away from home. Remember I stayed with the girls from college? - a different one every evening. Of course, I learned more during the social time talking to other teachers than at the workshops. I have always found that the best teacher learning happens in someone's house over a cup of coffee"*

Over the summer holidays, with space and time to think Sheila has come to an important realisation *"I have relished my new role"* Sheila tells Pádraig now. *"I love it. I have had new opportunities to grow and learn as a person."* Pádraig smiles wryly. He is glad that Sheila feels like this despite the challenges of her new role in terms of negotiating with the other members of the senior management team in the school. They have enjoyed the chat, their glass of wine, and the time to reflect. As they tidy up Sheila says; *"Every day teaches you something. It's not over!"*

The next morning Pádraig and Sheila rise early, pack their suitcases, and begin their journey home. Pádraig has been taken with the conversation of the previous evening and begins to ponder how he, as a principal might support the learning of his colleagues in the next school year. Because of this they continue their conversation about learning as they wind their way home, taking the scenic route and stopping for a leisurely lunch. Since he would like to support the professional development of his colleagues, Pádraig wonders about opportunities for school-based teacher learning and so he asks Sheila, "So do you think there are opportunities for teacher learning, you know, in the building, with colleagues?"

Thinking for a moment, Sheila answers, *"When groups of teachers get together to work on a project with a group of children like St. Patrick's Day or the Confirmation, I think an awful lot of learning goes on there. Like when the infant teachers were working preparing for St. Patrick's day, I learnt how best to deal with infant children by watching them. New teachers observe and absorb the culture by working in groups, and by culture, I mean 'the way things are done around here.'"*

Sheila continues, “The traditional way of being a teacher, where you close the door of your classroom and have nobody to reflect back your practice, there is no reflection, no mirror and you think you’re doing very well you think you’re marvellous. ... And maybe you’re not.” Sheila then acknowledges the reciprocal nature of school-based teacher learning, “We learn a lot from younger teachers too. They bring ideas from other schools, and we can learn from them. I think so much learning goes on whenever there are three or four or more teachers working together. We worked on several projects where teachers were learning together. When we really had to zone in on the Oral language, we divided into teams according to class levels. This meant there were eight teachers working together. They were able to plan and co-ordinate each class level and this was then co-ordinated at whole school level. I’ve seen great school learning from that; great collegiality built up and great relationships on staff. That’s why I love the size of my school: there’s so much talent; so many ideas; so much new blood”. This conversation, which began over lunch has continued in the car as they drove home. Approaching the city now, the traffic is building up, Sheila needs to concentrate on driving. And so, they continue their journey through the city in silence: each processing their own thoughts about their conversation; about how teachers learn best; and how they might develop this in the forthcoming school year.



Catherine’s Story: Teaching - An Organic Endeavour

It’s six am. Catherine is struggling to leave the house quietly: an impossible task when trying to juggle a laptop, briefcase, and her suitcase. The door slams behind her, and for a second, she worries about her sleeping family. But only for a second...

Then, she looks to the future.

The closing of a door.

Journeying to a door which has gently opened before her.

Catherine is driving to the Education Centre in Dublin where she will begin her new role providing professional development for the New Primary Language Curriculum. Once on the motorway she sets the cruise control and allows herself to relax a little. Thinking of the new experience opening up before her, she wonders whether the professional development for her new role will be a positive experience. As her previous experiences with the NIPT have been very positive she is open to and excited about this new learning opportunity.

She ponders her experiences of teacher learning to date. Catherine was both a teacher and principal teacher during the implementation phase of the 1999 Revised Curriculum. She recognises that there was considerable investment in the roll-out of this curriculum, with in-service for whole staffs and school closures to facilitate changes in practice. However, Catherine’s personal opinion is that the roll-out was not as successful as some believe, because she questions if changes in practice really became embedded in schools across the system. She wouldn’t share this thought with many, but her lived experience leads her to believe that even some of those working in the support services at the time would share her opinion. She also believes that the School Development Planning Service (SDPS) which followed, focused more on paperwork than practice, and as a result the profession became more focused on red-tape rather than changing practice. She remembers something she read in an OECD TALIS report which concluded that in Ireland the emphasis was still very much on the transmission model of education rather than transformative, with a focus on active learning. She hopes that her work on the New Primary language curriculum will be different, thinking that, *‘Sustained support makes a huge difference and explicit programmes like Building Bridges for understanding really have an impact on teaching and learning in schools.’*

As a result of her experience as a school leader, Catherine firmly believes that school-based CPD is most effective and needs to be supported by outside tutors who advance sustained learning. She considers the cascade model where one or two teachers from a school attend in service at an outside venue in the hope of sharing the knowledge with colleagues on return to school. This has become very popular with the DES as a result of recent financial constraints but in order for it to work Catherine maintains there must be a core group of likeminded people at school level.

Thinking now about the various policy initiatives of recent years, Catherine can discern a sense of coherency, a better dovetailing of policy change.

Laughing aloud, she wonders if this is due to the multiple roles she has fulfilled: her multiple selves.



Máire's Story: Practical Experience and a Working Lunch

The scene is a tutorial room in the College of Education. Newly built, it is bright and airy and conducive to teacher learning. For this tutorial, the teachers undertaking the M.Ed. have been tasked with considering their opportunities for school-based teacher learning. Following a long, thoughtful silence Máire is the first to speak, and as always, she seeks clarification about the topic under discussion. She asks if the tutor means the 'workshops and courses run by facilitators at school for Croke park hours'. 'Croke park hours' are the extra hours imposed on teachers as part of a productivity pay deal in austerity Ireland, and everyone in the group is aware of the negativity around them. However, they agree that these have now become part of the landscape of a teacher's life and that sometimes they are a useful solution to the perennial problem of sufficient time to engage in professional activities that go beyond in-class teaching. Máire explains to the group that "*you take in a lot*" during these events in school and that "*some things transfer*" into practice. Another member of the class, Clare, explains that she sees the value of CPD, but feels it needs to be more based on teachers' needs. She argues that matching CPD to teacher needs ensures that more learning transfers. Máire nods and says, "*knowledge is power!*" The tutor clarifies that she would like them to think about their opportunities to learn at school with and from each other.

"Experience," adds Jane. "I am definitely learning from experience." Jane elaborates that she learns from experience with colleagues, parents, pupils with special educational needs, and interacting with a new principal. Máire enlarges further on this, confirming, "*For me, the biggest part of school-based learning is experience...putting things into practice.*" The tutor is smiling and pleased with this exchange as it is paving the way for the module in the second semester on practice-based action research. She urges the group to reflect on the value of learning from shared experiences and asks that they reflect on how, when and where this might happen for next week's tutorial.



Máire's Story: Every Day is a Working Lunch!

Following this conversation, in the staffroom the next day, Máire initiates a conversation with her colleagues about the new framework for teachers' learning, *Cosán*, which has recently been published by the Teaching Council. They begin by thinking about the professional development which was provided by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme in the early years of the twenty-first century. Almost seventeen years ago. Many of the staff lament those days and the opportunities they had to work together to tease out the new methodologies and ideas in the curriculum. Rosie remains silent for much of this conversation. She was on career break and maternity leave for much of this time, and on returning to school CPD to support her in upskilling had been unavailable. The system didn't facilitate upskilling for teachers who had been on approved leave. The conversation turns to the very much reduced CPD which is offered now for many initiatives. Very frequently, only one member of staff is invited to attend, for possibly a half day, without substitute cover. There is widespread agreement around the table that the so-called cascade model of CPD does not work as there is no free time in school to share the learning even at after school meetings during Croke park hours. In Máire's school most of these sessions are used to develop and agree school policies and the principal drives this as she needs the 'boxes ticked' in terms of the school plan.

As the bell rings and Máire and her colleagues get up to leave, Rosie observes, "*Every day is a working lunch!*" Her colleagues are taken aback as she has been silent for most of their conversation, "Yes," Máire agrees, "we learn from each other like this. Around the staff room table during our lunch breaks."



John's Story: External Professional Development: Time and Cascade John is undertaking a postgraduate course in school leadership called '*Toraiocht*' and has read the recently published *Cosán* policy (Teaching Council 2016), he is now reviewing the many entries written in his reflective learning log in relation to this new framework for teachers learning. In his reflective journal he has explored this teacher learning further by considering the provision of CPD external to the school.

Literacy is my main area of interest... I can see the most amazing initiatives coming from DEIS schools: literacy lift-off, Mata sa Rang; reading recovery. But it's very difficult to get an entire staff to go to in-service for five Tuesdays in a row in the Education Centre. So there's a point when there's only a few trained but there's quite a number of staff implementing it...and there's 'that bit' that's lost when it's second-hand information.

*The cascade model...it **doesn't work!***

*Because If I go to the in-service, I take my interpretation of it, and now... This is what's being implemented in my school because it's **my** interpretation of it...it's filtered through me. Thinking of literacy lift-off, I have had the CPD but it's the class teacher who drives it. Then when I go into a class and the class teacher hasn't been to the training ...they're looking at me.....It's very difficult when you get to a stage when you're the only person in the room who is actually trained. I suppose three members of staff could go to a summer course and they could come back with the knowledge...Take the Comprehension programme, 'Building Bridges for Understanding'. There's fabulous theory; fabulous practice. But unless you actually see it - a good model of it - it's very hard to have something to hang on to. It's like the language curriculum, which is coming our way. Fabulous ideas! But as someone said to me last week, 'do they honestly think someone is going to go home and watch hours and hours of exemplars on video?'*

*"It's that whole **time** piece again!"* thinks John as he reviews his reflective diary for the final summative entry in his learning log. He records that he has identified 'time' as a major issue for teacher learning. His reflections also identify engagement as an important factor for teacher learning, and he concludes that levels of engagement are influenced by personal interests and motivation to learn about something.



CHAPTER 13: SACRED, SECRET, AND COVER STORIES

Dorothy Speaks:

In the stories which follow we come to know the interface or connection between the interpretative bricolage and the theoretical bricolage. The central element of the theoretical bricolage is the idea of the teachers' professional knowledge landscapes.

To reiterate: teachers' professional knowledge landscapes are "composed of relationships among people, places and things" (Clandinin and Connelly 1995, p. 5) in a synthesis of "individual teacher knowledge, the working landscape and the ways this landscape relates to public policy and theory" (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p.24).

Engaging with the stories may guide you to new insights and understandings of the theory-practice relationship at the site of practice.

The metaphors of a conduit and a funnel are used to convey how policy arrives at the site of practice. (1.7.1) Policy poured or funnelled into schools impacts teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. This leads us to understand that teachers' stories lived out on their professional knowledge landscape have the qualities of sacred, secret and cover stories (Clandinin and Connolly 1995,1996).

Sacred stories are policy stories. As such, they are "theory driven views of practice shared by practitioners, policy makers and theoreticians" (Clandinin and Connelly 1996, p.25) In this way, policy, as a rhetoric of conclusions becomes the 'sacred stories' on the professional knowledge landscape.

Secret stories are stories of practice which take place in teachers' classrooms.

Cover stories are the stories which teachers construct in the public communal spaces in schools in order to reconcile the moral and epistemological dilemmas created between policy and practice.

The stories which follow provide us with examples of teachers' secret and cover stories and how these are impacted by current sacred stories.

Policy in the Landscape of Practice: Sacred, Secret, or Cover Stories?

Sacred stories.

The drive-by:
the dreaded incidental!

Purely, absolutely, exhausted

Planning...fulfilling sacred stories;
Building cover stories;
Hiding secret stories.

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.

New Primary language curriculum.

What consultation?
Five pull-out pages?
Teachers overwhelmed.
It's easy to fall behind...

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.

Managing paperwork,
the immediacy of the classroom
Teachers overwhelmed.
It's easy to fall behind.
School until five o'clock in the evening...

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.

Accountability.

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.
No matter about improvement in teaching and learning.
Accountability.,
No matter if teachers are overwhelmed ...

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.

Cover stories.

Creative compliance.
Multiple performance scripts.
No matter that teachers are overwhelmed,

Purely, absolutely, exhausted.

Secret stories...

Purely. Absolutely. Exhausted!



Cora's Story: Teacher Learning and System Change

Cora has been sharing secret stories of teaching with some of her colleagues in the Teacher Professional Development support service where she has worked for several years. They have been discussing *Droichead* again: considering the phased implementation of the final Droichead policy. Many feel that allowing more time for Droichead to grow prior to it being mandatory would have created the opportunity for a system-wide mentoring culture to develop.

"The minister has too much power in policy-making. Policy-making, and policy implementation have to dovetail; and time for development at school level has to be facilitated. There's a breakdown in these areas. Droichead has fallen foul of that. And other initiatives we've seen over the years, have fallen foul as well."

Cora continues. *"I think it should have been given another five years before it was made mandatory, I think the sudden, misguided roll-out happened because of budget considerations."* Her colleagues nod in agreement: they are aware that financial considerations influence other teacher support services. "What about time?" a member of the

group asks.

“Yes,” answers Cora, “time is needed in people-based organisations to facilitate a change in ways of working in the culture of organisations.”

Mary, another colleague, speaks up for the first time in the conversation. “Teachers are the bridge” (they all laugh at the pun...another bridge, *Droichead eile!*) “Placing teachers at the centre; honouring teachers as the knowers in the policy space would bridge the space between policy development and implementation.” Mary continues, “The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have three different consultation processes being conducted at the moment. We are trying to inform teachers at the workshops we are facilitating but many teachers are completely ignorant of the consultation on structure and time or the new Primary maths curriculum.” Cora responds,

“The NCCA should be physically arriving into schools. Face-to-face communication would be very respectful of teachers in their role: they would get huge goodwill back.”

“Yes,” agrees Mary “just like we have been told to acknowledge the experience and expertise in a room of teachers when we are facilitating CPD...I suppose for policy implementation to happen and lead to meaningful change policy-makers have to acknowledge the experience that’s out there. The NCCA should acknowledge that experience of teachers through face-to face interaction.”



Sarah’s Secret Story: The Magic of ‘Flow’



‘La Jument’ by Jean Guichard

Sarah has been teaching for over twenty years. She and Dorothy have been friends on many levels for a long time and Sarah really enjoys meeting Dorothy. They have just finished an exercise class which they attend together and are chatting in the empty changing room. The conversation inevitably turns to teaching. Dorothy enquires how the school year is going for Sarah. This year has been good for Sarah. She explains “It depends on the group of children you have in front of you.” “The dynamics in the class,” as Dorothy put it. Sarah agrees,

“I would say every day so far this year that I have walked into the classroom, I have felt, ‘oh my god, ye’re great’ They’re great. I have a super bunch of children who work well together. Now there’s obviously little niggles, but I go in everyday thinking,

'This is great. Let's get going' and they all work and co-operate. Whereas I have had other years, when I've walked in the door and thought, 'Okay! I just want to walk home again.'

Dorothy wonders if this means Sarah is happy in school this year. She knows that other years have been difficult for Sarah, particularly because, like many teachers she is so conscientious and wants to do her absolute best for her students. Sarah confirms that she is happy because she feels there is no child making undue demands of her in terms of challenging behaviour. They both agree that in a class of twenty-seven it is very difficult to give any child individual attention. Sarah admits, *"it's still hard to get around to them and they don't understand, but you do your best."* Doing your best and always feeling that you will never be good enough is a recurring theme in Dorothy and Sarah's conversations.

Dorothy asks Sarah if there was ever a time when she felt she and the children had a really memorable learning experience. Sarah breaks into a warm smile as she begins to describe a recent learning experience: a 'secret story of teaching' which she has lived out in her classroom with the children. She explains that they had gone on an excursion and while she was waiting for the children to finish using the bathrooms before they returned to the bus, Sarah noticed photographs on the wall of the hotel. The children joined her, and they began talking about the photographs which showed lighthouses with waves surging around them.

Sarah goes on to explain that *"When we got back to school and the children were eating their lunches I looked up the photographer, Jean Guichard. It turned out that the photograph was of the last manned lighthouse in the world. In the photograph you can see the lighthouse keeper standing at the door and in the next photo the waves are surging around. And you don't know if the lighthouse keeper was safe or not."* Sarah explains that she was very relieved when she researched further and could confirm for the children that he was indeed safe and that he had simply closed the door. Sarah is distracted by a call on her mobile phone. While she takes the call Dorothy, looks at the photographs online. She can't help thinking, *"That's what we need to do... we need to just close the door to save ourselves from drowning."*

Dorothy sees the photographs as a metaphor for the profession. Who will protect the light...the light of learning; creativity; care? Who will be left to keep the last lighthouse operational? How can we protect the light against the darkness of the global education reform movement (GERM), against the inequity of neoliberalism and the influence of economic policy? When Sarah returns to the table Dorothy, laughs off her theoretical thoughts and returns to practical issues. *"So, tell me about the art lesson,"* she invites. *"Well, that week for our art lesson, we painted the lighthouse, and they painted the wave. Their paintings had a story and, you know, what it was - just a spur of the moment thing, something small, but you know...that was good teaching. That was great teaching, because there's a story behind the picture."* Dorothy laughs to herself saying, *"and you didn't have fears (resources) coming out of your armpits and you didn't spend all evening planning that lesson. Agreeing Sarah says, "No! It just came."* I suppose, replied Dorothy, *"That's an example of teacher knowing. Remember the day you told me the story of the butterfly in your classroom and how you then developed your lessons around the butterfly for the rest of the week even though it wasn't in your plans. "I know."* replied Sarah. *"But I was worried all the time about how I would justify myself if an Inspector arrived at the door."*

Dorothy wonders if there is time and space in the school day for teachers to react to events; to be flexible and harness learning opportunities as they arise. Sarah says.

"I don't think so, because of the pressure I feel, but you know some days I think...' Oh, for god's sake! Just forget it! Come on! Let's just do something fun and not follow the bloomin' timetable."

Dorothy explains. *"I feel sometimes that if you run with something there's more energy in it because it comes from somewhere inside of you."*

"But I just feel like always, just questioning, questioning so actually if an Inspector was to come in I would have to say 'well, we did this and we did this...etc.. my aims and objectives'. I know what my aims and objectives are: to educate the children, and give them a bit of...wonder and awe. My learning outcomes? My evaluations? I have enough sense, you know? I know they learned a lot. I know they enjoyed it. I know they will remember it."

Sarah goes on to say that each term in a school year has its own rhythm, and that over time all areas of the curriculum get covered. She talks about her upcoming pageant for Christmas and how this will be her music, art, drama and religion for the month of December. She is behind on the pageant, which she puts together herself. The problem is scheduling rehearsal time in the general-purpose room. Dorothy thinks about this issue and the politics around resources which is part of the culture of teaching and learning in every school. She recognises this as the hint of another secret story.



Sarah's Story: Time to Breathe "Go Away and Let Me Just Breathe for a Minute!"

Sarah and Dorothy leave the leisure centre, say goodbye and get into their cars. On the drive home Sarah thinks about the lack of time and space in school to think, to learn, or engage with colleagues - and how this influences their work.

Thinking about the hour after the children go home which teachers use to prepare the vast amount of resources required for teaching Infants, she realizes that the first fifteen minutes of this period is just 'time to breathe'. There is no time to breathe in an infant classroom and the first few minutes after the children go home is usually used to debrief with a fellow infant teacher.

"We never get on top of the amount of work we have to do." Sarah feels the pressure of recent changes in terms of accountability and paperwork. This leads her to always feel, *"Not quite good enough."* She thinks of her colleagues, and how many of them are in school early and that, as the years go by, many of them are leaving later and later. *"We do everything in triplicate,"* she thinks, *"planning for teaching, and then proving that we taught what we said we would teach. Then we need to analyse what the children have learned and document this."*

Most afternoons when the children go home Sarah talks things through with colleagues, reassuring them that they are doing their best. Oftentimes her colleagues reassure her. She has talked about this with her friend Dorothy, who wonders about the role of school leadership in all of this. How does or should the leadership in the school support teachers to ensure that they are affirmed and know that their best effort has to be good enough? Dorothy sees school leaders as the gatekeepers: the mediators of policy in the context of their school, their staff, and their pupils.

Sarah asks herself if it is possible to be the good, effective teacher we are asked to be. *"I don't think so"* You have ideas for a lesson, for resources but you never have time, you do your best and then you see the DES guidelines ...!" She would love to have super lessons where the children are engaged in active learning, working as geographers or historians. *"Where would I get the time to make the resources – but there is no time. I don't think it's possible to be this superhuman teacher. I don't know is it the government, the DES, who wants us to be this superhuman person. But I don't think it's possible."* This leads her to acknowledge the feeling again: the feeling of never being quite good enough, which is her constant companion.

To shake off these feelings of inadequacy when she gets home, Sarah decides to take the dog for a walk. *"It is Saturday, after all,"* she thinks to herself. Strolling with the dog and feeling a little brighter because of the fresh air and the bright spring sunshine Sarah feels her spirits rise. However, it isn't long before her thoughts return to school, and the volume of work teachers need to cover in their classrooms.

"It's not just nature study anymore. Now it's SESE, history, geography, science. Then there's Social, Personal and Health Education, and with all the themes in different books, you don't have the time to do a topic thoroughly."

This happened in the last few weeks when Sarah had planned to integrate the theme of spring through these subjects and in science. Now she thinks *"because we did spring so well, I have to play catch-up."* She feels pressure all the time. Pressure to cover things in a superficial way.

"The constant pressure I feel is...if there was an incidental visit from an Inspector and an Inspector walked in the door of my classroomI need to be sure my cuntais miosuil (monthly report) reflects my plans."

Sarah knows that Dorothy would say that the pressure she feels is linked to accountability and the concept of panoptic surveillance. Sarah remembers the recent incidental inspection. 'The drive-by'!!!

She was very grateful that the inspector didn't visit her room, although most days she sticks to her timetable and sticks to her plans.... ***for fear!! For Fear!!!***

Sarah has been so deep in thought that she doesn't remember much of her walk. Finally, as she turns the corner for home she considers the relationship between Inspectors and teachers and asks herself.

"Where is the space for my professionalism in all of this?"



Presenting Policy-makers' Sacred Stories:

All Change Please!

New Primary Language curriculum -

Curriculum changes in Structure and Time.

New Primary maths curriculum.

New model of Special Educational needs,

The continuum of Teacher Education:

School placement; Droichead, Cosán;

Professional portfolios (Taisce); Reflective practice.

Secret Stories

New language Curriculum

Roll-out...is it possible?

Current model? ...No. No. No!

Not in classes with over thirty children.

Professional awareness?

Heads down in busy classrooms.

No time!

Are we letting ourselves down?

Few teachers have regular interaction

With outside agencies.

Change done on the cheap.

Small pilot. Full roll-out.

Half a day to watch a video!

'Expert' after 'expert'.

We need experts but small numbers, big influence.

No mention of teacher practice

We are being 'told'!

Consultation? No Time!

Where is the teacher voice?

Teachers practice in policy development?

Teachers are the forgotten link.

Consider the big picture.

In reality that doesn't happen.

New model of SEN,

Spin in the media -no assessments?

Watch out! Watch this space!

Pace of change... the Pilot:

Nineteen schools, guaranteed to benefit.

Standardised test results; a stick to beat us with.

Fear of losing manpower.

Limited in-service.

Principal for only half a day.

No time for questions or clarification.

Completely short-changed

The profession?

As a profession we are taking things lying down.

People have lost the fight:

In pay talks; for parity for younger teachers

Bashing of teachers...

Newly Qualified teachers, the NQTs,
Face uncertain employment.
 How to establish identity as teacher?
 Establish yourself? Build relationships?
 Knowing children? Knowing parents,
 Knowing school community?

The larger landscape:
Age profile at union meetings?
 Section of the profession not fighting for themselves.
 Why do teachers just take it?
 We scratch the surface.
 But we don't drill down,
Don't question...

Sacred stories

Politics of the policy-space:
One or two powerful voices;
 Strong opinions;
 Fixed positions.
 The drive and the power influencing,
 and infiltrating other areas
Becomes the national policy.



**Kelly's Story: The Hamster Wheel
“The Bucket is Full!...That Magic Moment?”**

Kelly is at a professional development day for the Revised Primary Language curriculum run by the PDST. She always embraces learning opportunities and usually looks forward to these days. She is also quite experienced in supporting teacher learning as she is an Associate of another Teacher Support Service. Over a lunchtime conversation with Ann-Maire she explains,

“I have always been a support of improving schools and changing schools for the better, but I have to say, now I am at a stage now where I see the bucket as full, for myself and the school environment. Something is giving, and it's not the right stuff. People are getting more frustrated at school because everything is being extended.”

She explains that she sees the value in the many initiatives that schools undertake saying, *“we're frantic, like a hamster in a wheel and the wheel is just spinning too fast.”*

She points to the pace of change since she started teaching seventeen years ago and wonders where it will stop. *“We cannot keep going at this rate; there will be no value in education because people will be so demoralised...it'll just be a job!”*

Getting into her stride and encouraged by Ann-Maire's body language Kelly continues,

“I know what you think should happen in school, and what you'd really like, but there's so many outside pressures coming in and it could be that little bit of you...that 'magic moment' you used to find...But that's gone because by the time you get to five to three on a Friday. You're still doing what you should have been doing at 2 o' clock on Thursday, and then back on the hamster wheel next week.”

As an experienced member of the teaching profession Ann-Maire is well-versed in the educational policy landscape. She asks Kelly if she sees space for teachers' professional choices and decisions in the policy space. Thinking for a moment, Kelly waits for her coffee and then sums up,

“I think our professional choices and decisions are being squeezed. I'm very solid in my belief that I'm a good teacher and that I make a very good contribution to the profession. But I do think that everything is being squeezed at the moment. People who are a little less secure in their own professional standing; their confidence just goes down and down, because there is no space for them to exercise their professional choices and decisions. I'll put my foot down and I'll say 'no - I believe that this is what I

should do and I'm going to do it this way'. Whereas someone a little less secure won't have that self-belief to do that part and their sense of self is just wearing away."

As they walk back to the meeting room after lunch Kelly adds, *"It's getting worse in the last five or ten years, really."*

Ann-Marie nods in agreement and they find their places in the room.



Jean's Story: Panoptic surveillance- 'the Drive by'!

Dorothy and her friend Jean are strolling on the beach. They are both teachers. It is early summer, and they are both just beginning to wind down after a very busy school year. Dorothy asks whether the Union directive concerning non-co-operation with School Self-Evaluation made a difference to Jean's workload or contentment in school this year.

"No not really," replies Jean. Thinking for a moment, she goes on to say *"Like, I do constantly feel, like it's, like, a threat..."* She drops her voice to a whisper before continuing, *"that you'll have a 'drive by'! That's constantly there, and like I think, 'Oh crikey ...all right come in, have a look see what you can do?'"* Dorothy realises that Jean is actually thinking about the school inspection process, the Whole School Evaluation rather than School Self-evaluation, but goes with the flow. *"So you feel that's hovering all the time?"* Jean nods in agreement. Wanting to dig a little deeper Dorothy asks about the relationship between teachers and inspectors. *"I think it's like a parent-child role,"* Jean replies. *"They're not coming in to help you. They're coming in to judge you. They're not coming in to say, 'well, Jean, you're doing really well.' They're coming in to see that you're doing things the way they want it done."*

Thinking about levels of professional autonomy, the self-efficacy of teachers, and the hierarchical approach taken by the 'powers that be' (the Inspectorate, DES, and policy-makers) Dorothy asks, *"So you don't see it as a collegial professional interaction.?"* The young man and woman at the next table look up in surprise as Jean burst into laughter, *"Absolutely not! Do you know the last time I had an inspector in my classroom they were very cutting towards me even though I was following agreed school policy?"*

She goes on to recount a story about being admonished over recommendations in the Revised Primary Curriculum in relation to children beginning formal reading and how the teaching staff, taking account of the school context, had made a professional decision to introduce reading earlier than recommended.

As they finish their walk, Dorothy reminds Jean of a book she had recently read which they had discussed the last time they met. She now reminds Jean of Palmer's treatise, "The Courage to Teach". Getting into her car, Jean remembers the question raised for her by the book.

She asks herself *"who is the self that teaches?"* and wonders about the impact of this on her everyday as a teacher.



Conor's Story: Joining the Dots of Reflective Practice

"Taisce?.....Too Woolly!"

Conor is an Associate with the NIPT and as part of *Droichead* he has facilitated cluster meetings for NQTs in several Education Centres. Driving home after one such gathering, he begins to think about *'Taisce'*: the professional portfolio which supports the reflective practice element of induction. He is familiar with policy guidelines regarding the link between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Induction and how the NQT should bring identified learning needs forward from ITE. Based on his experience as a co-operating teacher and as an associate with the NIPT he is not convinced that this is happening. He feels there has been a lot of uncertainty around this reflective element in induction, and that initially no one really knew what was involved or where to start because it was too general, woolly, or difficult a concept.

Recalling his own difficulties with reflective practice he thinks *"reflective practice is alien to us as a profession."* He wonders if we will ever *'get there in terms of deep critical reflection.'* He believes that it is coming into teacher talk, (cover stories) but wonders if it will ever move in a meaningful way with the profession. While critical reflection was a central piece in an assignment which he completed for his M.Ed., he now sees that, *"at no*

stage did they show us how, give us something to hang it on.” He now understands that *“the honesty part is very difficult, especially when you’re seeing yourself in a not too good light.”*

Thinking again of reflective practice in ITE and induction he wonders, *“if it (reflective practice) becomes central to the start of your learning journey will you bring it forward and how meaningful can reflective practice be for an NQT?”*

He concludes that critical reflection comes later in the teaching/learning to teach journey and remembers that this is indeed an important element of *Cosán*, the recently published framework for teacher learning.



Jane’s Story: Joining the Dots - Stories from School for Policy-makers!

Jane is an experienced mentor and co-operating teacher. As a member of her school’s Board of Management, her principal has asked her to devise recommendations for their school policy on school placement. She brings the following draft of ideas and suggestions to the Board of Management meeting.

Ideas/suggestions for school policy:

- *Student and co-operating teacher should share plans and planning: Shared responsibility*
- *Clarity and consistency required around the co-operating teacher/ school placement tutor relationship*
- *Feedback conversations should be formalised as teachers are reluctant to get involved due of a lack of clarity around their role.*
- *Schedule professional conversations to facilitate feedback with possible template to facilitate the discussion.*
- *Professional teacher development should be provided in the school in relation to roles, responsibilities, and skills required for fulfilling the role of co-operating teacher.*

Her report is well received at the meeting and the policy development team comprised of teachers, parents and members of the board agree to include her ideas for consideration in the development of the policy on School Placement.

On her way home from the board meeting where she presented her report, Jane thinks ahead to her upcoming *Droichead* school visit to support school-based induction activities. Like a slow burning fire, ideas begin to take shape in her mind. She begins to see how her thoughts on induction and her reflections on school placement could provide the much talked about ‘integration’ in teacher education policy. If there was more clarity for teachers in their role as co-operating teacher, if professional development was provided in school, and if the time for structured feedback was incorporated into the schedule on school placement (leaving aside the issue of releasing class teachers for these conversations), the foundations of a mentoring culture would be laid. This would link in with observation and feedback which are part of the induction activities in *Droichead*.

There only remains the issue of the relationship between the School Placement tutor and the co-operating teacher. Then she recalls the ‘triadic’ relationship which she read recently in a journal article on this very topic. This concept includes the co-operating teacher, the student teacher, and the school placement tutor. The article described how all three should participate in the post-observation conversation.

As she eases her car into the driveway, tired now after a very long day, she sighs to herself,

“If only the policy-makers would join the dots? Do they really want to join the dots? Perhaps joining the dots would lead to a fulfilling of the Teaching Council’s stated core values of shared professional responsibility and collective professional confidence.”

Getting out of the car, Jane gathers the books, folders, and files which she needs to prepare her plans for the coming week’s teaching. Unlocking the front door, she thinks of the full day’s work she has on Saturday to do this work. Sighing again, she thinks *‘You’d be purely, absolutely, exhausted.’*

With this thought the front door closes gently behind her and Jane is home at last.



CHAPTER 14: REMINDING; TELLING; SELLING; LEAVING

REMINDING

14.0 Introduction

This inquiry has been a personal, philosophical, and educational endeavour that used narrative and arts-based inquiry methods to explore teachers' embodied experiences as they negotiated the enactment of the policy shift towards acknowledging and developing the school as a site for teacher education. This policy shift has been led by the Teaching Council of Ireland, whose work has been influenced by GERM, (Sahlberg 2007) the OECD, and the European Commission (Grek 2009; O' Doherty 2014; Coolahan 2007, 2013, 2017; Sellar and Lingard 2013; O'Donoghue, Hartford and O'Doherty 2017). The timeframe for the inquiry was 2008 to 2018, and the landscape that of 'Austerity Ireland.' The overall aim was to illuminate teachers stories of experience to interrupt and disrupt the current discourse in the policy space and to endeavour to ensure that teachers' personal and professional stories of practice are heard and influence future stories of Teacher Education policy in Ireland.

This concluding chapter is based on the premise that truth and knowledge are, "individual contextual, contingent and always in process" (Leitch 2006, p. 553) and that "there is a sense of tentativeness in narrative inquiry" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 31). Causality and certainty are elements of the grand narrative and no truths exist, rather there is a "ring of authenticity" (Craig 2018, p.309). Believing that life "is filled with narrative fragments enacted in storied moments of time and space" (Clandinin and Connelly p.17) and that in "Narrative Inquiry stories are never settled"(Craig 2017, p. 194), as educator/researcher, both living and narrating the story, I have invited the reader to travel with me as I relived and retold my own story and those of the teachers who joined me in my quest in a manner which honours multiple perspectives and enables the 'construction of personal knowledge' (de Mello 2006, p. 215)

The inquiry has primarily, but not exclusively, focused on the first two stages of the continuum of teacher education: namely initial teacher education and induction. The quest, theme, and problem, in this narrative inquiry were identified though my lived career as an educator. The exploration of my personal narrative led me to identify the narrative threads (4.2.8) guiding my journey as an educator, which, in turn, led me to engage with philosophers and build the

personal autobiographical interpretative framework (Fig 3,5.9) through which the stories were crafted. Thinking about teachers' professional knowledge landscapes (Schafer and Clandinin 2019; Clandinin and Connelly 1995, 1996; Craig 2011, 2017) through Foucault's theory of power relations, the thinking tools of Bourdieu's social theory and the sacred, secret, and cover stories enacted on this landscape, provided the theoretical bricolage (Fig.2 section 5.8) to explore teachers 'stories from school'.

14.1 Narrative Inquiry

As educator/researcher, I have waded through 'puzzled paradigms' and journeyed through the 'methodological maze' My narrative of experience (Chapter 2,3,4) and my engagement with philosophers (Chapter 5) have influenced choices and decisions in relation to research methodology. This has led me to privilege the concept of 'story' (Sinner et al 2018, Kearney 2002, Bruner 2004) as the golden thread guiding the inquiry. This informed my choice to move away from the 'grand narrative' where "*the universal case* is of prime interest" to thinking narratively where "*the person* in context is the prime interest" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 32, italics in the original). Understanding narrative as both the methodology and the phenomenon of this inquiry has ensured that personal experience, emotion, memories, and 'stories lived and told', are at the core of the new knowledge and understandings developed through the inquiry.

14.2 Arts-Based Research Methods

In choosing an Arts-based narrative inquiry approach (de Mello 2006; Leitch 2006; Estrella and Forinash 2007; Barone and Eisner 2012; Kim 2016; Leavy 2013, 2015, 2018; McGarrigle 2018), I have endeavoured to present this final research text in a manner which honours the veracity of the stories. I believe the stories presented will resonate with readers, evoke reflection and encourage readers to find patterns and convergences in ideas or beliefs (Sinner *et al* 2018, p 186). I argue that privileging the place of story to explore and present teachers' personal and professional stories of practice supports the aim of this inquiry and will create new *subjective* knowledge and understandings about teachers' embedded embodied experiences at the site of their professional practice. Understanding Arts-based research as "a method designed to enlarge human understanding" (Barone and Eisner 2012, p.8), I purport that the use of arts-based research methods in this instance ensured it moved beyond the scope of certainty, facts, and objective knowledge. I believe that this final research text will enable

the reader to access, “forms of feeling that have something to do with understanding some person, place or situation” (Barone and Eisner 2012, p.7), and that the use of arts based methods has brought into the light the relationship between knowledge and power (Leitch 2006) in teachers ‘stories from school’ as they play out on teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes.

14.3 The ‘Triple Tale’: Derbhile becomes *Dorothy*

The narrative of Derbhile’s research journey involved embracing uncertainty and facing the challenge of ‘resurgent positivism’ (Lather, 2006) which demands that researchers ‘create new knowledge’ and ‘impact’ is used to measure the value of research. Exploring “what it means to claim to be a knowledge producer after so long being positioned as the knowable object of powerful others” (Lather 2006, p. 42), led me to consider what counts as new knowledge and who decides upon it. Having weighed up a variety of ways of knowing I came to value subjective knowledge and to ponder the question; “*How do we know what the knower knows*”. Understanding neoliberalism as the overarching system of power in which policy-makers operate (Allias 2012; Ball 2013, 2016; Apple 2013; Mooney Simmie 2012; Conway and Murphy 2013; Connell 2013) led me to uncovering the triple tale which is a synthesis of *The Tale of the Pied Piper*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Emperor’s New Clothes*!

The *Pied Piper* of neoliberalism (Mooney Simmie 2012) was the first step towards the uncovering of the tale. Neoliberalism is the global ‘sacred story’ of neoliberal values, accountability, and performativity in which all sacred stories are seated. I see this as the outer element of the theoretical bricolage (Fig. 3) and a metaphor for the socio-political context of ‘Stories from School’.

The Wizard of Oz has been used as the metaphor for the sacred stories of policy-makers whose work is also influenced by the global sacred story. This inquiry has cast policy-makers as the *Great Oz* and questioned their wisdom, knowledge, and power. This understanding has underpinned the exploration of sacred stories which reach teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes as a ‘rhetoric of conclusions’ stripped of the theoretical basis guiding policy direction. As I uncovered the narrative threads and honed my ability to think with theory, I developed the personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PIAF) which forms the interpretative bricolage through which the stories were crafted. To represent this interpretative bricolage I imagined that Derbhile became *Dorothy* as the central character in ‘the triple tale’.

Dorothy is the composite character and represents the interpretative bricolage through which the stories have been crafted. On her journey *Dorothy* began to dare to see ‘the world as otherwise’ (Greene, 1995) question the power of *Oz*, and vehemently oppose the ‘yellow brick road’ of formalistic research.

This gave *Dorothy* the courage to ask whether she could or should proclaim that “*the king is in the altogether!*” in the teacher education policy parade.

Telling

14.4 Dorothy’s Last Word

In becoming *Dorothy* and encountering ‘The Triple Tale, I asked myself, “*Could I be ...*”

- *Dorothy* the researcher, following the yellow brick road to *Oz* in the hope that the Great Wizard would help me home?
- *Dorothy* the researcher, who aimed to compose the counter-melody to raise teacher knowledge and stories of practice above the pied piper of neoliberalism?
- *Dorothy* the educator/researcher, who together with her companions, the Tin-man, the Scarecrow and the Lion, bring themselves to the educational endeavour every day?
- *Dorothy* who believes in the I-thou educative relationship~
 - **Endeavouring** with her companions to embody an ethic of care
 - **Understanding** teacher knowledge on the landscape of practice as a unique form of ‘knowing’ that which others cannot know.
 - **Wondering** if she dare proclaim that “*The king is in the altogether!*” in the policy parade.

As I conclude my journey as *Dorothy*, this final research text is evidence that I did not follow the yellow brick road of formalistic research, nor look to the *Great Oz* to find my way home. Using writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson 1994, 2018) and embracing Arts-based methods I have built a research text “that enacts rather than fixates meaning” (McGarrigle 2018, p. 275) led me safely home to a place where I could reconcile the values articulated through the narrative threads with the development of this final research text. As *Dorothy*, I understand this research text to be the counter-melody which I hope builds a ‘courageous counterpoint’ (Hargreaves 2003) to rise like a bright obbligato over the *Pied Piper* of neoliberalism. As *Dorothy*, my journey with my research companions, presented as vignettes in this final public research text, has shown how the I-thou educative relationship is valued by many teachers. Finally, the vignettes offer “a rich resource of embodied understanding that enlarge views about the world of teachers” (Sinner 2010, p.34) as lived on their professional knowledge landscapes which is the theoretical construct for naming the ‘knowing’ of teachers which cannot be known by those not situated on this landscape. As I leave *Dorothy* behind to become *Derbhile* once

again, I will continue to work to ensure that the obligato of teachers' voice is heard bright and clear in the music of teacher education policy. Ultimately, I invite you, the reader of the vignettes to make you own conclusions (de Mello 2006, p.15) as to whether...

"The king is, indeed, in the altogether!"

14.5 Stories from School

In the 'telling' section of this final chapter I include a synthesis of the 'Stories from school' in the form of poetic performance scripts. These are. an attempt to synthesize "storied metaphors used by teachers to convey lived experience and bring coherence to their knowing, doing and being" (Craig 2018, p.300). Like Denzin I believe that:

"when performed the poetic representation opens up to multiple open-ended readings in ways that straight sociological prose does not permit"

(Denzin 2018, p 681)

To use the language of the 'Grand narrative of formalistic research' these represent the overall 'conclusions' of the inquiry and communicate the 'findings' in order to ensure 'impact' on the policy landscape. There are three scripts. The first explores sacred, secret, and cover stories, as they play out on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. The second explores teachers' experiences of the school placement element of initial teacher education. The third examines teacher stories in relation to the *Droichead* process for the induction of NQTs.

14.5.1 Not Ghetto, but a Fort - The Last Manned Lighthouse in the World?



Metaphor: Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscape

14.5.1 Teacher Professional Knowledge Landscapes; Sacred, Secret, and Cover stories

We cannot keep going at this rate.
There will be no value in education
because people will be so demoralised...
It'll
just
be
a
job!

Every day is a good day!

I could not wait to be a teacher.
Knowing, teaching and learning: part of who you are.
Teaching is a very organic endeavour.
The self. Relationships
Care. Energy. Exhaustion!

You need to be hugely committed yourself.
Chaos reigned; it was all about the kids
The love. The sharing. The caring.
Talking and sharing: we want to care for the children.
But sometimes it never seems to be enough.
There is **NO TIME...**I just feel that pressure,
I can't listen to their stories.

Taking the Person Out of Teaching

Where is the space for me? For my knowledge: for my creativity: for fun??

The 'drive by'!

For fear – *FOR FEAR*. pffff!

Go away and let me just breathe for a minute!

It's all about the new tricks: the old tricks aren't good enough anymore!

AGAINST ALL ODDS!

It's like operating a machine and teachers just follow the instructions.

Every day teaches you something - it's not over.

I submerge myself in water.

AGAINST ALL ODDS!

Experience...I am definitely learning from experience

Every day is a working lunch

Time and cascade.

The cascade model...it doesn't work!

It's that whole TIME piece again.

The Hamster Wheel...

...is a 'rollercoaster'

The bucket is full!

The magic of flow?

.....that magic moment?"

Ploughing that lonely furrow.

Polishing the Bell!

If you look at a bike;

To micro-manage,

If you can't control everything that's happening on the bike;

Then you just go off, and polish the bell.

'Stories from school!'

Stories of care; of tragedy; of trust.

Stories of disappointment and isolation.

Stories of triumph over adversity.

Stories of creativity and resilience...

'Stories from School!'

14.5.2 School Placement

Placement

It's like being an apprentice.
There's a lot to be gained from school placement.
The extended school placement is not as effective as it could be because 'schools differ'.
Students all over the building, experiencing every aspect of the job
Is very beneficial.
It depends very much on the school itself.
Principals worn out –
It's just another problem for them.
Try to keep teaching and learning at the core.
Learning opportunities for teachers is a secondary enhancement;
A level of mentoring by co-operating teachers and school placement tutors
Could contribute to the system-wide culture of mentoring

Time

Time for the conversation to happen.
"Well, I would have made the time."
We don't really have the time to connect with them.
"Well, I would have made the time."
If there were a couple of minutes where you could sit down;
A formal schedule once a week where the student teacher and class teacher sit down?
They're not making the space and unless teachers voluntarily give up their own time."
"Well, I would have made the time."
Discussions afterwards don't often happen. Where do you have the time?
"Well, I would have made the time"
Time for conversations with student teachers that are
Woven into the programme with time allocated during the school day
"COS IF IT'S NOT SCHEDULED, IT **WON'T** HAPPEN".....
"Well, I would have made the time."

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the teacher is unclear: lack of awareness of guidelines;
afraid of being overbearing or critical;
needs to be formalised into
roles, relationships, professional development?

The role of the teacher is unclear: the tutor will not have the full picture about
student teachers who
'put on a show for when the visitor is at the back of the room';
the students who just want to impress the 'Cigire.

The role of the teacher is unclear: they do not get the full picture.

14.5.3 *Droichead*

Magic Wand

NQTs...“they’re like deer in the headlights!”
The richness of the pilot programme has stayed in schools.
Schools who hadn’t engaged in the mentoring process
Prior to their involvement with *Droichead* were at a disadvantage.
No history of mentoring and the culture this enables:
The importance of a ‘helpful culture’, an ‘open door’, ‘sharing’,
Almost like a magic wand
That could be brought into schools if people were open to it’.

The Magic Wand of *Droichead*: A shared learning experience?

Droichead very much excited me.
Teachers always supported NQTs in school.
But there was still a lot that was **not** happening.
Staff were reluctant to get involved in the formal aspects of school-based induction activities.

A Mentoring Culture

Droichead builds a mentoring culture;
Permeates the culture of teaching and learning;
Building professional relationships,
Developing openness to learning from peers,
Providing opportunities for professional growth and development;
A structure to support their younger colleagues:
Gives teachers a voice,
A language
To talk about teaching and learning.

Time for the Conversations to Happen

Colleagues didn’t want to leave their classrooms.
Huge pressure with other things:

Planning templates;
New primary language curriculum;
School Self-Evaluation!

Lightning Rod

Resistance and Misunderstanding

“Of course, there was that vote!”
The birth of *Droichead* has been torturous;
Confusion about the evaluative element.
(It was beginning to grow)
Droichead is still ‘a lightning rod’ for discontent.
(It was beginning to grow)
Then there was that directive against participation.
A golden opportunity lost!
A knee-jerk reaction to the discontent in industrial relations.
I had to play it down...
I was conscious of ‘*going above my station*’.

Droichead Bashing

Droichead took a bashing... *Now it's watered down.*
People are very concerned,
I think it's going to be hugely difficult...
It's a huge undertaking for a school that haven't had their hand held to this point.
...But now it's watered down.
The whole self-regulation piece, we were getting to it: Who makes the call?
Self-declaration not recommendation
...But now it's watered down.
Very disappointing that there isn't a decision made at school level;
A lack to the teaching profession: Who makes the call?
Some form of evaluation sign off should form part of the process.
Being able to make a hard call is part of being a professional.
....But now it's watered down!

Of course, there was *that* vote!”

Resistance and misunderstanding;
more difficult to arrange observation for the NQT.
Resistance and misunderstanding;
the severe shortage of substitute teachers.
Time. Time. Time!

“Free gratis and for nothing!”

It could and should be a great thing;
a cost-free way of supporting young teachers?
It could and should be a great thing;
I think the Department is blackguarding us.
It could and should be a great thing;

Selling (Significance)

14.6 Dorothy becomes Derbhile (personal significance)

As previously stated, my personal journey as an educator and researcher has been an important element of this inquiry. As I conclude the inquiry it is important to address the significance of this personal journey. Embracing and placing my subjectivities front and centre has been integral to the inquiry and the core of the interpretative bricolage. Hence, the focus of the inquiry has arisen from my experience as an educator and researcher and the problem at the heart of the inquiry identified by me through a process of autobiographical triangulation (Fig.1). For almost twenty years, ‘thinking with theory’ has been integral to my educational practice and my research journeys.

The Narrative Threads

I now understand that the foundation of my practice as an educator are the narrative threads which came to light through the exploration of my personal narrative (4.2.8). These have existed in a reciprocal relationship with my engagement with philosophers; each element influencing the other. This, in turn, has guided my journey through the methodological maze and led me home. In discovering an Arts-based narrative inquiry, I have been fortunate to reconcile my personal epistemological and axiological stance with the unfolding narrative of the inquiry itself.

Derbhile’s Personal Journey

The journey which I have travelled in the course of this inquiry has provided an opportunity for me to move forward and look to the future while simultaneously looking back and coming to understand the multiple ‘I’s I brought to the inquiry.

Being Wide Awake in the World

In building my personal narrative I came to know myself and identify the narrative threads that have guided my thoughts feelings and actions as an educator. As previously outlined; I began the journey with an innate tendency to ‘think with theory’ and further engagement with theory has led me to “become wide awake in the world” (Greene 1995). I now see the world “as otherwise” and seek to ‘break free’ from the constraints of systems of power and the codes of the social world which I have always found restrictive, but until now, been unable to identify

or name.

Artistic Ability

As stated in my personal narrative, I come from a family steeped in the Arts. Although I have been involved in music all my life, I have never considered myself to be artistic in any way. I simply thought of myself as a teacher: practicing and practical. Thus, embracing uncertainty, enjoying the ‘swampy lowlands’, and breaking free from the grand narrative has allowed me to embrace Arts-based inquiry methods. I did not look for this methodology: rather, I feel the Arts-based methods found me. In sharing the journey of this inquiry with colleagues at conferences and seminars both nationally and internationally, I have attained a greater knowledge and understandings about myself.

I am a writer!

I am a performer!

I connect with people through my words and voice!

Eschewing the *Yellow Brick Road* Again

Unlike *Dorothy* I did not ‘follow the yellow brick road.’ Now I am indeed home; albeit a changed and temporary one. From this home, as Derbhile, I intend to ensure that the aim and quest of this inquiry becomes a reality. This inquiry does not end here: it is merely the beginning of the next stage in my journey to follow the quest identified in the inquiry.

14.7 Research Journey: Significance and Originality

Interpretive and Theoretical Bricolage

Throughout the inquiry I adhered to the concept that:

If new tools or techniques have to be invented or pieced together, then the research will do this.
The choice of which interpretive practices to employ is not set in advance.

(Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p. 4)

In the case of this inquiry, these new tools are interpretative and theoretical bricolage; the combination which provides a unique and nuanced framework through which the readers may come to new understandings of teachers’ stories to live by enacted in the context of their professional knowledge landscapes. In particular stories which relate to school-based teacher education. These were developed as a result of my efforts to escape the grand narrative of

formalistic research (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) which led me to identify as a narrative bricoleur theorist (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). They provide a clear articulation of the theoretical and interpretative lenses through which I crafted the novellas presented in the final public research text as vignettes.

Theoretical bricolage

Thinking with theory, I have developed a theoretical bricolage (Fig 2,5.8). I have deployed Clandinin and Connelly's concept of 'teachers professional knowledge landscapes', and the specific language related to this concept and their understanding of sacred, secret, and cover stories. I developed this further by locating these concepts at the centre of the macro-level theories of Foucault and Bourdieu. This is linked to the triple tale and leads us to consider the effect of the Pied Piper of Neoliberalism and the Wizard of OZ on teachers' stories lived out in their practice on their professional knowledge landscapes. I posit that this theoretical bricolage is a significant and original contribution to the field and may be of use in future research in understanding teachers' stories of experience. In addition, this theoretical bricolage will be a tool for policy makers to understand at a deeper level the effect of top-down policy development on teachers 'stories to live by'. In considering these stories, through the lens of this theoretical bricolage, policy makers and researchers may come to know the impact of neoliberal discourse on teachers' identity, beliefs, and axiological positioning. This may create greater alignment between policy and practice and perhaps reduce the 'moral violence' (Santoro 2017) which teachers experience in the negotiation of policy. This may reduce the epistemological dilemmas (Clandinin and Connelly 1996) which teachers experience and enable them to operate with an ethic of care and exercise their professional judgment (Biesta, 2013) and professional artistry (Schon, 1983) in a meaningful way

Interpretive Bricolage: Personal Autobiographical Interpretative framework

The interpretative lens developed in the inquiry is a personal autobiographical interpretative framework (PAIF) (Fig.3,5.9). This was developed in an inductive manner using arts based narrative methodologies which illuminated my personal values and beliefs. Central to this interpretative bricolage are the narrative threads identified through the multiple 'I's, which make up my personal narrative. These are linked to my engagement with theory.

This inquiry proposes that the use of Narrative Inquiry and engagement with theory may be used by teachers to identify their narrative threads as educators. The process of building a PAIF through which teachers articulate and make explicit their beliefs and values and build theoretical support will enable them to critically engage with policy discourse and directives arriving in schools as a rhetoric of conclusions (Clandinin and Connelly 1996). Using narrative methodologies in developing their PAIF would enable professionals to build self-efficacy leading to empowerment in the policy space so that they may speak truth to the power of the Wizard of Oz and the Pied Piper of Neoliberalism. Thus, supporting teachers in working against neoliberal subjectification (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020).

I believe that this inquiry has demonstrated how the use of narrative methodologies to build a PAIF may be used to support work on identity, values and beliefs in Teacher Education (Craig 2011, 2017; Schafer and Clandinin 2019; Sinner, 2010; Sinner et al 2018) at all stages of the continuum.

In addition, this inquiry indicates that the use of narrative methodologies and the exploration of an individual's PAIF would extend to other professionals. This may lead to building self-efficacy and empowerment, thus enabling the articulation of practitioner voice to build greater democracy in the various policy fields in which societal institutions operate.

I further contend that this process may be used as a tool by researchers seeking to place their own subjectivities and narrative threads at the center of an inquiry. I do not mean that my personal PAIF should be applied: rather I argue that the process through which I developed this, the use of multiple 'I's and engagement with philosophy and theory, can be used as a paradigm to build the interpretative structure as a significant and original contribution to the field.

14.8 Teacher Education (Significance)

The problem at the heart of this inquiry is the perception of the mismatch between the rhetoric of policy and the understanding and experience of teachers at the site of practice. The stories illuminate the fact that the school-based element of teacher education policy is situated in the larger technocratic discourse of accountability, performativity, and curriculum change. This inquiry pays particular attention to school placement as an element of ITE and to *Droichead* as the national framework for the induction for NQTs. This issue has been explored through the gathering of teacher's stories in 'narrative conversations' which began in the midst of stories

lived and told: stories of policy and stories of practice. These stories continue to evolve and accrue as does policy development in Teacher Education. As the story of school-based teacher education does not end here, but is ongoing, I have provided the reader with brief explorations of the current policy space pertaining to the focus of the inquiry. These are included in the appendices. ‘*Pause for Thought: Teacher Education Policy in 2019: The Here and Now*’ (Appendix 1) and *Signposts for the Future* (Appendix 2). I argue that the stories told in this inquiry provide an additional and highly important perspective for policy-makers’ consideration. I also argue that the stories will provide deeper understanding of teacher ‘stories to live by’ for those charged with working with teachers to facilitate school-based teacher education, namely the NIPT and faculty and school placement tutors from the HEI’s. I further maintain that this inquiry complements current and ongoing research in teacher education in Ireland. As I conclude this inquiry it is useful to look at the current situation in relation to policy development and recent / ongoing research.

14.8.1 Policy Progress

The public articulation of the stories in this inquiry, either through performance or written text, should inform and enhance current policy development. The *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council 2011) is now in Phase Three of review and stakeholder consultations have taken place. The new draft document entitled *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education, including School Placement* (Revised 3rd Edition: August 2019) has been shared with stakeholders.

This draft policy highlights collaboration with co-operating teachers (now called ‘*Treoraithe*’) on school placement and suggests that student teachers work with teachers to “engage in practitioner-based action research where the learning needs of pupils informs and refines the student teachers’ own pedagogical and reflective practices” (Ceim, 2019, p. 16).

Thinking with Foucault about the concepts of pastoral power and false freedoms leads me to wonder if, once again, there will be a disconnect between the rhetoric of policy and understandings and experiences of teachers at the site of practice. I argue that this inquiry may bridge the fault line between this new policy and teachers’ experience and understanding at the site of practice. An understanding of the theoretical bricolage and the ‘Stories from school’ explored in the vignettes in part two of this research text may go some way to ensuring that there is a greater awareness amongst policy makers and the providers of ITE of teachers

positioning in relation to facilitating the vision outlined in this revised policy for ITE. In relation to the induction phase of the continuum, *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council 2017) is now being implemented nationally since September 2020. This inquiry gives voice to experiences of practicing teachers which should be considered by the NIPT and the Teaching Council of Ireland as they move towards this full roll-out of *Droichead*.

14.8.2 Research Significance

This inquiry complements research commissioned by the Teaching Council in this area: namely, *School Placement in Initial Teacher Education Research Report* (Hall *et al.* 2018). ‘Stories from School’ provides a personal narrative perspective on teachers experience of school placement, thereby facilitating readers in developing *subjective* knowledge and understandings about teachers’ everyday experiences at the site of their professional practice, and, it is hoped will identify new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. These are articulated as ‘wonderings’ grouped as resonant narrative threads outlined in 14.9 below.

The recently published *The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform* (Sahlberg 2019) discussed in Appendix 2, highlights the inconsistency of placement experience for student teachers and recommends closer links between placement schools and HEIs. A further recommendation envisages a greater role in providing in-career professional learning for the HEIs, and that the considerable funding made available to agencies facilitating teacher learning should be allocated to HEIs to fund CPD for teachers. The suggestions in this report align somewhat with the stories of practice lived out on teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes articulated in the research text. Of further significance is that this inquiry will complement and perhaps inform the ongoing research in the area of induction funded by the Teaching Council of Ireland; namely, *Droichead, Exploring and Eliciting Perspectives, Experiences and Narratives*’ (*DEEPEN*). This research intends to use creative and innovative methodology including visual data which aligns somewhat with the use of the Arts-based narrative inquiry in ‘Stories from School’.

Leaving

14.9 Wonderings: A conversation with distant friends

None of us knows his or her final destination, but all of us can know about the shape-makers of our lives that we can choose to confront, embrace or ignore.

(Richardson 2018, p. 826)

‘Stories from School’ did not begin with a single question. Instead, the research journey began with a theme, a setting, a problem, and a quest. The inquiry was guided by two overarching considerations: firstly, to bring the voices and experiences of practising teachers into the open, and in so doing, “open up new and undiscovered avenues of understanding” (Estrealla and Forinash 2007, p. 381) of experiences in relation to school-based teacher education rooted in the site of policy enactment; and secondly, to present teachers’ school stories in a manner which honours their veracity while simultaneously identifying new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. This, the quest of the inquiry was clearly stated at the outset. Addressing this quest at journeys end through a conversation with distant friends has led me to identify a constellation of ‘*Wonderings*’ (Clandinin *et al.*, 2010) about the factors which influence how teachers experience school-based teacher education. These ‘*Wonderings*’ developed over time, all came to be recognised through the interpretative and theoretical bricolage which guided the crafting of the stories and the inquiry itself.

The overall aim of ‘stories from school’ has been to illuminate teachers “experience and find a means for empowerment and change” (Esterealla and Forinash 2007, p. 382) and to create a space in the policy for the voices and stories of teachers who have all too often been the objects of others stories (Denzin 2018, p. 681). The hope was to interrupt and disrupt the current discourse in the policy space in order to ensure that teachers’ personal and professional stories of practice are heard and influence future stories of Teacher Education policy in Ireland.

As I leave the inquiry and place teachers ‘stories to live by’ gently in the hearts and minds of those who have engaged with the stories I have used the concept of narrative resonance, which names the “complex relationships among many aspects of a story’ (Conle 1996, p. 313) to group these ‘*Wonderings*’ into Resonant Narrative Threads (Clandinin 2010). I believe that these are a synthesis of the new subjective knowledge illuminated in the inquiry and that engaging with these resonant narrative threads and wondering about how these impact teachers will interrupt and disrupt the policy space and lead to the identification of new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration. Thus, achieving the clearly stated aim of the inquiry.

The resonant narrative threads are:

- Teacher beliefs and identity
- Teachers axiological positioning.
- Teacher knowledge
- Teacher Agency
- Teachers as Neoliberal subjects

Teacher Beliefs and Identity

Understanding that “Teacher identities are both personal and professional and are shaped by the contexts in which teachers live and work” (Schafer and Clandinin 2019, p 62), the stories lead me to wonder about the ‘self who teaches’ (Palmer 1998) and the myriad of aspects of the teaching self which ‘are not immediately visible or capable of being easily articulated (Leitch 2006, p. 565) which influence their ‘stories to live by’.

I wonder about teachers’ habitus (Bourdieu) understood in this inquiry to be their professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin and Connelly).

I wonder what the stories tell us about the effect or impact of the ‘doxic narratives’ and codes of societal institutions on the ‘ontological insecurity (Ball, 2016, p. 1054) and epistemological dilemmas (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) they experience.

I wonder what the stories tell us about technocratic discourses and a “culture of educational positivism” (Biesta 2013, p.120) in education and how this has led to a mismatch between teacher beliefs and the wider discourse in education (Biesta *et al* 2015) and how this impacts their identity.

I wonder what we come to know through the stories about the ‘good girl’ ideal “which upholds cultural beliefs and norms that preserve gendered power arrangements” and which make it impossible to meet the demands of the fantasy ‘good teacher’ (Santoro 2017, p.54).

Teachers’ Axiological Positioning

An ethic of care was a central element of the interpretative bricolage through which the stories were retold. I wonder now what new knowledge has been revealed by the stories about the

connections between teachers, identity and beliefs and their values. Thinking of the “relational view of caring” proposed by Noddings (2005), I wonder what the stories reveal about how teacher values impact on the development of their ‘stories to live by’ and the cover stories they develop as they negotiate the sacred stories about school-based teacher education experienced as a rhetoric of conclusions on their professional knowledge landscapes.

I wonder how the stories illuminate the ‘soul work’ involved in supporting the learning of colleagues in school-based teacher education which is understood to be teachers’ “capacity to define and pursue an ethical position” (Mooney Simmie and Mole 2020, p. 389).

Understanding that an “ethic of care can be manipulated, especially in contexts where power is gendered and out of balance” (Santoro 2017.p.51), leads me to wonder if teachers’ axiological positioning implicit in the stories means that their moral agency is “systematically and/or repeatedly denied” (ibid, p. 52) and they are experiencing “moral violence” in the teacher education policy space.

As supporting school-based teacher education enables the growth and development of others rather than producing tangible goods, the work can be considered ‘reproductive labour’ (Santoro 2017). I wonder if this comes to light in the stories and if this explains the perceived lack of appreciation for the work which has resulted in miscommunication and a lack of resourcing for the work.

Teacher Knowledge

In the course of the inquiry, I posed the question “How do we know what the knower knows?” Understanding now that “we can only know as situated beings” (ibid, p. 26), and that such knowing is influenced by our imaginations (Greene), I wonder what the stories tell us about teacher knowledge and wonder what counts as teacher knowledge and who decides.

I wonder how propositional knowledge, considered to be knowledge for teachers or knowledge of teachers (Biesta *et al.*, 2017) impacts teachers’ understandings of their personal practical knowledge and their stories to live by which provides the context for their experience of school-based teacher education.

I wonder what we have come to know about teachers’ embodied narrative knowledge (Schaefer and Clandinin 2019, p.62) which is expressed in the lives and practices of teachers retold in the stories.

I wonder about the link between this embodied narrative knowledge which is “composed by teachers in and through their life experiences, in school and out of school, over time, place and

relationships” and teachers’ ability to make “embodied and situated wise educational judgements (Biesta 2013, p. 136).

I wonder about the implications of this for school-based teacher education in terms of supporting teachers to achieve educational virtuosity (ibid, p. 135).

Teacher Agency

Wondering in conversation with distant friends leads me to understand teacher agency as teachers ‘active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions’ (Biesta *et al.*, 2015, p. 624). Considered to be one’s individual habitus it has been suggested that there is a recursive relationship between one’s agentic ability or individual habitus and the social structures or fields (Lingard *et al.* 2003) in which an individual’s habitus is situated.

I wonder now what the stories illuminate in relation to the importance of teacher agency in their negotiation and experiences of teacher education policy on their landscapes of practice.

I wonder now if the ‘stories to live by’ presented in this research text support the idea that agency is something that teachers do rather than something they have (Biesta *et al.*, 2015).

I wonder also about how teacher identity and teacher beliefs which are informed by the past and lived in the here and now (ibid) influence the achievement of agency.

I wonder about the extent to which the stories evidence that teacher agency is undermined and that “existing change modes tend to both underplay and misconstrue the role of teacher agency in educational change” (Biesta *et al.*, 2015, p. 625).

The storytellers tell stories of how they use their practical wisdom to make situated judgements about what they believe to be ‘educationally desirable’ (Biesta 2013, p. 8). I wonder now if these are examples of ‘educational virtuosity’ (Biesta 2013, p. 8) and how teacher agency and educational virtuosity might enable teachers to stand against “the incursion of neoliberal ideas and practices” (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020, p.386) in the current teacher education policy context.

Teachers as Neoliberal Subjects

Teachers’ ‘stories to live by’ in this inquiry are influenced by neoliberal discourse and practices which operate through the technologies of the market, management and performance (Ball 2016). I wonder now what we have learned about the neoliberal subjectification (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020) and the de- or re- professionalisation of teachers (Ball 2016, p. 1046).

I wonder about “a culture of educational positivism” (Biesta 2013, p. 120) and what the stories tell us about Ball’s assertion that performativity and accountability changes how teachers think, what they do and how they relate to one another. (Ball 2016, p. 1050).

Thinking with Foucault leads me to wonder what the stories tell us about disciplinary power exerted through hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination and how this may affect teacher’s beliefs, identity, agency, values and knowledge.

I wonder about how panoptic surveillance through unannounced, incidental inspection visits effects “teachers’ subjectivities and soul work practices” (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020, p.384).

I also wonder what effect this may have on teachers’ ability to act with moral agency (Santoro 2017) and to “work with recognition of the uniqueness of each student” (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020, p.384).

This leads me to wonder if the pastoral power of governmental agencies which operates through self-regulation and leads to false freedoms strips teachers of a sense of agency.

I wonder if this is how teachers fall foul of neoliberal discourse which is considered by some to be in “the head and heart and soul” (Ball, 2016, p. 1047). I wonder if this is why sometimes teachers unknowing and unwittingly become neoliberal subjects; thus, changing who they are and what they do, and what they value.

I wonder what the stories tell us about how the pervasive hegemonic discourse which articulates “one particular way of thinking and talking about teaching and teacher education” (Biesta, 2013, pp122-123), coupled with the neoliberal subjectification of teachers impacts on their understanding and experiences of school- based teacher education.

14.10 Endings and Beginnings

As stated above, the overall aim of this inquiry has been to interrupt the current policy space in order to ensure that teachers’ personal and professional stories of practice, their ‘stories to live by’ are heard and have an impact on the future stories of teacher education policy in Ireland. The Resonant narrative threads outlined above are the key ‘wonderings’ which uncover new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and exploration in terms of consideration of teachers voice and experience in the Teacher Education policy space

I believe that the stories provide policy makers and teacher educators alike with embodied

‘razor sharp glimpses’ (Craig 2018, p. 310) of teachers pursuit of an ethic of care “which can be manipulated....in contexts of power and gendered imbalance” (Santoro, 2017, p. 51) described as ‘soul work’ (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020) or reproductive labour (Santoro 2017). They provide evidence that teachers are experiencing “a growing sense of ontological insecurity” (Ball 2015, p. 1054)) and are navigating “epistemological dilemmas” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) as they negotiate the fault line (Craig, 2018) between their ‘stories to live’ by and the ‘rhetoric of conclusions’ of policy which are understood to be sacred stories on their professional knowledge landscapes.

Finally, they confirm that teachers now have limited opportunity to exercise autonomous collective professional judgement (Santoro 2017) through creativity and educational virtuosity (Biesta 2013); thus limiting an ability to exercise professional artistry (Schon 1983) built through “life experiences in school and out of school over time place and relationships (Schafer and Clandinin 2019, p. 42). In concluding this inquiry, I now identify a new quest which is to share the stories through performance or written text to articulate these wondering and impact the policy parade.

In order to achieve the stated aim of this inquiry, dissemination and publication of the findings is the next step. I intend to engage in further analysis of the stories using the lens provided by the resonant narrative threads to explicitly articulate the power of the Pied Piper of Neoliberalism and the Wizard of Oz. I will endeavour to publish these accounts in peer reviewed journals such as the European Journal of teacher Education (Routledge) or Teaching and Teacher Education. (Elsevier)

I have already performed elements of the inquiry at Teacher Education Conferences such as Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) and the Standing Conference of Teacher Educators North and South (SCoTENS) and it is my intention to present this synthesis of stories and wonderings at these conferences in the future. In addition, I plan to perform/ present at the National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) Lunchtime Research Seminar Series in the University of Limerick and conferences organised by professional bodies such as ‘Feilte’ organised by the teaching Council and the Education conference organized by the INTO.

The use of Narrative Inquiry in teacher education has come to light during the inquiry. This inquiry adds the concept of a PAIF for use by teachers and Teacher Educators as a vehicle to

explore 'The self who teaches'. I hope to add to the work Cheryl Craig and Ann Sinner in this area and perhaps publish a book or book chapter on this for use by teacher educators.

Finally, as this inquiry is an account of the lived experience of escaping the tentacles of the grand narrative of formalistic research and a researcher becoming a creative narrative bricoleur theorist I hope to publish a book for early career researchers thus extending the available research methodology literature.

Therefore, armed with "the gift of stories" (Lather, Trinity College, Dublin, May 2019) and my newfound belief in my ability to proclaim teacher stories through word, voice, passion and care, I now venture forth to proclaim teachers' stories. I hope to name some of teachers' epistemological dilemmas and articulate elements of their secret and cover stories; all the while striving to ensure teacher's embedded embodied personal practical knowledge enacted on their professional knowledge landscapes is vibrant, valued, and validated in the policy landscape.

14.12 Epilogue: Maybe Now They Will Listen

September 2020

At journeys end we find ourselves in the grip of a global pandemic.

Maybe now they will listen!

The world as we know it has changed completely.

While understanding that this too will pass,

I now ask myself if any of the preceding work really matters now.

Maybe now they will listen!

Do I need a floppy hat?

Who needs a floppy hat?

What does gaining a floppy hat mean in the grand scheme of things?

More important issues spring to mind.

Maybe now they will listen!

Perhaps we will witness the demise of the power of the *Pied Piper* of Neoliberalism.

Maybe now they will listen!

Because of this worldwide crisis,

New knowledge and understanding are being brought into our consciousness every day.

Humanity is accessing the wealth of imagination and creativity which for many of us has

Remained latent because of the overarching and pervasive power of neoliberal ideals.

Kindness and care are becoming more evident and more valued everywhere.

Is this what it takes for us to place an ethic of care at the centre of all our endeavours?

Maybe now they will listen!

This crisis has revealed that *The Wizard of Oz*

(policy-makers and societal institutions) can be rendered powerless.

Maybe now they will listen!

Maybe now the voices of practising teachers will be valued and celebrated in the policy parade.

Maybe now they will listen, address impossibility and insist on the impossible (Osberg and Biesta 2020, p. 11),

build trust in teacher professionalism (Sellar and Lingard, 2013 p. 723),

Thus enabling teachers to “facilitate the beautiful risk of education, for transformation and recognition of the other”(Mooney Simmie and Moles 2020, p. 393).

Maybe...?



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APPENDIX 1: PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY IN 2019: THE HERE AND NOW

Narrative research involves moving forward and backward in a situation, time and space. The space is teacher education policy, the situation is that teaching is now a regulated profession governed by a regulatory body, the teaching Council of Ireland, the time is now autumn 2019.

Teacher education is now in a phase of ‘consolidation and promotion’(Teaching Council executive staff, 2019) and the Teaching council policy on the continuum of teacher Education (Teaching Council 2011) could be considered the umbrella document which has led us to the here and now. Built on the internationally accepted three stages of teacher learning commonly termed as the three ‘I’s in Teacher Education, initial, induction and in-career. The policy document pledges to move Teacher Education forward under three new ‘I’s integration, improvement and innovation. Further policy documents, discussed above included, *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council 2011), the *Guidelines on School Placement* (Teaching Council 2013), *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council 2017) and *Cosán: Framework for Teachers’ Learning*, (Teaching Council 2016).

The following is a brief review of the current situation in relation to the various stages of the continuum. I present this here without comment as ‘the story’ of the here and now in the regulation of teacher education in Ireland.

Initial Teacher Education

Focusing on the ‘here and Now’ the Criteria and Guidelines document is now being reviewed. Phase one of the review (2017-18) involved an analysis of feedback from the previous review and accreditation of ITE programmes which had been carried out by the Teaching Council between 2012 and 2016. This phase of the review also included an ‘impact consultation exercise’ which aimed to capture the insights and experience of all stakeholders.

Following on from this review, phase two of the review (2018-19) involved the drafting of an ‘ITE standards document’. Phase three of the review process is a further consultation on the ‘draft ITE standards document’, this document is now completed (Autumn 2019) in draft format and it is intended that this will be put to stakeholders for further consultation in the final

quarter of 2019. In the course of the review the areas which stimulated most discussion included, school placement, the mandatory areas to be included in the ITE programmes and the immersion programme for the Irish language ‘an treimhse sa ghaeltacht’.

In the course of the review process teacher educators have been struggling to ensure that their voices are heard. Attempting to locate themselves ‘in a discursive gap’ (Mooney Simmie et al, 2016), the National Teacher Education and Teacher Educator Forum has been formed with the specific aims of (i) discussing issues and developments in teacher education and, resulting from those discussions, to formulate position/discussion papers that can contribute to teacher education in Ireland, and (2) engage in professional development activities for teacher educators across the continuum of teacher education in Ireland. This group has had four meetings to date. Special interest groups have been formed focusing on school placement in ITE, the Criteria for accreditation of ITE programmes and teacher education and teacher educator identity. A report was presented at a meeting hosted by the Teaching Council in November 2018. This report focused specifically on school placement, ITE programme structure / mandatory areas, and research and portfolios. ‘a number of challenges and infrastructural dilemmas within the Guidelines that merit consideration within the context of a re-accreditation process.’ were identified (Unpublished report for the Teaching Council, MacPhail et al p. 2).

At this meeting, the proposed schedule for redrafting the criteria and guidelines and reviewing ITE programmes was outlined, as follows.

- Commencement of drafting of standards (quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2019)
 - Consultation on the draft ITE standards document with stakeholders (quarter 3 of 2019)
 - Finalize the standards (no later than quarter 1 of 2020)
 - Call for submission of programmes for review (no later than quarter 2 2020)
- (Email from Ann MacPhail dated; 22.11.2018)

School Placement

The continuum document and the criteria document require that student teachers to spend more time in schools. Extending school placement was expected to provide a more authentic learning experience for student teachers. Seen as ‘a critical part of teacher education’ the policy clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. For the first time there are clearly articulated guidelines for co-operating teachers. The overriding emphasis in the document is a

recognition of the school as a site for teacher learning. This is conceived as being framed by a partnership approach between schools and HEI's.

Considering this, in the here and now, through the lens of my personal narrative as researcher and teacher educator I have found on many, many occasions that teachers are not aware of the existence of these guidelines.

Moving backwards in time and space, I recall regularly asking who had responsibility for communication and dissemination of the guidelines and supporting experienced teachers at school level. The responsibility was never taken on by the Teaching Council and many HEI's endeavoured to build partnership, provide CPD and support the professional development of extended professional knowledge and skills required. However, they have had to do so with little or no funding or additional staff allocation. Over the years several small-scale projects have endeavoured to do this, (Ni Aingléis, 2008; Young et al 2015). Indeed, in the course of my research journey I have been involved in several efforts to build partnership between schools and HEI's. Many of these projects failed to get off the ground, while others had small scale success only to be subsumed into the immediacy of life in schools and in the HEI's. As a result of my personal narrative and my research journey I have formed the opinion that space and time are required to ensure that 'the reconceptualization of the school placement experience' becomes more than just 'a roadmap for the journey' (School placement Guidelines 2013, p.8).

These school placement guidelines have also been under review. The school placement working group which drew up the original policy document (Guidelines on School Placement, Teaching Council 2013) has been reconvened. The catalyst for this was twofold, (1) The School *Placement in Initial teacher Education* (Hall et al 2018), research report which recommended that the working group be reconvened. (2) The Teacher Supply Action Plan (Department of Education and Skills 2018). The working group sought input from co-operating teachers and student teachers. In addition, bilateral meetings between providers of ITE (HEIs) and management bodies also took place. This work is now reaching a conclusion with the completion of a 'School placement vision document'. This is a high-level costed action plan for the sustainable implementation of school placement. What is noteworthy about this work is 'the high level of involvement from the Department of Education and Skills and the Inspectorate. Further meetings are planned with the stakeholders to consider the

implementation of the action plan. (Teaching Council executive, September 2019)

Induction

Protracted negotiations with the profession led to the publication of the current induction policy, *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* (Teaching Council 2017). This policy reflects the concerns of the profession in relation to the evaluation element of the process. In addition, the findings and recommendations of the *Review of the Droichead pilot* (Banks et al, 2015) were considered in the final document.

The National Induction programme for teachers (NIPT) has overall responsibility for providing professional learning and support for the implementation of the Droichead process at school level. Experienced teachers who take a role in school-based induction activities as members of professional support teams (PST) receive four days professional development. In addition, the NIPT facilitates induction workshops and cluster meetings for NQTs.

A carefully planned growth phase spanning five years followed the publication of the finalised policy. The policy has been rolled out on an incremental basis since 2016. Focusing on the here and now we are now in the penultimate year of the roll out. Progress points to this being on track for full implementation in the 202/21 school year and that there are sufficient resources available. (Teaching Council executive staff, September 2019).

Focusing on the here and now, the Teaching Council has commissioned research to harness understanding and experiences during the roll out of Droichead. Entitled ‘DEEPEN: *Droichead, exploring and eliciting perspectives, experiences and narratives*’, it is intended that this research will:

explore a range of topics, including the roles and responsibilities of those engaging in, and supporting, the Droichead process, resourcing and supports for the process, the impact of the Droichead on school culture, and the connections between the Droichead process and initial teacher education. (Teaching Council website <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Research-CROI-/Research-Library/Commissioned-and-Funded-Research/Commissioned-Research/> (accessed 16th of September 2019)

Using creative and innovative methodology including visual data the aim is to

‘listen to the voice of professionals who are living the process’ (T. O’ Ruairc, April 2nd, 2019 source Twitter ‘@DEEPEN-Project) and ‘make sure-footed steps towards realising the potential of an autonomous professional exercising agency in its service of all learners’ (ibid) The first phase of the project, a literature review has been completed. Data collection will begin with an online survey circulated to all schools providing the Droichead process for NQTs.

School leaders, mentors, members of professional support teams and NQTs will be invited to complete the survey.

The second phase of data collection focus group interviews will also take place during this academic year.

Teacher Professional Learning

Following the publication of *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning*, (Teaching Council 2016), the teaching Council moved to work with the profession in the development phase of the policy. Considered to be a flexible, trust based, empowering, teacher led framework. Council staff have been leading 'opt in exploratory' initiatives with teachers. Initially this has been facilitated by staff of the council themselves, more recently support services such as the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) and the Education Support Centres Ireland (ESCI) have been working with the council to facilitate teachers engagement with Cosán.

This development process of Cosán has been progressing somewhat slower than originally expected. One of the key findings to date is that there is a 'huge spectrum' of understanding in relation to reflective practice within the profession. (Teaching Council executive staff September 2019).

The Council are now working with ESCI to co-design programmes of workshops for teachers in the area of reflective practice. While these workshops are in the draft stage, a series of three workshops is envisaged with several teachers from each school participating. It is planned that they will be facilitated by practicing teachers.

Since there are no externally imposed deadlines (as was the case for Droichead) the development process for Cosán is more organic and less rushed than the Droichead pilot with great input from the profession (Teaching Council executive staff 2019).

A Research Informed Profession

The Continuum document considers 'inquiry-as stance' (Cochran-Smyth and Lyttle, 1999) as central to teachers as lifelong learners. Council strategic plans have identified engagement *with* research and engagement *in* research as a key pillar of teacher professionalism. The Teaching Council supports the CROÍ Research Series (Collaboration and Research for Ongoing Innovation). This aims to develop 'strong research activities which strengthen the

links between research, policy and practice, and on collaboration among teachers, and between teachers and other stakeholders in education' (<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Research-CROI-/Research-Support-Framework/> accessed 16th of September 2019).

Elements of CROI include access to online journals for registered teachers, funding for teacher led research through the Research Support Framework research meets and T_REX the online platform for teacher research.

APPENDIX 2: SIGNPOSTS FOR THE FUTURE

Having considered the here and now, we look towards the horizon, the road ahead in order to understand the landscape more fully. To do this I consider the current teaching Council Strategic plan, the *School Placement in Initial Teacher Education research report* (Hall et al, 2018) and the recently published *The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform* (Sahlberg 2019)

Teaching Council Strategic Plan

The current strategic plan covers 2018 to 2020. This is the fourth published by the Teaching Council since 2008 and points the way forward for the teaching profession. As such it outlines, ‘where to from here’ on the journey forward rather than where we are now on our map. However, it carries forward the three pillars of research, reflective practice and relationships from the previous strategic plan which mapped the journey to the here and now. For me, this third strategic plan which covered the years 2015 to 2017 is the most pertinent to understanding the here and now. This is because the fourth plan (2018-2020) places an emphasis on ‘consolidating and communicating the significant progress to date’. The Fourth strategic plan also states that the desire is to ‘embed the structures which have been developed for teacher education’. In addition to very clearly articulated pillars, the third strategic plan identified three core values underpinning the work of the council and has particular importance for understanding the landscape of teacher education in Ireland in the here and now of 2019. These core values are shared professional responsibility, collective professional confidence and professionally led regulation.

The plan goes on to say that the council would seek to reassure and challenge but also ‘seek to maintain and enhance trust’. Perhaps most pertinent as we consider the landscape of Teacher Education policy in the here and now, is that the council stated that it would ‘endeavour to develop a new understanding of professionalism in a way that is rooted in teachers’ own experience and expertise, but that also reflects the fact that today’s society has new expectations of professionals” (Teaching Council strategic plan 2015-2017 p3).

Of particular interest to this narrative inquiry into the experiences of teachers engaging in school-based teacher learning is that the council stated in the plan that “Teachers’ learning

requires space and time and should be supported and informed by research. Teacher educators have a key role to play in supporting and guiding teachers' learning" (p.3).

The plan further states that 'robust standards of quality' should be in evidence at all stages of a teacher's career and this is underpinned by linking these standards to registration.

Moving forward again to consider the current strategic plan, the presentation uses clever graphics and there is a greater emphasis on maintaining standards and professional regulation. There are seven strategic goals and many of these contain references to communicating and working with the profession. For example, Strategic Goal 6 is to "Promote the teaching profession, including wellbeing, and enhance awareness of the Council's work, through innovative and accessible communications" (Teaching Council 2018). It remains to be seen if this goal will lead to an enhancement of teacher voice in the policy space particularly because the influence and control of the Department of Education and skills as identified by O'Donoghue, O'Doherty and Hartford (2018) is very much in evidence.

School Placement in Initial Teacher Education

This report, published at the end of 2018 and funded by the teaching council was commissioned to understand "the implementation, bedding down and impact" (Hall et al, 2018, p.11) of the changes described above. Of significance to 'stories from school' is that these changes have meant that the school is now seen as a site for teacher learning. The research was carried out over four years with fieldwork beginning in 2014 and continuing until early 2018. Therefore, this report is a mirror to my exploration of the main change in terms of the school as a site for teacher learning in initial teacher education (ITE). The concept of partnership which underpins the model of school placement articulated in the guidelines was found to be "ad hoc" though some evidence of the development of 'greater formality' in procedures developing (Hall et al, p. 13). The report finds that "While it is clear that the reforms are being enacted, there is much variation in the experience of students in schools" (p.13). This mirrors my personal narrative as a teacher educator as I engage with schools as placement tutor.

The report identifies the difficulty of capacity of the system to facilitate school placements as an aspect requiring future consideration in the implementation of policy. In addition, the professional learning needs of co-operating teachers requires some attention. Again, this aligns with my personal narrative as a research and teacher Educator. The aforementioned immediacy

of life in HEI's is highlighted by the study. Identifying 'the challenge of securing school placements for student teachers' (p.13) as an overarching finding the report states that this hampers the development of partnership. The recommendations that there be a 'more coherent and consistent approach nationally'(p.17) , particularly regarding partnership between HEI's and schools maps onto my personal narrative as researcher and teacher educator and is also borne out in the 'stories from school' presented in this narrative inquiry. The implications and advised actions included in the report (p17/18) are also borne out in my personal narrative and the stories, gathered 'in the midst' which are retold in this narrative inquiry.

The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform (Sahlberg 2)

This report, which set about reviewing the implementation of a previous report (Sahlberg 2012) is pertinent to the context in which we come to know and understand teachers' 'stories from school' in relation to school-based teacher education. While echoing the tone and direction of the previous report, important signposts for the future of school-based teacher education are outlined. A comparison of the titles of both reports indicates the developing coherence and integration of teacher education across the continuum. The 2012 report focuses on Initial teacher education while the title of this report implies an acceptance of integration across the three I's. The report supports the discussion in chapter 3 of the research text relating to the 'rising tide' the 'perfect storm and 'unprecedented change' in teacher education stating that;

“Structural reform of ITE in Ireland took place at a time of national economic retrenchment while coinciding with significant reform of ITE programmes following the decision to extend those programmes by an additional year” (Sahlberg 2018, p.7)

While acknowledging 'a stronger emphasis on school placement than was the case in 2012' (p.7) the review panel concluded that there is no guarantee that 'all students without exception experience learning to teach through clinically supervised settings' (p 33). This points to inconsistency of school-based learning for student teachers and hints at the mismatch between the rhetoric of policy and the experiences of teachers facilitating school-based teacher learning. Recommending that teacher education in Ireland should now move from "the reform phase in ITE to the further development of teacher education in Ireland" (p.31), the report recommends "closer links between school placement and the universities". HEIs should now work with "a clinical teacher training school or schools closely integrated into their normal operations" (p. 7/p.33).

Finally, the report takes careful note of the provision for CPD for experienced teachers arguing that the considerable funding which is provided to agencies external to the developing centres of excellence. It is argued that a portion of this funding be made available to the centres of excellence through a competitive tendering process to provide CPD for teachers and school leaders.

APPENDIX 3: THE STORIES IN THE TRIPLE TALE

The Legend of the Pied Piper

The Pied Piper legend originated in Hamelin, Germany during the middle ages. As the story goes, the town was struggling with a rat infestation problem and was desperate for relief. A mysterious man in “pied clothing” approached the mayor and promised he could rid the city of its problem in return for payment of 1000 guilders. The mayor agreed, and the man played a magical pipe to lure all the city’s rats to a nearby body of water, where they drowned. When the Piper returned for his reward, the mayor refused.

Furious that he had been cheated, the piper soon returned to the town of Hamelin on St. John and Paul’s day. As the grown members of the town attend church, the Piper once again played his magical pipe through the streets, this time luring the town’s 130 children from their homes. Depending on the version of the story, he either led them to the lake or into a cave, and none were ever seen again. Most versions agree there were a few children left behind- one was crippled, and he could not keep up, one was deaf so he could not hear the music, and one was blind and could not see where the other children were going. When church let out, the survivors told the towns people what had happened, and the rest is history.

<https://blog.bookstellyouwhy.com/the-legend-of-the-pied-piper> accessed (02/03/2020)

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Dorothy is a young girl who lives in a one-room house in Kansas with the care-worn Uncle Henry and Aunt Em; the joy of her life is her dog, Toto. A sudden tornado strikes, and, by the time Dorothy catches Toto, she is unable to reach the storm cellar. They are still in the house when the cyclone carries it away for a long journey. When at last the house lands, Dorothy finds that she is in a beautiful land inhabited by very short, strangely dressed people. The Witch of the North informs her that she is in the land of the Munchkins, who are grateful to her for having killed the Wicked Witch of the East (the house having landed on the witch), thus freeing them. The Witch of the North gives Dorothy the silver shoes of the dead witch and advises her to go to the City of Emeralds to see if she can find someone who might help her return to Kansas. The witch sends Dorothy off along the yellow brick road with a magical kiss to protect her from harm.

On the long journey to the Emerald City, Dorothy and Toto are joined by, the Scarecrow who wishes he had brains; the Tin Woodman, who longs for a heart; and the Cowardly Lion, who seeks courage. They face many trials along their route, but they overcome them all, often because of the Scarecrow’s good sense, the Tin Woodman’s kindness, and the bravery of the Cowardly Lion. At last they reach the Emerald City, where the Guardian of the Gates outfits them with green-lensed glasses and leads them to the Palace of Oz. Oz tells them that no favours will be

granted until the Wicked Witch of the West has been killed.

The companions head to the land of the Winkies, ruled by the Wicked Witch of the West. The witch sends wolves, crows, bees, and armed Winkies to stop them, all to no avail. So she uses her Golden Cap to summon the Winged Monkeys. The Winged Monkeys destroy the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and cage the Cowardly Lion, but they bring Dorothy and Toto to the witch, who enslaves Dorothy. The witch wants Dorothy's shoes, which she knows carry powerful magic. She contrives to make Dorothy trip and fall, so she can grab one of the shoes. An angered Dorothy throws a bucket of water at the witch, who then melts away to nothing. Dorothy frees the Cowardly Lion and engages the help of the now free Winkies in repairing and rebuilding the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow, and the friends return to Oz. Oz does not summon them for several days, and, when he does admit them into his presence, he seems reluctant to grant their wishes. Toto knocks over a screen, revealing that Oz is only a common man. However, he fills the Scarecrow's head with bran and pins and needles, saying that they are brains; he puts a silk-and-sawdust heart into the Tin Woodman; and he gives the Cowardly Lion a drink that he says is courage. He and Dorothy make a balloon to carry them out of the Land of Oz, but the balloon flies away before Dorothy can board; Oz leaves the Scarecrow in charge of the Emerald City. Oz.

At the suggestion of a soldier, Dorothy and her friends go to seek the help of Glinda, the Witch of the South. They encounter several obstacles but at last reach Glinda's Castle. Glinda summons the Winged Monkeys so that they can take the Tin Woodman back to rule the Winkies, the Scarecrow back to Emerald City, and the Cowardly Lion to the forest to be king of the beasts. Then she tells Dorothy how to use the silver shoes to take her back to Kansas. Dorothy gathers up Toto, clicks her heels together three times, and says, "Take me home to Aunt Em!" She is transported back to the farm in Kansas.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Wonderful-Wizard-of-Oz>(accessed 02/03/2020)

The Emperor's New Clothes

Many years ago there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The King's in council," here they always said. "The Emperor's in his dressing room."

In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.

"Those would be just the clothes for me," thought the Emperor. "If I wore them, I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away." He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.

They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest old thread which they demanded went into their traveling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.

"I'd like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth," the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbors were.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."

So the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.

"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colors. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."

"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it's beautiful -it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colors!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."

"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colors and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.

The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.

The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms, he couldn't see anything.

"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.

"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colors and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."

All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old trusted officials-the ones who had been to the weavers-he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible!

Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people! - Oh! It's *very* pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.

His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's *very* pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."

Before the procession, the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."

Then the Emperor himself came with his noblest noblemen, and the swindlers each raised an arm as if they were holding something. They said, "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle," naming each garment. "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."

"Exactly," all the noblemen agreed, though they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off," said the swindlers, "we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another. They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something - that was his train-as the Emperor turned round and round before the looking glass.

"How well Your Majesty's new clothes look. Aren't they becoming!" He heard on all sides, "That pattern, so perfect! Those colors, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit."

Then the minister of public processions announced: "Your Majesty's canopy is waiting outside."

"Well, I'm supposed to be ready," the Emperor said, and turned again for one last look in the mirror. "It is a remarkable fit, isn't it?" He seemed to regard his costume with the greatest interest.

The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle. Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn't dare admit they had nothing to hold.

So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said, "Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!" Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

"But he hasn't got anything on," a little child said.

"Did you ever hear such innocent prattle?" said its father. And one person whispered to another what the child had said, "He hasn't anything on. A child says he hasn't anything on."

"But he hasn't got anything on!" the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, "This procession has got to go on." So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.

https://andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheEmperorsNewClothes_e.html (accessed 02/02/2020)

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION



INFORMATION SHEET

Stories from school!

A narrative inquiry exploring the experiences of teachers supporting school-based teacher education.

To whom it concerns,

The above-named research is a doctoral study researching the narratives (story) of the lived professional experience of practising teachers as they engage in the extended professional activities required by the implementation of recent policy developments in the continuum of teacher Education. My research will explore teachers' personal experiences of facilitating school-based teacher education. The research will consider recent policy developments in Teacher Education particularly the implementation of the Guidelines on school placement (Teaching Council 2013), Droichead Induction Policy Guidelines (Teaching Council 2013) and Cosán (Teaching Council 2016) the national framework for Teacher Learning. The context of globalised education policy is the broad contextual background for this.

Following the adoption of 'Cosán' (Teaching Council 2016) as the national framework for teacher learning it is important to research the voice of teachers and explore and validate the importance of both formal and informal school based professional learning.

Data gathering through engagement with fellow professional will take place over one academic year. I will form a "narrative inquiry engagement group" of approximately six participants from among teaching colleagues with whom I have already developed a relationship and a shared professional or personal history.

Participation will involve attendance at an initial workshop at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic years. In addition, participants will participate in 'narrative interviews' (1 per term) It is my intention that the research will develop in collaboration with participants and that their contributions and voice will inform the development and progression of the study.

All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. A pseudonym will be used for each participant and it is this pseudonym rather than the participant's name which will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity.

Participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and without consequence

In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all research data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years

Primary Researcher:

Derbhile de Paor

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087 9081197

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

MIREC Administrator

Mary Immaculate College

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Limerick

061-204980

mirec@mic.ul.ie

APPENDIX 5: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL | MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
- OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH - | - UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK -

Participant Consent Form

Stories from school!

A narrative inquiry exploring the experiences of teachers supporting school-based teacher education.

Dear Participant,

The above study is outlined in the attached Participant Information Sheet. This should be read fully and carefully before consenting to take part in the study.

I confirm that I have read and understand the details of this research study, as set out in the information sheet. I am aware that my identity will not be revealed at any stage in reporting this research and that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving a reason.

I hereby consent to participate in the research for the above study.

Name (Printed): _____

Name (Signed): _____

Date: ____/____/____

APPENDIX 6: MIND MAPS: NARRATIVE CONVERSATIONS

