A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Lived Experiences of Engagement with Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

Anne O'Byrne

PhD Thesis

Mary Immaculate College

University of Limerick

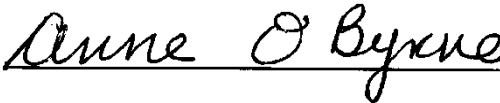**Supervised by Professor Jim Deegan and Professor Emer Ring**

Submitted to Mary Immaculate College

July 2019

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, Anne O'Byrne, declare that the work in this thesis is my own and has not been submitted to any other University or Higher Education Institution in support of a different award. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

Signature:

Anne O'Byrne

12th July 2019

ABSTRACT

The research study aimed to make a contribution to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement. Specifically, it sought to explore the nature of eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with special educational needs (SEN). It also sought to discover what could be learned from beginning teachers that could inform initial teacher education (ITE).

A qualitative case study approach was adopted, underpinned by an ecological theoretical framework. Data were collected during participants first two years of teaching and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. Interpretative phenomenological analysis allowed for in-depth analysis within and across cases, while still maintaining the idiographic or particular nature of each case.

Three themes emerged from the data analysis: beliefs, influences and realisations. Two beliefs emerged from the data analysis. Firstly, these beginning teachers believed that children benefit when home and school engage with each other. Secondly, they believed that this engagement is challenging, but becomes less challenging over time. Five distinct influences emerged from the data analysis, namely school culture, SEN, personal educational philosophies, memories of their own parents' engagement with school and ITE. In terms of realisations, there were three. These beginning teachers learned about teacher engagement on the job, they found engagement with parents to be an emotional experience and they identified communication as central to successful engagement between home and school.

Findings also led to discussions on an ecological understanding of teacher agency and a 'lifewide' approach to professional learning to support beginning teachers to develop positive engagement with parents. This study suggests learning for ITE: when student teachers are provided with focussed input in their ITE programmes, they feel prepared for parent-teacher engagement. They still find this engagement challenging but are not overwhelmed by it.

The study is significant as it allowed the voices of beginning teachers in Irish primary schools to be heard as they told stories about their lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. This helps us to better prepare student teachers in ITE for parent-teacher engagement, which, in turn, supports the development, learning and wellbeing of children.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mary Storan and Patrick O'Byrne. I am grateful to you both for so many things but especially for my education and that you taught me what it is to be kind. Míle buíochas ó chroí, Áine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Being a parent has informed and influenced the writing of this thesis. To my children, Caoimhe, Darragh and Emma, the lights of my life, thank you for being my inspiration.

To Brian, my husband and soulmate, there are no words to thank you for your love and unwavering belief in me. Here's to a new springtime for us!

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASD	Autism Spectrum Difference
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
AUEI	Australian Education Index
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EEC	European Economic Community
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Centre
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals' Network
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IUA	Irish Universities Association
MIREC	Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee
NCSE	National Council for Special Education

NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NPC	National Parents Council
NPPTI	National Pilot Project in Teacher Induction
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
SET	Special Education Teacher
THEA	Technological Higher Education Association
TES	Teacher Education Section
TUI	Teachers' Union of Ireland
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

What do the lived experiences of beginning teachers in Irish Primary Schools tell us about parent-teacher engagement? Is there something in these beginning teachers' stories that can enhance our understanding of parent-teacher partnership? Is it possible that by giving voice to beginning teachers in Ireland, educational theory, policy and practice can be further developed? By coming to an understanding of the lived experiences of a group of eight beginning primary school teachers during their first two years of teaching, can we inform teacher education across the teacher education continuum, particularly initial teacher education (ITE), for working with parents? Is it possible to learn something about how best to support beginning teachers so that they, in turn, can support the best possible outcomes for children, particularly children with special educational needs (SEN), through positive parent-teacher engagement in our schools?

This chapter details the research problem, followed by a statement on the purpose of the research and culminates in the research questions. These three critical elements are interconnected and, according to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), these components are at the core of all research and "everything that follows hinges on how well these components are constructed and aligned" (p. 94). Then the context for this research study is addressed, providing a rationale for the work undertaken. It seeks to position the research within the historical and policy context of Ireland in 2019 and therefore, provide a rationale for the work undertaken. The chapter also positions the researcher as beginning teacher, parent and teacher educator and acknowledges that this matters in terms of background, experience and knowledge. What follows is an outline of the relevance of this research and concludes with a synopsis of the relevant chapters.

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Ireland, a report by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), commissioned by the Irish Teaching Council, identified engagement between parents and teachers as problematic and highlighted the need for beginning teachers to be better prepared for working with parents (ESRI 2016). Internationally, a similar study in Finland (Aspfors and Bondas 2013) deemed relationships between beginning teachers and par-

ents to be one of the most significant challenges and negative factors for beginning teachers. In Australia, Hudson (2012) found that beginning teachers were also challenged by working with parents, as did a study by Hudson et al. (2008) in Scotland. As far back as 1996, an American study by Love indicated that 98% of beginning teachers surveyed stated they wanted to engage better with parents. However, there is little in the literature which examines the experiences of beginning teachers' engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. This research study aims to contribute to this knowledge gap and, consequently, contribute to how beginning teachers might be better prepared for working with parents in their ITE programmes.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

The participants in this research study were eight beginning primary school teachers in Ireland and data were collected across the first two years of their teaching careers. The purpose of this research study was to:

(i)   Enhance our understanding of parent-teacher engagement;

(ii)   Hear the voice of beginning teachers in Ireland;

(iii)   Contribute to the development of educational theory, policy, practice and research;

(iv)   Inform teacher education across the continuum, particularly ITE;

(v)   Contribute to one of the Teaching Council of Ireland's priority research areas, partnership in education;

(vi)   In keeping with national and international policy, support the best possible outcomes for children and their families, through positive parent-teacher engagement.

To achieve the research purpose, research questions were developed from an extensive literature review on engagement between teachers and parents.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Mertens (2010), "the literature review serves as a foundation for forming research questions" (p. 115). A literature review allows us to learn from the experience and expertise of experts who have gone before us (Ravitch and Carl 2016) and, if nothing else, prevents us from undertaking research that has already been undertaken (Sil-

verman 2014). In order to make a contribution to knowledge, "new insights need to be based on knowing what is known already" (Flick 2015, p.60). To shed light on the problem identified, the following research questions were devised from an extensive literature review:

(i)   How do beginning teachers engage with parents in Ireland?
(ii)   What is the learning for ITE?

1.4 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

All research is contextually based and therefore, in order to appreciate the rationale for undertaking this research study, it is necessary to provide an overview of a number of contextual factors as outlined in Figure 1.1, beginning with parents in Irish education. This is followed by an overview of ITE. The rationale for this is because all of the participants in this research study recently undertook a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree and spoke about the influence their ITE programme had on them in terms of engaging with parents. Moreover, it is envisaged that the findings from this research study will further influence and inform how student teachers are prepared at ITE level to engage with parents. A contextual understanding of education for children with SEN is also warranted, as all of the participants reported more contact with parents of children with SEN than any other parents and its associated challenges. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate this educational context, an overview of education for children with SEN is presented, from 1960s Ireland to the most recent developments over the past two years. Another context that merits discussion is the researcher. Patton (2015) argues that "the perspective that the researcher brings to a qualitative inquiry is part of the context for the findings" (p. 73). Therefore, I present myself as beginning teacher, as parent and as teacher educator so as to fully acknowledge and make explicit who I am and openly declare my contextual contribution to this research study.

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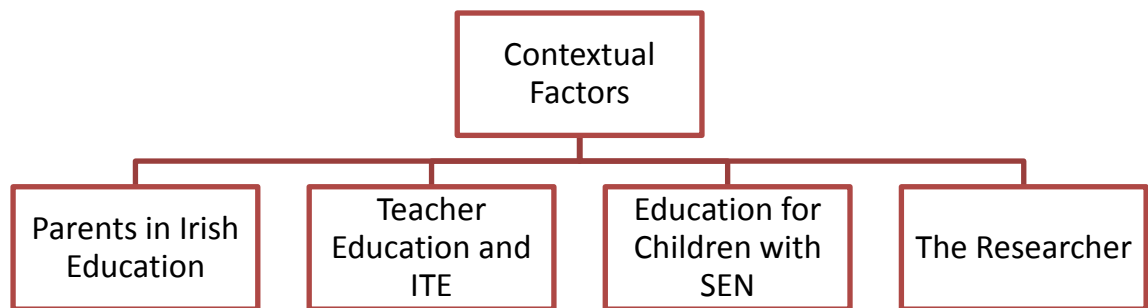
Figure 1.1 Contextual Factors underpinning this Research Study

1.4.1   PARENTS IN IRISH EDUCATION

In Article 42 (Education) of the Irish Constitution (Government of Ireland 1937, the Irish State acknowledges that the family is the *natural educator* of the child and "guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents" (Government of Ireland 1937, p.116). In Ireland, parents are free to educate their children at home, in private schools or in State schools. From a historical perspective, and despite the Irish Constitution's acknowledgement of the role of parents in their children's education, Irish parents have not traditionally been very involved in their children's education (Coolahan 1981). Historically, the 1960s began to see Irish parents becoming a little more involved in their children's education. According to Coolahan (1981), this was due to a number of factors including Ireland's efforts to become part of the European Economic Community (EEC), and Ireland's links with international organisations like the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), where issues, including education, were coming more to the fore. In 1961, television was introduced to Ireland for the first time and this, combined with interest in educational matters by journalists, succeeded in informing the public about educational issues that had up to this time been confined to Church and State authorities. At this time too, Irish teachers began to visit schools and educational institutions throughout Europe and America and bring back ideas and practices that were gaining traction elsewhere. Of significance is the founding of the Irish section of the European Association of Teachers in 1962. Suddenly, Ireland of the 1960s was beginning to see

education as an opportunity for equality and this included parents becoming more in-volved in their children's education.

Ireland of the 1970s and 1980s saw Boards of Management being instituted for national schools. For the very first time in the history of the State, parents were involved in the management of schools. In 1985, ten years after the establishment of the first Boards of Management, under the programme for government, the National Parents Council (NPC) was established as a charitable organisation. The NPC consults with parents in an effort to influence national education policy and also facilitates and supports the development of Parent Associations at local levels. The services of the NPC (Primary), which include a helpline, training and development, and website, are aimed at empowering parents to support the education of their children. It would not be until the late 1990s that Ireland would enact legislation empowering parents to support the education of their children.

In Ireland, the DES communicates with schools' boards of management via circular letters and 1991 saw the introduction of Circular 24/91, entitled *Parents as Partners in Education*, which was an important communication in terms of schools and parents working together. The 1991 Circular clearly outlined that partnership with parents in education is a stated policy aim of the Government. It required each national school to have a policy, as part of their overall school plan, for productive parental involvement (DES 1991). In 2012, the NPC (Primary), in a report to the Minister for Education and Skills regarding DES Circular 24/91, found that of the 456 parent respondents to a research survey, only 75 said they had any involvement in developing partnership for parents with their local school (NPC 2012). The NPC (Primary) found that while most national schools had a Parent Association, they were primarily engaged in fundraising and not involved in productive parental involvement, as had been envisaged by Circular 24/91.

It is most interesting to note that, while acknowledging parents as the primary educators of their child, nowhere in the Circular 24/91 is communication seen as a two-way street between parents and schools. Communication is presented as schools informing parents about what is happening regarding their child. This has implications for all children in terms of productive parent involvement, but it has particular implications for children with SEN. Parents of children with SEN most likely have a wealth of information, not only about their child's needs, but more importantly, about how these needs impact on

their child. Information on a child's SEN, when shared by parents with schools has the potential to enhance a school's ability and capacity to meet the needs of a child and improve their educational outcomes. The NPC (Primary) concluded its report by requesting a meeting with the Minister for Education and Skills to discuss legislation that would ensure parental involvement in schools to support better educational outcomes for children.

It would be remiss not to include reference to parents of children with SEN seeking recourse to the courts to seek appropriate education for their children. In 1993 there was a High Court case taken by Marie O'Donoghue on behalf of her son, Paul O'Donoghue, against the State. Paul had contracted a viral infection at eight months old and, as a result, had, what was categorised as, severe physical and intellectual disabilities. In his 1996 ruling, the judge stated that Article 42.2 of the Irish Constitution (Government of Ireland 1937) "gives rise to a constitutional obligation on the part of the State to provide for free primary education for this group of children in as full and as positive a manner as it has done for all children in the community" (O'Donoghue v. Minister for Health 1996, pp. 65-66). As a result of this ruling, not only did Paul O'Donoghue receive free primary education, but so too did other children with severe and profound disabilities, who had previously been denied this right. Another landmark case was in July 2001 when the Supreme Court decreed that children in Ireland are entitled to free primary education only until they are eighteen years old (Sinnott v. Minister for Education 2001). This judgement overturned a High Court ruling from the previous October, when Kathryn Sinnott took an action in her son's name, Jamie Sinnott. The High Court had ruled that the State was obliged to provide free education based on need and not age; Jamie Sinnott was twenty-three at the time of the judgement and had a diagnosis of ASD. However, the over-ruling of the original High Court decision meant that free primary education was based on age, up to the age of eighteen, and not on need and as a result "the State's obligation to provide a primary education for people with severe/profound general learning disabilities ends at eighteen" (Griffin and Shevlin 2011, p. 56). These landmark court cases highlight the struggles of parents to seek appropriate education for their children. These struggles continue as evidenced in more recent reports on ASD, where parents of children with ASD still struggle in seeking early intervention for their children (NCSE 2016).

It was not until 1998 that Ireland's first piece of legislation about education, The Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland 1998), was enacted. This Act gave parents the

right to appeal decisions by schools that refuse to enrol their children; some parents of children with SEN have used the Act to challenge decisions when local schools refused admission to their children (Griffin and Shevlin 2011). The 1998 Education Act (Government of Ireland 1998), followed by the 2000 Education Welfare Act (Government of Ireland 2000) and the 2004 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) (Government of Ireland 2004), all promote the involvement of parents in school decision-making. The EPSEN Act (2004) (Government of Ireland 2004) clearly stipulates that parents must be consulted with and invited to participate in all decisions of a significant nature concerning their child's education. National policy, as outlined in the 1999 Primary School Curriculum, also promotes parents as decision-makers in schools. A significant endeavour by the DES in 2012 was the introduction of school self-evaluation (SSE). Guidelines were issued to schools (DES 2012) and the Inspectorate has supported schools in introducing and embedding this into their school practice. However, in DES Reports by the Chief Inspector (DES 2016; 2018), recommendations were still being made for improvements in home-school engagement, especially in the area of communication and particularly with parents of children with SEN.

1.4.2   TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education in Ireland spans a continuum which includes ITE, induction into the profession and continuing professional development (CPD). The Teacher Education Section (TES), established by the DES, is concerned with all elements of the teacher education continuum including policy, quality and support for teachers throughout their careers. On matters relating to teacher education, TES liaises with all sections of the DES and, in particular, the Teaching Council. In March 2006, the Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis under The Teaching Council Act 2001 (Government of Ireland 2001). Its purpose is to "promote, support and regulate the teaching profession" (Teaching Council 2010, p. 3). The Teaching Council is responsible for registering teachers, promoting a Code of Professional Conduct for teachers and investigating complaints regarding the fitness to teach of registered teachers. The Teaching Council is also responsible for setting the requirements for entry into the teaching profession at ITE level.

1.4.2.1   INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

According to O'Donoghue et al. (2017), "during the period 2012-2017, an unprecedented level and rate of change took place regarding the initial preparation of teachers in Ireland" (p. 179). A report into ITE, *The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of progress in implementing reform,* by Sahlberg (2019) (known as Sahlberg II), reported that in recent years "considerable progress" (p. 6) has been made in ITE in Ireland, based on recommendations made in a previous report, *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland: Review conducted on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills,* by Sahlberg et al. (2012) (known as Sahlberg I). According to the Minister for Education and Skills, Joe McHugh, this Sahlberg I Report "was a critical moment for ITE in Ireland, heralding a period of significant consolidation and innovation across colleges and universities" (Salhberg 2019, p. 3). The Sahlberg I Report identified the need for significant structural reforms in ITE and recommended that the existing nineteen discreet ITE providers be consolidated into six centres of teaching excellence by 2030.

The Salhberg II Report, by Professor Pasi Sahlberg and advised by Professor Aine Hyland, is a review of this progress and compliments "all of the centres of teaching excellence for their efforts to collaboratively work together, and for their commitment to implementing the wider reform agenda" (DES 2019, p. 1). In particular, it highlights how the original nineteen ITE providers have come together into seven centres of teaching excellence, as illustrated in Table 1.1. Of note is the last centre; Sahlberg I recommended in 2012 that Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) and Marino Institute of Education (MIE) become one centre, but the institutions developed a two-track approach over the last number of years, with TCD and MIE working together as one cluster and UCD and NCAD working together as a second cluster, which Sahlberg II now recommends be accepted. Hence, the six centres of teaching excellence recommended in Sahlberg I have become seven centres, as agreed in Sahlberg II.

Table 1.1 An Overview of Seven Centres of Initial Teacher Education in Ireland (Sahlberg 2019, pp. 3-4)

Centre	Description
1.	DCU Institute of Education (Dublin City University; St. Patrick's College, Mater Dei Institute; Church of Ireland College, has become a reality.
2.	Completion of the new education building at Maynooth University, which, along with the incorporation of Froebel College of Teacher Education into Maynooth University, facilitates strong interaction between staff across the full sectoral continuum from early years education, through primary and post-primary, to further education.
3.	Systemic cooperation between University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) now means that student art teachers at CIT are integrated with UCC for the pedagogical elements of their training.
4.	Progress toward the incorporation of St. Angela's College into National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway, with senior management teams in both institutions committed to the project.
5.	Collaboration on research, continuing professional development and post-graduate programmes between Mary Immaculate College (MIC), University of Limerick (UL) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), through the National Institute of Studies in Education (NISE).
6.	Trinity College Dublin and Marino Institute of Education
7.	University College Dublin and National College of Art and Design

In addition to the recommendation that there should be seven teaching centres of excellence in ITE in Ireland, further recommendations are also made in Sahlberg II. These include:

- creating a coherent range of ITE provision from early childhood education to adult and higher education teacher preparation;
- further strengthening research-based approaches to teacher education;
- further strengthening quality of pedagogy and instruction through various programmes;
- building coherent linkages between theory and practice;
- broadening internationalisation of ITE for both students and staff.

As well as identifying the need for significant structural reforms in ITE, in 2012 the Sahlberg I Report also made a recommendation to extend ITE programmes at under-

graduate level from three years to four years and at postgraduate level from eighteen months to two years. Furthermore, inclusive education was mandated for all programmes. The eight participants in this research study were the first cohort of students to engage in this four-year reconceptualised B.Ed. Degree programme.

As a result of the Sahlberg II Report, the DES, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, is committed to "developing a comprehensive policy statement, which will provide renewed clarity to the sector in respect of the future direction of initial teacher education" (DES 2019, p. 1). In light of the findings from this research study, I look forward to the consultative process and supporting a case for the inclusion of a focussed approach on the preparation of beginning teachers to engage with parents. There is also an intention by the DES to convene a conference on ITE this winter, which may provide an opportunity to disseminate the findings of this research study to a wide and significant audience concerned with ITE and the preparation of beginning teachers.

One cannot refer to the reforms in ITE without reference to a policy document entitled *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and for Life* (DES 2011). This document outlines a national strategy from 2011 to 2020 for improving literacy and numeracy among children and young people in Ireland so that they will be able "to participate fully in the education system, to live satisfying and rewarding lives, and to participate as active and informed citizens in our society" (DES 2011, p. 7). The document focuses on fostering literacy and numeracy skills from early childhood to adulthood and sets specific targets in both areas. Of particular interest to this research study is the acknowledgement in the national strategy that "young people achieve better when their parents take an active interest in their education" and that, particularly in the early years, "partnership with parents and families plays a central role in nurturing this development and lays the foundation for further learning in early childhood care and education settings and schools" (DES 2011, p. 19).

Another recent report, relevant to the ITE context in Ireland and to this research study, commissioned by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), was entitled *Initial Teacher Education for Inclusion* (NCSE 2018). This report examined the impact of the changes that were recommended by Sahlberg I in 2012, in terms of extending ITE programmes at undergraduate level from three to four years, extending postgraduate programmes from eighteen months to two years and the mandatory inclusion of content focussing on inclusive education and differentiation. This report details findings from

the first two phases of a four-phase study. Findings showed "a clear emphasis on promoting the core values associated with inclusive teaching, such as valuing learner diversity" (NCSE 2018, p. 116). As part of the study, a review was conducted on the content of ITE programmes and concluded that in some instances, the content was delivered in discreet or standalone modules, while in others, the content permeated or was diffused across general modules. It also reported that in many cases, inclusive education was conceptualised in quite a narrow way to focus on children with SEN, rather than on the learning of all children. As part of this study, student teachers were surveyed, as were teacher educators. Student teachers reported being "very positive about their courses in terms of how they have developed their attitudes to inclusion, and concepts of inclusion … they see many challenges to inclusivity but are not unduly surprised by their existence" (NCSE 2018, p. 107). Moreover, students who had specialised in special needs reported feeling more equipped and more confident, not only in terms of including children with SEN, but all learners. However, despite the positivity expressed by student teachers, they were "very negative about what they see as missing practical skills input" (NCSE 2018, p. 107). Another important finding in this report was that, while teacher educators reported being supportive of inclusive education, they also reported not having the confidence or expertise required to do this. This leads to a need to provide support for teacher educators in ITE through professional learning and development. This report resonates with this research study in two ways. Firstly, the cohort of student teachers surveyed for the report were contemporaries of the participants in this research study and perhaps some of the participants may even have contributed to the data. Secondly, this report found that the area of working with parents and families "appeared to be the least developed area of competence" (NCSE 2018, p. 126), pointing to the need for a more focussed input on this at ITE level. This has particular relevance for this research study that explores beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN.

1.4.2.2   INDUCTION INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

Induction into the profession of teaching merits consideration here as all of the eight participants in this research study engaged with this process. Three education policy documents of the 1990s, the Green Paper (Government of Ireland 1992), the National Education Convention (Government of Ireland 1994), and the White Paper (Government of Ireland 1995), all recommend support for beginning teachers in Ireland. In particular, the White Paper (Government of Ireland 1995) recognised beginning teachers'

induction as being critical, not only to applying what had been learnt in their ITE programmes, but also in terms of fostering positive attitudes to teaching for their entire career. In September 2002, the National Pilot Project in Teacher Induction (NPPTI) was established and funded by the TES of the DES. This was done with the support of the standing Committee of Teachers Unions (the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI) and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)) and University Education Departments which were represented by University College Dublin and St. Patrick's College Drumcondra. At its inception, working with forty beginning teachers of primary and post-primary levels, there were three core elements to the project: mentoring, professional development workshops and seminars and teacher observation.

Even though the literature clearly shows that students have better outcomes when parents are engaged with the school (Zablotsky, Boswell and Smith 2012), the literature search did not yield a significant amount of research on beginning teachers and parents in Ireland. However, some small but significant recent studies, including a 2016 ESRI review of the Irish Teacher Induction Pilot Programme called *Droichead*, meaning bridge in the Irish language, highlights that beginning teachers identify working with parents as an area of concern for them. This ESRI Report (2016) identifies engaging with parents as one of the most significant challenges teachers face as they begin their teaching profession. It is worth examining this report in some detail, as it is quite recent and one of the few commentaries we have on beginning teachers in Ireland.

The ESRI Review of the *Droichead* Teacher Induction Pilot Programme (2016), which was peer-reviewed, was conducted in 2014/2015. Its intention was to examine the pilot induction programme, known as *Droichead*, in both primary and post-primary schools in Ireland and subsequently inform future teacher induction. The *Droichead* pilot programme began in 2013 and provided whole-school support for beginning teachers in both Irish primary and post-primary schools. Schools took part in the *Droichead* programme on a voluntary basis. For the review, questionnaires were distributed to 123 primary and post-primary schools taking part in the *Droichead* programme in autumn 2014 and new schools that joined the *Droichead* programme were surveyed by questionnaire in autumn 2015. Questionnaires were also distributed to 199 non-*Droichead* schools, as a matched sample. In addition to the questionnaires, six case studies were conducted in *Droichead* primary schools and six case studies in *Droichead* post-primary schools.

The findings of the ESRI Review (2016) suggested that school principals were most positive about how their beginning teachers were prepared to use a range of teaching methodologies, their knowledge of curriculum, how they planned their lessons and the use of appropriate assessment methods. Principals, however, were critical of their beginning teachers' preparedness to teach diverse groups of students, including children with SEN. Beginning teachers themselves, while acknowledging the value of some induction workshops, highlighted a duplication of content with their ITE and similar lack of support, particularly with regard to teaching diverse student groups. In addition, and with particular relevance for this research study, only a small number of principals felt their beginning teachers had been prepared for working with parents. The review also highlighted the need for complementarity between ITE, induction, and CPD programmes, "in order to provide continuity of learning and facilitate high-quality teaching" (ESRI 2016, p. 5).

Currently, there are two ways in which beginning teachers can engage in this induction process. There is what is referred to as the traditional process, where beginning teachers engage in ten two-hour workshops and receive visits from their local DES Inspector. Following a satisfactory outcome these teachers are deemed to be probated. Alongside this traditional model is *Droichead*, the integrated professional induction framework. *Droichead* consists of school-based induction from a mentor and professional learning in the form of additional learning activities. There are three *Droichead* Standards, as outlined in Figure 1.2. It is envisaged that by 2021 *Droichead* will be the route of induction for all primary school beginning teachers.

1. • The newly qualified teacher will have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities

2. • The newly qualified teacher will have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students

3. • The newly qualified teacher will have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively

Figure 1.2 *Droichead* Standards (The Teaching Council 2016, p. 4)

During the two years of this research study, all eight participants engaged in this induction process, some via the traditional route and others via *Droichead*. All of the participants reported finding this process onerous and demanding and there was palpable relief expressed by all who completed the process, some during their first year of teaching and others during their second year; one participant had yet to complete the induction phase by the end of the study. Having completed the induction phase of the teacher education process, early career teachers move on to what is known as continuing professional development (CPD).

1.4.2.3 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A contextual understanding of teacher education would not be complete without an overview of CPD in teacher education. In 2010, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) was established, under the auspices of the TES of the DES. Prior to 2010, a number of stand-alone services were providing CPD to teachers in schools. The PDST offers teachers CPD and professional learning opportunities in a range of educational, curricular and pedagogical areas.

In 2011, the Teaching Council commissioned a report into CPD in teacher education, drawing on data from the *Growing Up in Ireland* study (Banks and Smyth 2011). The findings indicate that "take-up of CPD appears to increase throughout the teaching career with those working over 20 years or more having the highest take-up" (Banks and

Smyth 2011, p. 30). Furthermore, more female teacher than male teachers engage in CPD and teachers with multi-grade classes and children with SEN are more likely to participate in CPD.

In March 2016, the Teaching Council published a Framework for Teachers' Learning, entitled *Cosán*, meaning pathway in the Irish language. *Cosán* is underpinned by the concept of life-long learning, which the Teaching Council committed to as part of its 2011 *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (The Teaching Council 2011). This national framework was based on a consultative process with teachers and other stakeholders, including ITE providers. *Cosán* "is a flexible framework, which provides a long-awaited opportunity to affirm the value of teachers' learning and acknowledge the full range of learning activities that teachers undertake for their own benefit and that of their students" (The Teaching Council 2016, p. 2). It is underpinned by the Teaching Council's values of shared professional responsibility, collective professional confidence and professionally-led regulation.

1.4.3 EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All eight of the participants in this research study spent some time as classroom teachers during their first year of teaching where, as beginning teachers, they taught children with and without SEN and reported having more engagement with parents of children with SEN than any other parents. Furthermore, all except one of the participants spent time as special education teachers where all of the children they taught had SEN. Consequently, most of the parents they engaged with were parents of children with SEN. Hence, the emphasis in this research study on parents of children with SEN which is reflected in the in the title of this thesis, *A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Lived Experiences of Engagement with Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs*. In order to fully appreciate this context, what follows is an overview of education for children with SEN in Ireland.

Historically in Ireland, like many other countries, it was widely believed "that children and young people with SEN were qualitatively different from their peers and that their social and learning needs were significantly dissimilar to other children so that they required separate education away from their mainstream peers" (Griffin and Shevlin 2011, p. 2). However, in more recent years, Ireland has given legislative commitment to inclu-

sive education, particularly, in the form of the Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland 1998) and the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland 2004). Other Irish legislation that supports inclusion includes the National Disability Authority Act 1999 (Government of Ireland 1999), the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Government of Ireland 2000), the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 (Government of Ireland 2000; 2004), the Children's Act 2001 (Government of Ireland 2001), the Teaching Council Act 2001 (Government of Ireland 2001) and the Disability Act 2005 (Government of Ireland 2005). This enabling legislation followed on from the *Special Education Review Committee Report* (1993) which, according to Stevens and O'Moore (2009) "was one of the most important events in modern special education, instigating unprecedented debate among the relevant education partners" (p. 7) and "provided a blueprint for the development of special education that continues to influence policy decisions" (Griffin and Shevlin 2011, p. 45). Prior to this *Report of the Special Education Review Committee* (Department of Education 1993), there was the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap* (Government of Ireland 1965) which was a response to a government White Paper (1960) entitled *The Problem of the Mentally Handicapped* (Government of Ireland 1960). Worthy of note here is that both of these publications were by the Department of Health. Furthermore, the language of the time cannot go unnoticed. However, it must also be noted that, despite the language used, which was of its time, Chapter Six of the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap* addresses the importance of early identification and the need for a team response to assessment, which would not be out of place in a modern-day publication.

Inclusive education, a multidimensional philosophy, is one of the most complex and controversial issues confronting educational professionals and policy makers worldwide (Mitchell 2005; Rose 2010). Defining inclusion is complex and there are "differing views on the definition of inclusion" (Shevlin et al. 2009, p. 2). Inclusion is sometimes conceptualised as a continuum with full inclusion at one end and optimal/moderate inclusion at the other (Norwich 2012). According to Lauchlan and Fadda (2012), inclusion is a social responsibility and is not restricted to education. Rose (2012) supports this view and contends that inclusive practices that are focused solely upon action in schools are unlikely to succeed. This paradigm shift towards inclusive education has implications for all involved in education. According to Drudy (2009), the inclusion of children with SEN is "at once the most topical, probably the most challenging and possibly the most significant, in terms of potential for change and development within the

Irish education system today" (p. 73). From an international perspective, the core of inclusive education is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly 1948) and the principles of inclusive education which were adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 in what became known as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO1994). Ireland is one of the signatories to the Salamanca Statement.

In Ireland, while there is legislative commitment to inclusive education, there exists a spectrum of educational provision for children with SEN. Our definition of SEN comes from Section One of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, where:

> "Special educational needs" means, in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition.

There is a variety of different approaches based on different values, assumptions and theories about individual difference, disability and SEN and three main models guide special education assessments and interventions (Desforges and Lindsay 2010). These are the medical model, the social model and the biopsychosocial (interactionist/ecological) model. Table 1.2 below gives a brief overview of each model.

Table 1.2 Brief Overview of Models of Disability (Desforges and Lindsay 2010)

Model	Description
Medical Model	The medical model views individual difference in terms of deficit, disability or disease.
Social Model	The social model sees disability as a social construct and argues that disability and SEN must be understood in the context in which they occur.
Biopsychosocial (interactionist/ecological) Model	The biopsychosocial (interactionist/ecological) model takes into account the various forces impinging on the developing child, forming a complex array of stress and support factors that interact at particular times during the life of a child.

According to Desforges and Lindsay (2010, pp. 3-4):

> Evidence from academic theory and research clearly supports the biopsychosocial model (interactionist/ecological model) as providing the best fit to the complexities of identifying and providing an appropriate education to children and young people with special educational needs … as this gives due weight to both within-person factors as well as a broad range of environmental factors that provide support and cause stress to the individual.

In 2011, the NCSE published a guide for schools on the inclusion of pupils with SEN: the *Inclusive Education Framework* (NCSE 2011b). This framework has been designed for use across all educational settings, including mainstream schools, special classes and special schools. All of the eight participants in this research study found themselves teaching across all these educational settings during the first two years as beginning teachers.

Prior to the issue of Circular No 0013/2017 (DES 2017) resources to support children with SEN had been allocated in a number of ways. Resources could include one-to-one or small-group teaching, support from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), now known as Inclusion Support Assistant (ISA), and sometimes physical resources like equipment, including laptops. From 1999, resources were allocated to schools based on children's assessed needs. This allocation model was revised in 2002 and again in 2003 where resource allocation was based on a child's category of disability. In 2005, a general allocation model (GAM) was introduced where each school received resources on an annual basis for children with *high-incidence disabilities*. The GAM model was expanded in 2012 to include provision for children who had English as an additional language (EAL). In addition to the GAM model, children with *low-incidence disabilities*, as determined by diagnosis, received resources from the NCSE. In 2013, a review of resource allocation was conducted and deemed inequitable and policy advice was provided in 2014 on a new resource allocation model.

This new resource allocation model was piloted in 2015/2016 and introduced to all schools in September 2017. With this new resource allocation model schools now have greater autonomy and deploy resources based on children's individual learning needs as determined by each individual school and without the requirement for a diagnosis. In Section 14 of Circular 0013/2017 (DES 2017) it states that special educational teachers will have access to additional training in the area of special education and in Sections 18 to 21 discuss the filling of these posts, including a comment that:

the acquired professional development and expertise of teachers, including where teachers have attained recognised qualifications in special education, should be taken into account by the principal when allocating teaching responsibilities, in order to ensure that pupils with the greatest needs are supported by teachers who have the relevant expertise, and who can provide continuity of support.

As a teacher educator, I welcome this, as I do the recent announcement by the DES of 900 new special education teacher posts to make this new resource allocation model work. However, I wonder how many of our beginning teachers will find themselves in these posts working with children with the greatest needs and engaging with their parents in order to fulfil the educational planning requirements outlined in Circular 0013/2017 (DES 2017), which includes collaboration with parents (Section 24)? If our beginning teachers are going to be employed as special education teachers, as anecdotal evidence suggests, then this has implications for teacher education, including ITE.

This section has presented a context for this research study by discussing ITE in Ireland and how children with SEN are educated in primary schools. Another context that merits discussion is the researcher. Therefore, the next section looks at me, as beginning teacher, parent and teacher educator.

1.4.4   THE RESEARCHER

According to Patton (2015), in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument of inquiry and who the researcher is, in terms of background, experience, knowledge and training, matters. Yin (2016) concurs with this sentiment and discusses the importance of the researcher making their research lens as explicit as possible. This lens, Yin (2016) argues, is never free of bias and, therefore, it behoves the researcher to "try hard to identify the features of your lens that are in any way likely to influence the findings made by your declarative self" (p.286). This lens influences everything the researcher does from the choice of data to be collected, to the research sample, to the choice of methodology, to the emergent findings, to the interpretation of these findings, and to the discussion and recommendations made at the end of the project. I choose to present myself as researcher in the following ways: as beginning teacher, parent and teacher educator. All of these aspects of who I am influence who I am as researcher and my purpose in including them in this introductory chapter is to declaratively state who I am so as to explicitly acknowledge my biased lens from the outset. In declaring myself, I risk revealing too much or perhaps too little of my reflexive self, but ethically and in the interest of research integrity I dare to take this risk.

I stood inside the main door of the school with my back up against the wall to catch my breath. Feelings of trepidation, excitement, anxiety, expectation overwhelmed me. This was my first morning as a beginning teacher. I was 20 years old and somehow acutely conscious of my youth. I remember wondering if I could do this job, did I have enough from my ITE programme to get me through, would my energy, passion and enthusiasm make up for what I lacked in experience? My first challenge that morning was walking into the staffroom; I found the prospect very daunting. As I stood inside the main door I waited, not sure what I was waiting for, but thankfully, a teacher in the school arrived, a colleague who in time was to become a good friend and brought me into the staffroom. The first hurdle of many on that first day was overcome. I remember the bell ringing to announce the start of the new school day, and indeed the new school year, and I waited again unsure of what to do next. At that point, the school principal arrived into the staffroom shook my hand and informed me that he would walk me to my classroom to meet the first children I would teach as a beginning teacher.

As we walked across the yard, my excitement vied for position with my trepidation. I like to think my excitement won out. As we crossed the yard my principal said something to me that has remained with me my entire teaching career, including my time as a teacher educator. He really was ahead of his time as he gave me one piece of advice. He said, "Anne, at the end of each day look back and ask yourself what went well and then ask yourself what you might do differently in the future". On that very first morning as a beginning teacher, he reminded me of the importance of reflective practice, and this has served me well throughout my career. I had been appointed as a special class teacher in a large mainstream boys' school for a group of 12 boys, all of whom had challenges in the areas of learning and behaviour. I was to be their teacher.

As a beginning special class teacher, I also recall being invited to become a member of a local community group, the Association of Parents and Friends of the Mentally Handicapped. As a young teacher I remember being taken aback by the name and I quietly inquired from a colleague, who brought me along to that first meeting, if this really was the name of the group. She said, yes it was and said that while the name might be off-putting, the work being done by this group was very worthwhile. Later, I realised that this association was similar to groups all over the country, driven by parents to support their children. In Dublin in 1956 the Association of Parents and Friends of the Mentally

Handicapped opened its first day school for children with what then would have been called mental handicap. The National Association of Parents and Friends of the Mentally Handicapped was formed in Ireland in 1960. This helped me understand, as a beginning teacher, why the name was still being used in my rural town twenty-five years later. Today, this association that I was part of at the beginning of my teaching career, is still going strong and still doing great work, including running summer camps for children and young people with SEN, where some of my student teachers volunteer.

This was the beginning of my teaching in the area of SEN and this has contributed to the lens through which I view the world. For me, every child is first and foremost a child and the nine years I spent as a special class teacher contributed to my understanding of children having common, distinct and unique needs (Ainscow 1999). It also helped me realise that who I am as a teacher mattered to these children and their families. Every child I met during this time had parents and families who loved them and when we worked together, the children benefited, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally and behaviourally. This was my lived experience as a young beginning teacher and is in keeping with the wider extant literature on the benefits of parent-teacher engagement (Broussard 2000; Catsambis 1988; Epstein 1983, 1984, 1986; Evans 2013; Fan & Chen 2001; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 2007; Henderson and Berla 1994; Jeynes 2005; Love 1996; Marjoribanks 1979; Sheridan et al. 2016; Wilder 2014; Zablotsky, Boswell, and Smith 2012). During that first day, I drew on every bit of experience and knowledge I had. My ITE programme did indeed serve me well, but so did my time as a youth leader and choir leader with children. I drew from many learning spaces during those first few days, weeks and months as I entered into this noble profession of teaching.

1.4.4.2 THE RESEARCHER AS PARENT

As a primary school teacher who began my career as a special class teacher, I was in trepidation of working with parents. As a parent of a child with what we call *special educational needs*, the notion of parents working with professionals suddenly became an imperative. As parents we want what is best for our children. Our hopes and dreams for them include education and the fervent hope that they will be happy in school and reach their potential. This hope begins the day they go to preschool, continues the day they start primary school and is still held on to as they enter secondary school.

The night before my first child was born, I wrote a letter welcoming my baby into the world. I wrote a letter to my child every birthday and recently, I reflected on these letters and realised it took me six birthdays to come back to the hopes and dreams that I initially held. There are myriad reasons for this, many to do with how others viewed my child and the language that was used to describe them and the challenges they faced. My child's story is theirs to tell but, suffice it to say, that when your child goes to school you want the best possible experience for them, and this is even more important when your child has SEN.

While I have always endeavoured to keep my personal life separate from my professional life, being the parent of a child with SEN has hugely informed my work. I can honestly say that in the work I do as a teacher educator I am particularly conscious of how the language we use as teachers matters. I tell my students a story about when I was delivering a session to what are now called Special Education Teachers (SETs) and this was an introductory course to SEN. I was presenting on individual education plans and was about ten minutes into my presentation and in full flight when a teacher, four rows from the front, shouted up at me, "I'm getting a Down's next year and I don't know what to do". I remember hearing a sharp intake of breath from around the room and feeling as if the world had just come to a standstill. I was incredibly conscious that there were 199 other pairs of eyes trained on me, probably wondering how I was going to respond to this. My first thought was, what if the parents were standing in the aisle listening to this teacher speak about their precious child? The best response I could manage at the time was, "I hear from what you have just said that you are going to have a child with Down syndrome in your class next year and you are very concerned as to how best to meet this child's needs". In that space between the teacher's comment and my reply I was thinking that this teacher was giving up her time to be at this professional development event, she used language that perhaps could be perceived as being inappropriate, but she was here. When I tell this story to my student teachers, I hear the same sharp intake of breath that I heard from the other 199 teachers on that morning, almost 20 years ago now. It makes me realise that, as a teacher educator, I am so privileged to work with over 1,000 student teachers every academic year and to have an opportunity to discuss values, attitudes, language, legislation, policy, pedagogy, needs, strategies, resources and especially, the fact that every child is first and foremost a child.

I spent nine years as a special class teacher and a further five years as a mainstream class teacher before I became a teacher educator. I was also a parent of a seven-month old and an eighteen-month old when I took up this position. As a teacher educator for the last 20 years, I have had the privilege of teaching students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the areas of early childhood education and inclusive education for children with SEN. Currently, I teach inclusive education for children with SEN to second, third and fourth year students during their four-year B.Ed. Degree Programme and I am also a Tutor on School Placement for first, second and fourth years. During this time, I have had opportunities to hone my own philosophy of education.

My personal philosophy of education is based on an ethic of care and caring relationships. How we, as teacher educators, care for and about our students is important and I believe that it is important that our students know that they are cared for. I also believe it is important that teachers in schools care about the children and that the children in the classroom care for and about each other. Encompassing all of this is how everyone in the school community cares for and about each other. Believing that the school does not exist in isolation, but nested within a myriad of systems, I think it is important how the school community cares for and about the children's families and, in the spirit of reciprocity, how families care for and about the school community. Because my teaching background has been mainly engaging with children with what we call *disability/special educational needs/additional needs*, I am acutely aware of the importance of relating with other professionals outside of the school community who support children to reach their potential. Having caring, respectful relationships is the foundation upon which my personal philosophy of education is built.

Having caring relationships is important and indeed essential in my view, but not sufficient. Students, I believe, deserve teachers who are competent and 'know their stuff'. Content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and skills are essential to that which we call teaching. I am careful when I refer to content knowledge, because while I believe teachers must be competent in terms of content knowledge, I also think it is important to be open to the fact that students in your classroom bring their own content knowledge to the table and indeed, on occasion, might bring more to the table than the teacher. I have a plaque on my desk, which I bought for myself, that quotes Michelangelo, 'I am always learning'; I like to think I am in good company with Michelangelo. So, I believe that

when we encounter each other in the classroom, we are all learners and can learn from each other. As a teacher, I believe we can learn so much about how our students learn as we teach and as we analyse what they show us about what they have learned. Here I am referring to assessment of, for and as learning and, in particular, the importance of observation and student voice.

Pedagogy is, in my view, essential to good teaching. How we teach and the pedagogical approaches we employ matter and they matter most when we engage with students who find accessing the curriculum challenging. My starting point is universal design for learning, where right from the outset we plan for everyone in our classroom. In planning and designing our curricula, pedagogies and assessments, we need to be cognisant of all of our learners. We do not plan the lesson and then, at the end, offer a hard and an easy worksheet to accommodate the learners who need differentiation. Something I strongly believe in asking our learners what would help them. Several years ago, I had a number of students in my lectures who had English as an additional language. I worked hard at differentiating the lectures and employed about a dozen evidence-based inclusive strategies to scaffold and support their learning. However, I neglected to ask them for their input and when I did, I was able to do one simple thing, based on their feedback that made all the other strategies much more effective. It was simply that I repeated what other students in the class had said. My teaching style is interactive in nature and the international students said they found the accents and speed at which the students in the class spoke very difficult. A simple request by them for me to repeat what students said more clearly and slowly meant they could now more fully engage in the class.

Ultimately, my personal philosophy of education is based on a premise that everyone has a right to education. I believe in the dignity of each human person and the right of each one of us to an appropriate education. This is not just about having access to education but is also about meaningful participation in education and educational achievement. Moreover, I hold the belief that everyone can learn if provided with appropriate conditions for learning. I tell my student teachers a story about Death Valley to illustrate this point. In the winter of 2004, the conditions in Death Valley changed, double the amount of rainfall fell in the valley than usually falls. Because the conditions changed, in the spring of 2005 Death Valley turned into a valley of wildflowers. This rare phenomenon only happens once in a lifetime and when it happens, people travel from all over the world to witness the sight. How on earth is this possible in a place that is so

hot, that virtually nothing can grow? The answer is that the seeds that are always on the floor of the valley, lying dormant and asleep, woke up! This reminds us that when the right conditions are created we can all realise our potential. As teachers, policy makers and legislators we need to do whatever it takes to create educational environments that will support our learners to reach their potential. Furthermore, I believe that we need education legislation, policies, and resources to allow our caring, competent, creative and committed teachers to do their jobs.

As already mentioned, the eight participants in this research study were the first cohort of students to engage in the reconceptualised B.Ed. Degree programme. I had the privilege of teaching them in the second year of their programme in large groups for a module entitled *Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs 1* and again in the third year of their programme, once again in large groups, for the module *Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs 2*. Furthermore, I worked with all eight participants in their final semester in fourth year, when they choose an elective module entitled, *Parent-Professional Partnership: Supporting the learning and wellbeing of children with special educational needs*. (see Appendix A for an overview of this module).

The elective module in fourth year merits particular mention, as all of the participants reference it throughout the three phases of the data gathering process. This module was conceived from my work at national level, where I brought a parent perspective to the roll-out of *Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People* by the DoH. As part of this initiative, I was asked to become a member of a working group looking at health and education partnership to support children and their families. We arranged a meeting in Mary Immaculate College, to which stakeholders from the Mid-West of Ireland were invited to have a conversation about working together in partnership. Remarkably, this was the first-time people from health and education in the Mid-West had formally sat in the same room together. At this meeting I met a psychologist from the Health Service Executive (HSE) who spoke about the assumptions we all have in terms of each other and how these assumptions can get in the way of working together. I decided I needed to meet this person. As a result of many conversations, we decided that student teachers in ITE would really benefit from input on working with parents and other professionals from both education and health in order to support the learning and wellbeing of children with SEN. The germ of an idea for a module on parent-

professional partnership was born. I approached my Head of Department about the possibility of offering such a module as part of our B.Ed. programme. Another colleague came on board and we designed a module on parent-professional partnership. The module emphasised the child within the family and was designed to support the learning and wellbeing of children with SEN through partnership between teachers, parents and other professionals. From the outset, and intrinsic to its design, the module was research-based and modelled the partnerships we sought to emulate, while placing a particular emphasis on reflective practice. We involved other parents, health professionals and education professionals in the design and delivery of the module. However, we faced a dilemma when it came to assessing the module, as we felt we needed an assessment mode that would honour the spirit, ethos and nature of the module and so another colleague came on board with particular expertise in using portfolios as a means of assessment and a vehicle for professional development.

The collegiality with three other enthusiastic and committed colleagues led to the development of a community of practice between the four of us. We made efforts to attend all the sessions with the student teachers, where one of us took the lead and the others were there in a supportive capacity. We were challenged both personally and professionally and as we met each week after each session, we kept minutes and discussed our learning. In these reflective sessions we discussed the most recent research on the topics being delivered, we explored with each other why we used particular approaches and we reflected individually and collectively. Essentially, we did what we expected the students to do during class: we took risks with each other. Figure 1.3 shows feedback from one of the student teachers on their learning from the module. We also developed a collaborative professional portfolio based on our work on this module and in recognition of this work we were awarded a National Forum Pilot Participant Digital Badge and a National Forum PACT Digital Badge from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in September 2017. For myself, I can honestly say designing and delivering this collaborative module has been one of the most satisfying and creative endeavours I have undertaken as a teacher educator.
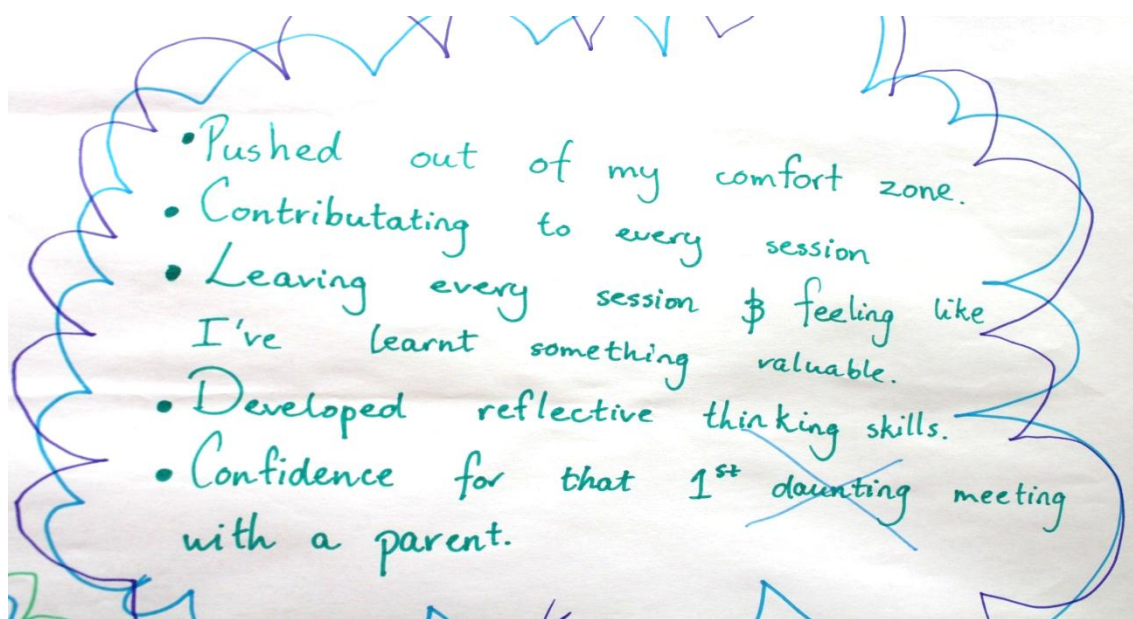
Figure 1.3 Feedback from Student Teacher on Elective Module on Parent-Professional Partnership

1.5 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

In terms of relevance, this research study is an original piece of Irish research that makes a contribution to the knowledge gap around beginning teachers' engagement with parents. The knowledge contribution comes from the perspective of beginning primary school teachers and how they engaged with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. Moreover, the findings point to how ITE can prepare student teachers to engage with parents.

1.6 THESIS OVERVIEW

This chapter sets the introduction to the research which is described in more detail through each of the next chapters, a summary of which is provided below.

Chapter Two provides a literature review on parent-teacher engagement. It firmly places the literature review within the broader concept of the conceptual framework that underpins this research study. As researcher, I argue for a rather broad definition of conceptual framework that includes a focus on research integrity, theoretical framework, a review of the literature and an outline of the research questions. Together, these threads weave their way into what I present as my visionary lens, my fundamental structure, my frame of reference, and ultimately, what I call my conceptual framework. It is iterative and responsive and places research integrity at the heart of this research study and not as

Mertens (2010) posits as is often the case, as an afterthought or burden. Research integrity must be integral to all that the researcher does and permeate all aspects of the work from inception to completion, including the theoretical framework. Theoretical frameworks and conceptual frameworks are often used synonymously. However, it is it important to distinguish between them while at the same time acknowledging their interrelatedness. Ravitch and Carl (2016) proffer that theoretical frameworks are part of the overarching conceptual framework and contribute immeasurably to the overall rigor of the study being undertaken. The theoretical framework underpinning this research study is an ecological systems framework that provides a clear and systematic platform for examining beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents and brings rigour, clarity, and direction to the work.

Chapter Three reports on how the data were collected, managed, organised and analysed. The chapter begins with an overview of the research approaches available to a researcher and the sort of data they generate. These research approaches need be understood so that a researcher can decide on a research design that will best answer the research question being asked and to "ensure that the data will be sufficiently rich, complex, and contextual to address the question and support the required analysis" (Richards and Morse 2013, p. 91). What follows is an articulation of why a qualitative case study approach, using interpretative phenomenological analysis, was decided upon as the methodological choice for this research study. Furthermore, an account of the data-gathering using semi-structures interviews over a three-phase cycle is discussed, as is the decision to use a purposeful research sample. The process of preparing the data for analysis and a description of the in-depth analysis of the data follows, evidenced by a clear audit trail and account of each step of the analytic process, accompanied by memos, diagrams, tables and screen shots of the process. Research integrity, ethical considerations and trustworthiness are addressed throughout the chapter, in order to ensure rigour and enhance the credibility of the research conducted. All of this is done with the intent purpose of contributing to our understanding of beginning teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN.

Chapter Four is about telling the story of the data. This chapter puts back into a coherent whole that which was taken apart in the previous Methodology Chapter. According to Smith and Osborn (2008), the findings section of a research study is where "the analysis becomes expansive again, as the themes are explained, illustrated and nuanced" (p.

76). The findings are guided by the research questions, where the research questions act as a lens through which the participants' stories are viewed (Breakwell 2012). According to Smith et al. (2009), IPA findings are "discreet in the sense that the interpretative account provided is a close reading of what the participants have said … without reference to the extant literature" (p. 112). As with all stages of a research study, the findings stage requires integrity and trustworthiness in terms of an ethical reporting. In reporting findings there is "an ethical duty to ensure that the results of the research are reported fairly, credibly and accurately, without misrepresentation or unfair selectivity" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 279). Consequently, the beginning teachers' own words feature largely in this chapter in an effort "to build the reader's confidence that the reality of the participants and the situation studied is accurately represented" (Bloomberg and Volpe 2016, p. 208).

Chapter Five revisits the research questions and presents a discussion on the findings. If research findings are what Denzin (1989) refers to as thick description, then discussion on the findings is about what Patton (2015) refers to as thick interpretation. In this chapter discussion on the findings, or Patton's (2015) thick interpretation, is contextualised within the wider extant literature on parent-teacher engagement and the ecological conceptual framework that underpins the entire research study. Findings that are in keeping with the extant literature in this field are discussed as are discrepant cases. One of the things that Smith et al. (2009) say about writing the discussion section of an interpretative phenomenological analysis study is that while "the findings should always be related to relevant literature … often this discussion will include a dialogue with literature which was not referenced in the introduction to the study" (p.181). I found myself in this position, where, as a result of consideration of the findings, the concept of agency and, in particular, an ecological understanding of teacher agency emerged and merited exploration and discussion. As an extension of this ecological understanding of teacher agency, in this chapter, I also argue for another ecological concept, lifewide learning, to be taken into consideration in terms of beginning teachers' agentic behaviour.

Chapter Six adopts Borton's (1970) Reflective Framework of *What?/So what?/Now what?* to offer a summary of this research study and raise the interpretation of beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN, to a broad set of ideas. Borton's *What?* is presented as Reflections, followed by

the *So what?* as Lessons Learned and concluding with *Now what*? as a series of Recommendations.

1.7 CONCLUDING COMMENT

The purpose of this research study was to contribute to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement and, specifically, how beginning teachers in Ireland engage with parents. The chapter began with a presentation of the research problem, research purpose and subsequent research questions that formed the basis of this research study. It sought to position the research within the context of Ireland in 2019 and therefore, provide a rationale for the work undertaken. The research context included positioning the researcher as beginning teacher, parent and initial teacher educator. This chapter concluded with an overview and synopsis of the remaining chapters that comprise this thesis, namely Conceptual Framework, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research study is to make a contribution to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement and, specifically, how beginning teachers in Ireland engage with parents. This chapter begins by outlining my definition of conceptual framework, which underpins the entire research study that explores beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents. Embedded within the conceptual framework, which I define rather broadly, I discuss my theoretical framework, address research integrity and present a literature review on parent-teacher engagement. To conclude, I outline the research questions.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Much has been written about conceptual frameworks and their importance in conducting rigorous research (Marshall and Rossman 2011; Maxwell 2013; Miles, Huberman and Saldana 2014; Ravitch and Riggan 2012; Ravitch and Carl 2016; Ravitch and Riggan 2017). My understanding of conceptual framework is most aligned with the thinking of Ravitch and Riggan (2017), in that it is both a process and a product and guides research from its inception to its completion. Ravitch and Riggan 2017 posit that the conceptual framework makes research meaningful and provides both direction and impetus for the work. They consider it multifaceted with the capacity to embrace complexity, contradictions and a multiplicity of ideas and experiences. They argue that when used well, the conceptual framework gives focus to the research and acts as a link between the researcher, the literature, the methodology, the fieldwork, the findings, and the recommendations.

This conceptual framework is iterative and responsive to literature searches, research findings, analysis, and the experiences along the way. Sometimes it is to the forefront of the writing, other times it takes more of a back seat, but always it is there giving strength and rigour to the work being undertaken. It is the golden thread that weaves its way through all of the work; it is the alpha and the omega. It is this type of conceptual framework that will frame my research study, shed new light on existing issues and add

to the existing body of research on beginning teachers and parents, with particular emphasis on parents of children with special educational needs (SEN).

I am defining the conceptual framework for my research study rather broadly to include the issue of research integrity, a theoretical framework, a review of the literature, and an outline of the research questions. Together, these threads weave their way into what I present as my visionary lens, my fundamental structure, my frame of reference, and ultimately, what I call my conceptual framework. To illustrate my conceptual framework and represent it in graphical form, I searched long and hard and realised that a labyrinth, an ancient symbol which has captured human imagination for thousands of years (Sands 2005), best represents the concept that I am trying to capture. More specifically, a unicursal labyrinth as opposed to a multicursal labyrinth, best represents this, as the unicursal labyrinth has only one path to the centre. Everything leads back to this centre, that is to say the theoretical framework, research integrity, literature review, and the research questions all lead to the very centre that encapsulates the conceptual framework of this research study. By its very nature this conceptual framework needs to be dynamic, iterative, flexible and open to revision, expansion and correction as new insights emerge during the research process.

Figure 2.1 Image of Conceptual Framework - Unicursal Labyrinth (creativecommons.org)

2.1.1   RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Research integrity is important, or at least ought to be important, for all researchers and forms part of the overall conceptual framework. Is it reasonable to assume that a researcher will act with integrity in terms of the research they will conduct? Does getting ethical approval from a board ensure that research will be conducted ethically and with integrity or is more required? Can one have secured ethical approval and yet conduct ethical research in an unethical manner? Brooks et al. (2014) argue that "conducting research ethically is important in itself"' (p. 4), regardless of the requirements of ethics boards or indeed legislation and state that all research has ethical implications. There are so many questions. In essence, what does it mean to conduct research ethically and with integrity? Mertens (2010) suggests that these questions and others like them need to be considered from the outset of a research study and, indeed, throughout the research study and not as an afterthought, as sometimes happens. Research integrity must be integral to all that the researcher does and permeate all aspects of the work from inception to completion and including the theoretical framework. Throughout this research study, I have endeavoured to work as an ethical researcher and all of the work has been undertaken with a strong commitment to participants' welfare and best interests.

2.1.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical frameworks and conceptual frameworks are often used synonymously. However, it is it important to distinguish between them, while at the same time acknowledging their inter-relatedness. Ravitch and Carl (2016) proffer that theoretical frameworks are part of the overarching conceptual framework and contribute immeasurably to the overall rigor of the study being undertaken. The theoretical framework underpinning this research study is an amalgam of the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 2005) and Epstein (1999; 2010). Of all the theories in existence, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a clear and systematic platform for examining a person's life and development. In addition, as theory on parent engagement is built largely on ecological systems frameworks (Gadsen et al. 2016), Bronfenbrenner's work lends itself beautifully to underpinning this particular research study. Building on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is the work of Epstein (1999; 2010); the relationship between the two will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2.1.2.1   BRONFENBRENNER

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of child development is a result of many years of engagement "... in a concerted effort to develop a theoretical and operational model for investigating the role of the environment in shaping human development through the life course" (Bronfenbrenner 1999, p. 3). Bronfenbrenner divides his work into two periods, the first from his doctoral thesis in 1943 to his 1979 publication of the *Ecology of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The second period of his work is from the seminal 1979 publication to his death in 2005. Bronfenbrenner (1999) characterises this period through a series of papers calling his original model into question, and then proceeding to "incorporate its former components, along with new elements, into a more complex and more dynamic structure eventually referred to as the bioecological model" (p. 4). This *new beginning*, as he refers to it, makes a critical distinction between the concept of *environment* and *process*.

Of interest to this study is Bronfenbrenner's concern about the healthy development of children and how external influences impact on this (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006). One such external influence identified by Bronfenbrenner is the school. While presenting the family as the principal context in which child development takes place, Bronfenbrenner acknowledges that what happens in another setting, for example the school, can influence what is happening at home and vice versa. In his 1979 work, Bronfenbrenner used the terms microsystems (environments directly surrounding the developing person), mesosystems (relationships between the microsystems), exosystems (environments external to the developing person), macrosystems (culture of the developing person) and chronosystems (influences of changes over time) to characterise the different environments or ecological systems we encounter during our lives.
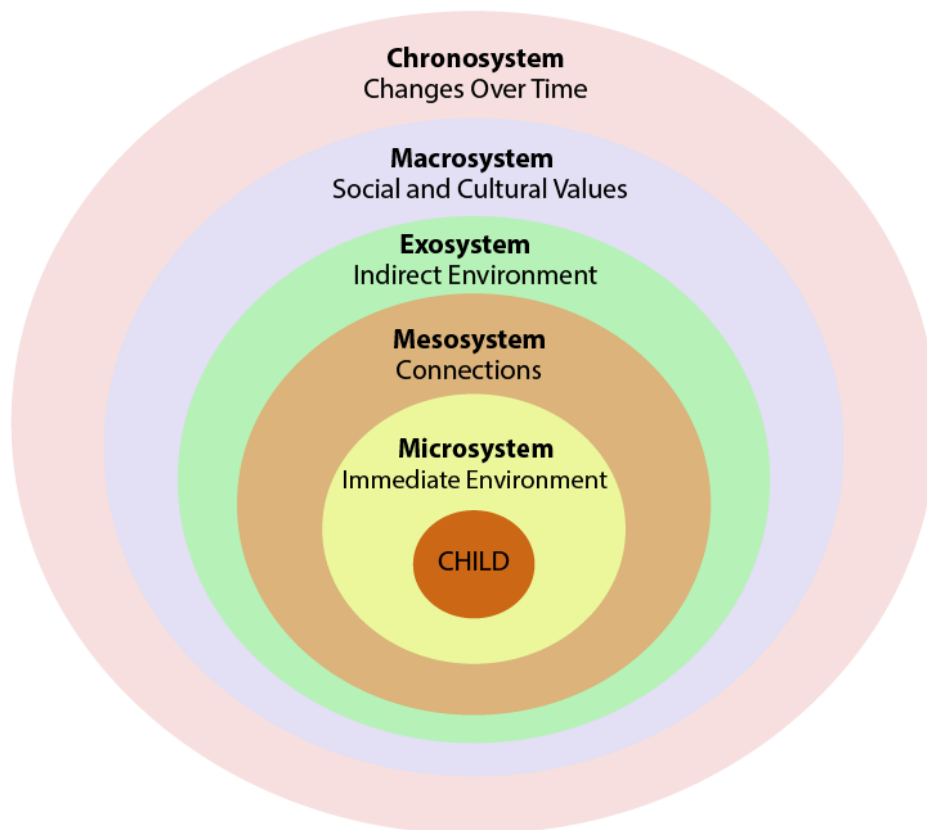
Figure 2.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (from https://www.Psychology NotesHQ.com)

Bronfenbrenner (1986) singled out the work of Joyce Epstein as being a very balanced and good example of relationship between home and school.

2.1.2.2 EPSTEIN

Epstein's work, according to Bronfenbrenner, not only looks at the impact family has on the child in school, but also the impact that school has on the child at home. He refers specifically to Epstein's research on "Longitudinal Effects of Family-School-Person Interactions on Student Outcomes" (1983) where Epstein worked with approximately 1,000 students who were transitioning from middle school to high school. In this study Epstein considered "the joint impact of family and classroom processes and changing pupils' attitudes in their academic achievement during this transition" (Bronfenbrenner 1986, p. 727). What is noteworthy in this piece of research is that, "… the effects of family and school processes were greater than those attributable to socio-economic status or race" (p.727). This leads us to examine in more detail the contribution of Professor Joyce Epstein to partnership between family and school.

Epstein (2011) states the importance of "… peer driven and research-based approaches to programs of school, family, and community partnerships" (p. 20). Her theory identifies six facts and one urgently needed action. The urgently-needed action is a call for, "… immediate and dramatic changes in the presence and advanced education of teachers, administrators, counsellors, and others who work with schools, families and students" (Epstein 2011, p. 21). This urgently-needed action is a boost to the rationale for this particular research study as we look at beginning teachers' experiences of relationship with parents with a view to informing ITE programmes. The six facts Epstein refers to are as follows:

- All students have families. All students and families live in communities. Families and communities are important in children's lives and, along with schools, influence students' learning.

- Teachers and administrators have direct or indirect contact with students' families every day of their professional careers.

- Few teachers or administrators are prepared to work with families and communities as partners in children's education.

- There is widespread agreement and accumulating evidence that well-designed programs and practices of school, family, and community partnerships benefit students, families, and schools.

- Ever more rigorous research and evaluations are needed to continually improve knowledge about family and community involvement and the effectiveness of state, district, and school programs and practices.

- Although there is more to learn, we know enough now to implement research-based, goal-linked programs of school, family, and community partnerships that engage all families and help all students succeed to their full potential. (Epstein 2011, p. 20-21).

In her early work, Epstein (1995) speaks of home, school, and community as overlapping spheres of influence and argues that when schools, families, and communities interact with each other, "... more students are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of schools, of working hard, thinking creatively, of helping one another, and of staying in school" (p. 702). Epstein (1995) insists that, "… the way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families" (p. 701). Epstein argues that if schools view children simply as students then family and home are more likely to be seen as separate from the school.

However, if schools view students as children, then it is more likely that family and, indeed, the community will be seen as partners to improve outcomes for children both in school and in later adult life.

Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence takes into accounts the history, development, and changing experiences of parents, teachers and students. The degree of overlap is influenced by three things: time (both individual and historical time), experience and families, and experiences and schools. As seen in Figure 2.3, the model outlines six types of involvement between home, school, and the community, and speaks of parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating within the community (See Appendix B).

1. • Parenting
2. • Communicating
3. • Volunteering
4. • Learning at home
5. • Decision-making
6. • Collaborating within the community
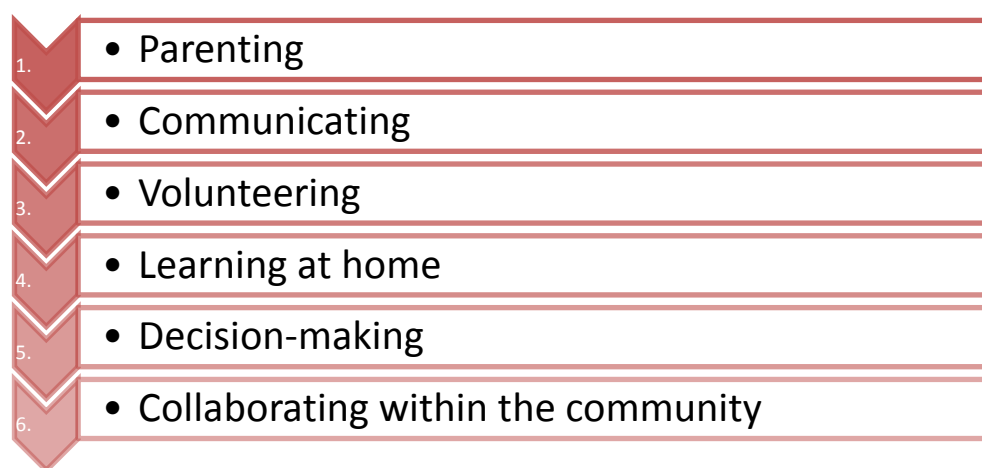
Figure 2.3 Epstein's Home/School/Community Engagement Framework (Epstein 1995)

In her 2005 paper, *Attainable Goals? The Spirit and Letter of the No Child Left Behind Act on Parental Involvement*, Epstein encourages researchers to take new directions on school, family and community engagement. She argues that The No Child Left Behind Act 2002 "activates the theory of *overlapping spheres of influence,* which posits that students learn more and better when the home, school, and community share responsibilities for their success" (Epstein 2005, p. 180).

2.1.2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK CONSIDERATIONS

In contemplating the work of Bronfenbrenner and Epstein, I identified, as a researcher, much harmony between the two theoretical frameworks but also some differences. For me, both theories were based on assumptions of interconnectedness between individuals and their surrounding ecologies. There were, without question, permeable boundaries where influences from one sphere of life seeped into other spheres of life. Both theories

acknowledge that the child does not exist in isolation, whether at home or at school, and what happens to the child in either situation can and does impact, not only the child, but those around the child. Both Bronfenbrenner and Epstein seek to support the learning and wellbeing of the child both at home and in school. The idea of partnership between home and school has a very clear focus, namely, to support the flourishing of the child in both places.

I decided to write to Professor Joyce Epstein with my dilemma, in the hope that she would be kind enough to shed some light on my deliberations. To my absolute delight, Professor Epstein replied to my enquiries and very graciously informed me that, yes, she had been influenced by the work of Professor Uri Bronfenbrenner and indeed was very pleased when Professor Bronfenbrenner dropped her a little note commending her on her work and how he liked the way her theoretical model extended his prior work. In her email to the author, Epstein relayed that Professor Bronfenbrenner went on to link his work to the dynamics she presented, particularly her theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which Epstein says she developed, "to extend Bronfenbrenner's work by adding a sociological perspective, creating an interdisciplinary and dynamic view (external and internal models) of high school, family and community partnerships contribute to student success in school" (December 2016).

In her email to the author (December 2016), Epstein highlighted the description of the development of her theory of overlapping spheres of influence in her book, *School Family and Community Partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (Epstein 2011). Epstein (2011) recalls how in the last decades of the 20th century, ideas about family and school moved from separate entities towards increased teacher-parent cooperation and communication. She outlines how schools and families can act and interact in ways that can include or exclude parents from influencing their children's education. She also outlines how schools and families can act and interact in ways that can include or excludes teachers from influencing the family. She refers to actions, on the part of the school and the family, that, "... push the spheres of family and school influence together and apart in a continuous, dynamic passion, and influence student learning and development" (Epstein 2011, p. 39).

In my email correspondence with Epstein (December 2016), we also communicated about how her work is influencing and underpinning a national project here in Ireland. In 2014, Professor Epstein was invited by the National Parents Council (NPC) (Primary) to present at their National Conference in Dublin. At this conference she outlined her theory of *overlapping spheres of influence* and presented extensive research on how her work has supported children in schools. At the same conference, a number of schools presented results from a pilot study on how they had used Epstein's work to develop family-school relationships. This pilot study has now been developed into a national project, *Partnerships Schools Ireland Programme*, a joint initiative between the NPC, the Irish Primary Principals' Network and the DES (NPC 2016). The aim of the project is to co-ordinate, train and support Irish primary schools to use Epstein's evidence-based partnership approach to improve outcomes for children. In her correspondence to me, Professor Epstein commended the Irish Government for their support for this national project.

2.1.3   CONCLUDING COMMENT ON CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Both Bronfenbrenner and Epstein provide a very firm ecological platform for exploring beginning teachers' experiences of engaging with parents. Using Bronfenbrenner and Epstein as a theoretical framework to investigate the experience of these beginning teachers will offer rigour, clarity, and direction to the work. In addition to sound theoretical underpinnings, is the need for an examination of the existing literature in the field. According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), "perhaps the most important function of a review of existing knowledge in a particular area is to identify promising directions for future investigation" (p. 734). And so, to the literature review.

2.2   LITERATURE REVIEW

Conducting a literature review is essential, even if one's only motive is to avoid undertaking a piece of research that has been already undertaken (Silverman 2014). Hart (1998) posits that the literature review needs to be more than mere description of what has been read by the researcher, but an *effective evaluation* of that reading. In addition, the literature review should support the rationale for the new research study and provide a framework for where the new research fits in terms of the "big picture" of what is known and indeed what is not known about the research topic (Mertens 2010).

2.2.1 THE LITERATURE SEARCH

A thorough literature search and associated reading are essential, particularly when undertaking doctoral research, in order to identify research that has not yet been undertaken and contribute new knowledge to the research field being studied (Silverman 2014). The literature search, or review process, to which it is sometimes referred, needs to begin with a broad idea (Mertens 2010), as too narrow a search can yield little or no findings. According to Flick (2015), the actual process of searching the literature helps refine the researcher's thinking and clarifies the research topic.

The literature search for this research study, which investigates beginning teachers' experiences of working with parents, began with twenty-two search terms (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Literature Review Search Terms

teachers and parents
Irish teachers and parents
parent teacher engagement
parental involvement
parental engagement
parent teacher collaboration
newly qualified teachers and parents
newly qualified teachers and parental involvement
newly qualified teachers and parental engagement
newly qualified teachers and parental collaboration
newly qualified teachers and parents of children with special educational needs
NQTs and parents
NQTs and parents of children with special educational needs
NQTs and parental involvement
NQTs and parental engagement
beginning teachers and parents
beginning teachers and parents of children with special educational needs
beginning teachers and parental involvement
beginning teachers and parental engagement
parent professional partnership
parent professional collaboration

home school community partnership
home school community collaboration

Having consulted the thesaurus in the search engine ERIC International, which consists of two abstract databases (Australian Education Index (AUEI) which is Australia's largest source of education information and the US Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) which has access to 1.5 million bibliographic records of journal articles and other education related materials), to determine how these terms might have been conceptualised by the indexers inputting the data, the search was confined to searching for "beginning teachers" AND "parents" .

To add to the Australian and American findings from ERIC International and AUEI, searches were also conducted using the British Education Index, Educational Research Abstracts Online, and Google Scholar. A critical perusal of results and subsequent reading of abstracts led to a narrowing down of the findings. On reading a particularly relevant article, a very useful and productive strategy was to examine the reference section at the end of the article and follow up on research that appeared to offer more depth and/or expansion of my own research questions. Another very useful strategy within the electronic search was following up suggestions given alongside relevant articles e.g. having read, Aspfors, J. and Bondas, T. (2013) 'Caring about caring: newly qualified teachers' experiences of their relationships within the school community', *Teachers and Teaching,* 19(3), 243-259, I was directed to the following related articles: Haggarty, L. and Postlethwaite, K. (2012) 'An exploration of changes in thinking in the transition from student teacher to newly qualified teacher', *Research Papers in Education,* 27(2), 241-26.; Ulvik, M. and Langørgen, K. (2012) 'What can experienced teachers learn from newcomers? Newly qualified teachers as a resource in schools', *Teachers and Teaching,* 18(1), 43-57; Caspersen, J. and Raaen, F. D. (2014) 'Novice teachers and how they cope', *Teachers and Teaching,* 20(2), 189-211.; Pillen, M., Beijaard, D. and den Brok, P. (2013) 'Professional identity tensions of beginning teachers', *Teachers and Teaching,* 19(6), 660-678.; Hong, J. Y. (2012) 'Why do some beginning teachers leave the school, and others stay? Understanding teacher resilience through psychological lenses', *Teachers and Teaching,* 18(4), 417-440. This type of literature search ensured that current articles were brought to my attention and proved very helpful in identifying the GAP within the literature, thus giving credence, credibility and indeed confidence to my exploration of the relevant literature in my chosen field.

In addition to electronic searches of databases, a hand search was conducted in the Mary Immaculate College Library of all the journal articles of *Remedial Education*, *Special Children* and *REACH*. The *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland* proved particularly useful in terms of tracing parents and teachers working together to support the learning and wellbeing of children with SEN in the Irish context. Complementing the search was a search of government education websites and relevant information was identified in Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Canada, Finland, Norway and Victoria and New South Wales in Australia. The primary criteria used for the inclusion of articles and documentation in this research study was what Martens (2010) called, centrality to your topic, which in this case refers to beginning teachers' experiences of engaging with parents.

To systematically review the findings from the literature search, I constructed a rubric for a Literature Input Table (see Table 2.2) based on the following headings: Who? (author/s and year); Where? (full bibliographic reference); What? (three key points/findings/recommendations); Why? (the GAP, why is this relevant and meaningful for my research study? What other piece of research is conceptually close to this piece of research?); Quote (possible quotes to use in thesis). Please see Appendix C for more extensive extract from Literature Input Table.

Table 2.2 Literature Input Table

Who?	Where?	What?	Why?	Quote
Dale 1995	Dale, N. (1995) *Working with families of children with special needs: partnership and practice*, Brunner Mazel Inc.	The book is a combination of theory and ideas for practice. It provides a framework for thinking and practice on working with families of children with SEN and partnership methods.	AOB: in an intervention/strategy/approach- the ultimate judge must be the children, parents and families at the receiving end.	"A professional and parent come together for the first time. They bring their own worries and concerns, their own priorities and responsibilities. Somehow these have to be woven together into a relationship that works for both parties" (Dale 1995, p. 1).

2.2.2 THEMES FROM LITERATURE SEARCH

An extensive search of the literature found that when schools and parents work together, children benefit. The following section presents the themes that emerged beginning with what the literature says about schools and parents, including the barriers that prevent schools and parents from working together. The role of fathers in their children's education also emerged as something that needs careful consideration, as did the need to acknowledge the diversity of today's families. Of particular significance was the emergence of the theme of parents of children with SEN. The use of technology also emerged as an important theme to support communication between home and school.

2.2.2.1 SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Research consistently shows that students have better outcomes when schools and parents work in partnership (Broussard 2000; Catsambis 1988; Epstein 1983, 1984, 1986; Evans 2013; Fan & Chen 2001; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 2007; Henderson and Berla 1994; Jeynes 2005; Love 1996; Marjoribanks 1979; Sheridan et al. 2016; Wilder 2014; Zablotsky, Boswell, and Smith 2012) and "attempts to enhance parental involvement in education occupy governments, administrators, educators and parents' organisations across North America, Australasia, continental Europe, Scandinavia and the UK" (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003, p. 7). In particular, the research tells us that students benefit, not only, in their academic outcomes, but also in their behavioural outcomes, when parents and schools work together to support their learning and wellbeing (Hornby 2011). When schools, families, and communities work together in partnership, "children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more" (Henderson and Mapp 2002, p. 8). According to Sheridan et al. (2016) "the benefits of engaging families in children's education are among the most convincing and consistent findings in the educational literature" (p. 1).

Henderson and Berla (1994) posit that when parents and teachers work together not only do children succeed in school, they also succeed throughout their adult life. This is of particular significance when it comes to investing in programmes that support the development of relationships between home and school. This is particularly true when investment is made in the early years and when poverty and disadvantage are prevalent. An abundance of research supports this assertion, including the 1960s Perry Preschool Project where children from Ypsilanti, Michigan were followed from preschool into

their forties (Derman-Sparks 2016), the 1970s Abecedarian Project where infants from Carolina were followed into their thirties (Campbell et al. 2012) and the 1980s Chicago Child-Parent Center Preschool Programme where parental involvement in schools was cited as one of the main factors contributing to the impact of reduced child maltreatment (Mersky et al. 2011). The findings from these projects have influenced policy-making worldwide and have provided an evidence-based rationale for investment in home-school projects, particularly in the early years. Heckman (2013) who is considered the world leader on early years' policy within economics, credits parental involvement in education as one of the main factors supporting positive outcomes for children.

Of particular significance to this research study is Epstein and Dauber's (1991) research which shows that above and beyond all the factors that influence parent-teacher engagement, including parent education socio-economic status, and family size, the most critical factor is invitations from teachers to parents to become involved in their children's education. These invitations can take many forms including parent-teacher meetings, classroom volunteering, and helping with homework. Harris and Goodall (2008) conclude that it is "parental engagement in children's learning at home that makes the greatest difference to student achievement" (p. 1). In a recent extensive American study (Gadsen et al. 2016), the literature on parent engagement in schools is divided into two approaches: the first focusing on improving parents' level and quality of engagement with their children at home, and the second focusing and connecting parents with their children's school. Both approaches are with the view to supporting the academic achievement and behaviour of their children (Gadsen et al. 2016).

However, there is also a body of research that concludes that not all parental involvement programmes improve student achievement (White et al. 1992; Mattingly et al. 2002). The work of White et al. (1992) focuses on early childhood, while the work of Mattingly et al. (2002) is concerned with outcomes for children in primary school, which is the focus of this research study and, consequently, merits further commentary. According to Mattingly (2002), programmes that promote parental involvement must be rigorously evaluated if we are to ascertain whether or not they contribute to improving outcomes for children and according to Henderson and Mapp (2002), parental involvement programmes must be related to children's learning, if there are to be improved outcomes for children.

Mattingly et al. (2002) examined the data and methodology used in 41 American studies that evaluated parental involvement programmes at primary/elementary school level and discovered that "fewer than half (45%) of the studies evaluated the effect of interventions and fewer than a quarter (22%) were published in refereed journals" (p. 550). The methodology used to gain an understanding of the evaluation methods used in the 41 studies was extremely rigorous and thorough and reliability was maximised by using two researchers to code each article. However, the researchers in this study do not claim that involving parents is not effective, but rather highlight the importance of rigorously assessing parental involvement programmes. The findings from Mattingly et al. (2002) are important and useful because it makes it incumbent upon researchers to rigorously assess programmes and identify what kind of parental involvement programmes lead to positive outcomes for children.

Parental involvement programmes that lead to positive outcomes for children "should be part of a contextually focused school improvement process designed to create positive relationships that support children's total development" (Comer and Haynes 1991, p. 271). Henderson and Mapp (2002) concur and posit that successful parental involvement programmes that achieve positive outcomes for children are programmes that focus on respectful and trusting relationships. Considering that parental involvement has become "one of the centrepieces of educational dialogue among educators, parents, and political leaders" (Jeynes 2003, p. 203), it is necessary to explore what the term *parental involvement* means.

Parental involvement, which "has become one of the centerpieces of educational dialogue among educators, parents and political leaders" (Jeynes 2003, p. 203), can mean different things to different people (Epstein 1986) and "despite its intuitive meaning, the operational use of parental involvement has not been clear and consistent" (Fan and Chen 2001, p. 3). Some researchers do not define parental involvement, but rather present the types of involvement in which parents engage with schools (Wilder 2014). Many governments, like the Scottish Government, view parental involvement as "parents and teachers working together in partnership to have children become more confident learners" (Scottish Government 2006, p. i). Park and Holloway (2017) view parental involvement as a multidimensional construct and differentiate between three types of parental involvement: parental involvement that helps an individual's own child, parental involvement that improves the school, and parental involvement through peer networking. Twenty years earlier, Hoge, Smit, and Crist (1997) refer to parental expecta-

tions, parental interest, parental involvement in school, and family community. Regardless of definition, however, parental involvement has the potential to improve outcomes for children. What is important is to establish what types of parental programmes can contribute to positive outcomes for children and what might constitute barriers to achieving this.

The research literature identifies many barriers to parent-teacher engagement, including parents' poor literacy skills, which do not allow parents to support their children's learning; parents working all day and unable to attend parent-teacher meetings; and in disadvantaged contexts poverty which often means children are without the necessary resources to enable learning (Martinez 2014). Another barrier to parent-teacher partnership is legislation, or rather the lack of legislation to ensure that families and schools work together in the best interests of the child. Where there is legislation, there is a legislative requirement on schools to engage with parents and examples of such legislation can be found in America's No Child Left Behind Act 2002. This Act has a specific section on Parental Involvement (Section 1118). Section 1118 presents the following four principles with regard to parental involvement: parental involvement requires multilevel leadership; parental involvement is a component of school and classroom organisation; parental involvement recognises the shared responsibilities of educators and families for children's learning and success in school; parental involvement programs must include all families, even those who are not currently involved, not just the easiest to reach.

Of particular interest to this research study is the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. This Act, which sees schools, parents, and carers having a shared responsibility to educate children, aims to support parents to be "involved with their child's education and learning; welcomed as active participants in the life of the school; encouraged to express their views on school education generally and work in partnership with the school" (The Scottish Government 2006, p. 1). The Act focuses on improving parental involvement in three ways: learning at home, home-school partnership, and parental representation. To support the implementation of the Act, a Guidance document was designed to support education authorities and schools to meet the requirements under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. What is particularly appealing about this document is that is recognises that *not one size fits all*, and acknowledges the importance of developing policies, practices, and arrangements that are appropriate to local circumstances.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009, which is an amendment of the 2004 Act, outlines parents' rights within the education system. The Act promotes collaboration between professionals and parents with a view to supporting children and young people, who face barriers to their learning, to achieve their full potential. In 2010 Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (Scottish Government 2010a) was published, providing guidance on the new Act. It includes a focus on avoiding and resolving differences between authorities and families. In the previous year, 2009, The Early Years Framework was published with the view to giving children in Scotland the best start in life. The Framework focuses on children pre-birth to eight-years old and acknowledges many aspects of the framework are also relevant to older children. Within the Framework, there is a strong emphasis on "the importance of strong, sensitive relationship with parents and carers" (The Scottish Government 2009, p. 4) and an acknowledgement of the *crucial role* parents and communities play in achieving positive outcomes for children. What is really heartening about The Early Years Framework (2009) is its emphasis on quality, collaboration, and helping children, families and communities secure positive outcomes for themselves. In all of its legislation, it is clear that the Scottish Government is of the view that "partnership working between professionals is only meaningful and effective when it includes parents as partners" (Scottish Government 2010b, p. 21). While legislation may be important, there is also an argument to be made that legislation alone may not be enough to effect change and bring about the required engagement and partnership desired (Mandlawitz 2002; Ring 1997; Simmons 2000). Nevertheless, supportive legislation and policy can and does support the development of positive home-school engagement and is part of the ecological platform upon which this engagement flourishes.

2.2.2.2 FATHERS

Fathers play an important role in their children's education (Morgan 2017). Yet, research on the effects of fathers' involvement in their children's learning is sparse. Panter-Brick et al. (2014) examined 199 publications on father participation in parenting interventions and identified seven key barriers to engaging fathers. The barriers identified were cultural considerations, institutional considerations, professional considerations, operational considerations, content considerations, resource considerations, and policy considerations. As we look at engaging fathers, it is important to state that it is not about engaging with fathers for the sake of engaging with fathers, no more than it

is about engaging with mothers for the sake of engaging with mothers. Engaging with parents, be they fathers or mothers, is so that their children will have better outcomes in school and in later life.

Supporting fathers to engage in their children's learning and development requires careful consideration of the design, delivery, and evaluation of initiatives (Panter-Brick et al. 2014). More research is required to identify evidence-based practices to better engage fathers in their children's learning and with schools, and schools need to specifically target fathers in their efforts to involve parents in their children's education (Gadsen et al. 2016). This has implications for this research project and careful consideration will need to be taken in terms of methodological design. It will be important to design a research instrument that will elicit information not just on beginning teachers' engagement with parents, but on their engagement with both fathers and mothers, and indeed other relevant caregivers in the child's life.

2.2.2.3 DIVERSE FAMILIES

It is acknowledged that families are "more dynamic and diverse than ever before" (Richards et al. 2016, p. 278). There is no *quick fix* for building partnership between schools and diverse families (Allen 2007) and efforts to do so can be extremely challenging (Lo 2008). The traditional notion of family, as father, mother and children, has changed and diverse families now include single parents, same-sex parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents, and adoptive parents. In addition to being aware of the diverse structure of families, there is also a need to be sensitive to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of children and their families. Turnbull et al. (2011) posit that understanding the culture of a family is the beginning of honouring cultural diversity. Richards et al. (2016) recommend that educators critically reflect on their own beliefs and practices to reveal any biases or dissonances between them and the beliefs and behaviours of the children they teach and their families.

In 2003, a meta-analysis of 21 studies was undertaken by William Jeynes to "determine the impact of parental involvement in the academic achievement of minority children" (Jeynes 2003, p. 1). This was the first meta-analysis examining the impact of parental involvement and minority children's academic outcomes. Meta-analyses are useful in that they examine more than one individual study and therefore can contribute greatly to our understanding of what has already been researched in a particular field. Each of the

21 studies, which involved almost 12,000 participants, controlled for socio-economic status and examined the overall effects of parental involvement on academic achievement. Academic achievement was assessed using four different measures, incorporating standardised and non-standardised testing. The studies also looked at the components that make up parental involvement. The specific components examined included:

> the extent to which parents communicate with their children about school, whether parents check their children's homework, parental expectations for the academic success of their children, whether parents encourage their children to do outside reading, whether parents attended school functions, the extent to which there were household rules regarding school and/or leisure activities, parenting style and warmth
>
> (Jeynes 2003, p. 206)

The results of Jeynes' meta-analysis in 2003 indicated that, overall, parental involvement impacts positively on academic outcomes for children from minority groups. A number of years later, Wilder (2014) concurred with Jeynes' (2003) findings. In a meta-synthesis of nine meta-analyses of the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement, Wilder (2014) found that, regardless of ethnic background, parental involvement in school has a positive effect on school achievement.

As teachers, and particularly as beginning teachers, we can learn with and from families, if we are so inclined. The research informs us that effective parental involvement programmes between schools and diverse families are ones that acknowledge differences, build on strengths, work to meet needs and ultimately, share power and decision making (Henderson and Mapp 2002). Verdon et al. (2015) identifies opportunities to enhance cultural competence, as a benefit for professionals of engaging with diverse families. There is clear evidence that when schools and families, including diverse families, work together in partnership, there are enhanced outcomes for all children, regardless of background (Henderson and Mapp 2002). In terms of moving forward, there is a need, just like with fathers, to develop evidence-based programmes and policies to support schools and diverse families to work together to support needs of children (Desimone 2010).

2.2.2.4 PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

For parents, finding out that their child has a disability or special educational needs can be very frightening and for some very confusing (Beckman and Boyes 1993). By contrast, Lalvani (2015), found that parents of children with disabilities, while reporting stresses, identified these stresses as being associated with a combination of their child's

needs and environmental factors, rather than just associated with their child's disability. Some of these parents reported feeling stigmatised by their child's disability. Griffin and Shevlin (2011) posit that there are several factors that contribute to how parents and families respond to the news that their child has a disability or special educational need. These factors include family circumstances, and the nature of the child's needs.

As teachers, we also need to be mindful of the fact that, for some parents, the way they were told about their child's disability may not have been very appropriate. A national survey was conducted in 2007 where 34.6% of families (584 families) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with how they had been informed about their child's disability (Harnett et al. 2007). In the same survey, 62% of professionals (1588 professional in twenty-seven disciplines) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with how they informed families about their child's disability. There is a significant gap here in how parents and professionals perceived disclosing of this information. In 2017 guidelines were published to support professionals in informing families about their child's disability (Harnett 2007). As a teacher educator, I believe there is something that we can learn from these guidelines in terms of communicating with parents, including operating from the following guiding principles, upon which the recommendations are made:

(i)   Family Centred (e.g. family-friendly appointment times)
(ii)   Respect for Child and Family
(iii)   Sensitive and Empathetic Communication
(iv)   Appropriate, Accurate Information
(v)   Positive, realistic Messages and Hope
(vi)   Team Approach and Planning
(vii)   Focussed and Supported Implementation of Best Practice

In my own work, as an initial teacher educator, I have incorporated these guiding principles into supporting student teachers during role-play activities on parent-teacher engagement. I also present some of the findings from the research report, where professionals and parents recommended that information should be communicated with honesty, sensitivity, empathy, respect, compassion and understanding and that the language used needs to be simple, straightforward, appropriate and understandable.

Ludicke and Kortman (2012) acknowledge the benefits of parent-teacher engagement for children with SEN, while also highlighting the many tensions that can exist in actual

practice. One of these tensions can be that teachers are influenced by the traditional model of disability/SEN and this influences how they engage with parents and families. In addition, sometimes schools can view parents as a homogenous group and not take cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic factors into account; this can happen for parents of children with and without SEN. Furthermore, Ludicke and Kortman (2012) posit that when children have SENs there is often a need for teachers and parents to engage more with each other, sometimes giving rise to tensions about assessment and support plans.

In 2010 the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) conducted a national survey of 1,400 Irish parents of children with SEN. Parents were surveyed on their views and experiences of special education services. The majority was satisfied with parent-teacher contact and 75% of parents surveyed reported satisfaction with how their views were sought and welcomed by the school (NCSE 2010). 92% of these parents also agreed that their children were welcomed in school. In a more recent report that evaluated education provision for students with Autism Spectrum Difference (ASD) in Ireland across twenty-four sites (early years' settings, primary schools, post-primary schools), communication between early years educators/teachers was excellent except for one post-primary school site where it was deemed acceptable (NCSE 2016). Communication systems included parent-teacher meetings, home-school communication books, telephone and email communications and open-door policies. Dardig (2008) offers an extensive range of communication strategies for teachers to use to engage with parents of children with SEN. These include sending home an introductory letter at the beginning of the school year, keeping a parent contact log, creating a class newsletter and face-to-face meetings.

In order to engage positively with parents of children with SEN, I advocate a family-centred approach. A family-centred approach is based on establishing mutually trusting relationships between teachers and families, based on a set of principles and practices that respect families and build on their strengths and competencies (Moore 2010). According to King et al. (2002), this approach recognises that parents have a unique insight into their child with SEN and have expert knowledge to share with the professional. Ultimately, this approach to working with parents and families is based on a respectful relationship that recognises the importance of the family in the child's life and the belief that when families and organisations, like education settings, work together in this way, the child benefits. Working in a family-centred way requires education settings to commit to meeting with and listening to families and being sensitive to what

parents may be experiencing (Schultz et al.2016). While it can be challenging for education settings and families to make the time to do this the evidence suggests that when it does happen, the child benefits. The Education Act (Government of Ireland 1998), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (Government of Ireland 2004), *Aistear* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2009) and the Irish *Primary School Curriculum* (NCCA 1999) all stress the importance of having regular consultations with parents, not only to inform parents their child's progress, but also to hear what parents have to say about their child and to benefit from this expert knowledge.

Rose and Howley (2006) offer advice to beginning teachers when working with parents of children with SEN. They begin by highlighting the importance of being aware of and sensitive to the anxieties which parents or carers may feel about their child. It is possible that these sensitivities and anxieties may affect a parent's response to the teacher and the nature of the communication. Beginning teachers are advised to try and find a place that ensures privacy and listen carefully to any anxieties or questions the parents may have. When parents ask questions, it is acceptable to say you do not know the answer, but that you will find out and come back to them. It is suggested not to offer hasty responses and to avoid using jargon. It is suggested that beginning teachers keep a record of conversations with parents, particularly about any concerns they may express about their child. It is also advised that teachers inform parents about any visits from professionals to their children and the purpose of these visits.

2.2.2.5 TECHNOLOGY

Home-school communication is an important aspect of home-school relationships but "it is critical that educators continually strive to find new, effective ways to communicate with families" (Richards et al. 2016, p. 271). Using technology is one such way for schools and families to engage with each other. Technology can include texting, email, use of apps, and possibly video conferencing where it might be difficult for both parties to be present in the same room. One of the main advantages of using technology to communicate with parents is that it provides a quick and efficient way of keeping in touch and provides a direct line of communication between the school and home without necessarily having to rely on the child to deliver the message. However, excluding the child from home-school communication is not necessarily a positive thing. Grant (2011) found that children did not like the idea of parents and teachers using technology

and talking about them 'behind their back' and wanted to be involved in the communication. This is something that would certainly need to be taken into account when designing how schools and families engage with each other using technology.

Grant (2011) refers to digital home-school communication as the *third space* that links home and school and argues that technology has potential to create such a space for communication between home and school. Grant's (2011) research study of two UK secondary schools saw the opportunity for parents and teachers to support children's learning, and in particular children's behaviour, facilitated by the use of technology. Grant's research study (2011) reports parents perceiving home and school as separate domains where "the boundaries between the two were strongly maintained" (p. 1). She argues that digital communication can draw elements of both home and school together to support the learning and wellbeing of children. This is reminiscent of Epstein's concept of 'overlapping spheres of influence' where home, school and community are seen as separate entities which overlap when efforts are made to communicate.

Using technology, however, presupposes both schools and families are technologically aware, have the required technology and a willingness to communicate in this way. A means for schools to address this might be to hold a family technology session to support families to engage with technology (Morgan 2017). Crucially, however, it is important to plan the session, or indeed sessions, at a time when families are available to attend (Ramirez 2001). Grant (2011) found that "the promise of digital communication between home and school was welcomed by parents, teachers, and children, with parents and teachers particularly hoping that it would lead to more timely and direct communication between them" (p. 299). If we are concerned with facilitating, supporting, and enhancing home-school communication then technology has the potential, when used well, to do just this.

2.3 BEGINNING TEACHERS AND PARENTS

The challenge for beginning teachers to engage with parents is recognised internationally (Broomhead 2013; Cairns and Brown 1998; Evans 2013; Hudson 2012; Johns 1992; Levine 2006; Love 1996). Beginning teachers cannot draw on experience like their more senior colleagues can and many research studies refer to the shock and struggle experienced by teachers as they begin their teaching careers (Caspersen and Raaen 2014). According to Evans (2013), beginning teachers report that one of the most signif-

icant challenges they face is, "the establishment of relationships with families and communities" (p. 124). Consequently, it is critical to find ways to support beginning teachers as they engage with parents. Broussard (2000) suggests that attention to working with parents at undergraduate ITE level would go a long way to alleviate many of the barriers and challenges that face beginning teachers.

In 1998, Broussard conducted an evaluation of 116 Colleges of Education/Teacher Education undergraduate programs for, "awareness of or interest in the importance of family" (p. 44). The findings are stark, in that, just over 5% of the preservice teacher education programmes examined had family content as part of their programmes. The findings of this study, according to Broussard (2000), support studies conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These findings are really interesting and quite concerning when we know how much research exists supporting the value of schools and families working together in partnership.

Almost a decade and a half later, Caspersen and Raaen (2014) question if ITE programmes are preparing beginning teachers for the world of work. Saltmarsh et al. (2015) argue that student teachers are indeed being prepared to work with parents, 'but there is insufficient continuity to ensure that all beginning teachers have a thorough understanding of how to work effectively with parents' (p.1).They invite further research into how this might occur which includes cooperation between teacher education, beginning teachers and schools.

Cairns and Brown (1998) suggest that, in order to support the beginning teacher, engaging with parents must be addressed in ITE programmes. Likewise, Broussard (2000) recommends including a strong focus on parent-teacher partnership in teacher education for the benefit of the child. Bleach (2010), in her evaluation of national parental involvement policy in Ireland recommended that not only do practising teachers require input involving parents in their children's education, so also do preservice teachers in their ITE programmes. This is a call echoed by Evans (2013) who examined 33 empirically-based research studies on preservice teacher preparation relating to family, schools and communities from 1992 to 2012 and recommended that ITE programmes place an emphasis on teachers and parents working in partnership to support positive outcomes for children.

According to Epstein (2013), the haphazard nature of *parent-teacher partnership* in teacher education courses is well documented. She argues that beginning teachers are faced with the prospect of working with highly diverse families and yet, are not prepared for this in their ITE programmes. This is in spite of decades of robust research highlighting the importance of schools, families and communities engaging with one another, for the benefit of the child. Epstein insists courses at ITE level must contain the following four elements: teamwork for program development; goal-linked partnership activities; equity in outreach to all families; and evaluation of program quality and results of partnership activities (Epstein 2011; Epstein et al. 2009).

This research study aims to harness the voices of beginning Irish teachers as they tell their stories of their lived experiences of engagement with parents. These voices, without doubt, will have something to tell us about how we can belter prepare beginning teachers for this engagement.

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

"The literature review serves as a foundation for forming research questions" (Mertens 2010, p, 115). It enables the researcher to generate research questions that will inform the design of the research study. Following on from this literature review, I want to explore the nature of beginning teachers' engagement with parents and I was also interested to find out if there is learning for ITE. Therefore, the research questions that have emerged from the literature are:

(i)   How do beginning teachers engage with parents in Ireland?

(ii)   What is the learning for ITE?

2.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

"No topic about school improvement has created more rhetoric than parental involvement" (Epstein 2011, p. 3). Involving parents in schools, whether that is home-based, school-based, or community-based, is not for the sake of involvement, but rather to improve outcomes for children. Involving parents in schools is considered an issue for beginning teachers and one that requires investment at every level of the teacher education continuum, from initial to induction, to continuing professional development level. It will be interesting to explore what beginning teachers have to say about their experiences of engaging with parents during their first two years of teaching and determine if

there is learning here for initial teacher educators in terms of how we support student teachers to engage positively with parents.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an overview of the research approaches available to a researcher and the sort of data they generate. These research approaches need be understood so that a researcher can decide on a research design that will best answer the research questions being asked. Included in this research design is an account of the sampling strategy utilised to "ensure that the data will be sufficiently rich, complex, and contextual to address the question and support the required analysis" (Richards and Morse 2013, p.). In addition, an account of the data-gathering process is presented, as is the process of preparing the data for analysis. In-depth analysis of the data follows with a commitment to trustworthiness, evidenced by a clear audit trail and account of each step of the analytic process, accompanied by memos, diagrams, tables and screen shots of the process. This is with the intent purpose of contributing to our understanding of beginning teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACHES

According to Patton (2015), the primary purpose of research is its contribution to knowledge. Bassey (1999) posits that research "is systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom" (p. 38). Traditionally, there have been two approaches to research namely, quantitative and qualitative. There is also the approach known as mixed methods which attempts to combine the strengths of both (Silverman 2014). The question as to what constitutes good research has long been debated and the world views or paradigms held by each differ significantly and have ontological and epistemological considerations and implications for the research being undertaken. The debate about the nature of reality and the theory of knowledge is long-standing and often presented as two opposing viewpoints based on assumptions about how one views reality.

Cohen et al. (2018) posit that the assumptions about the nature of reality i.e. ontological assumptions, give rise to epistemological assumptions, i.e. "ways of researching and

enquiring into the nature of reality and the nature of things" (p. 3). These epistemological assumptions are considered as either objectivism, where the view held is that "things exist as *meaningful* entities independently of consciousness and experience" or constructionism, where the view held is that people construct their own reality (Crotty 1998, p. 5). In this research study, the beginning teachers are constructing their own reality about their lived experiences of parents.

Claims and assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and the theory of knowledge (epistemology) have raged for decades. According to Patton (2015), this paradigm debate is part of our methodological heritage and, as researchers, we need to appreciate its significance in order to make informed decisions about the methodologies we engage in to conduct our research. Crotty (1998) suggests four areas that should be addressed when undertaking any research study (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Areas that Should be Addressed when Conducting Research (Crotty 1998, p. 3)

Research Aspect	Areas to be Addressed
Epistemology	the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology
Theoretical Perspective	the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria
Methodology	the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes
Methods	the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis

Different beliefs and assumptions about the nature of reality influence how researchers work and determine the paradigm within which they operate. Some researchers assert that "the entire world is rational, it should make sense and, given sufficient time and effort, it should be possible for it to be understood through patient research" (Bassey 1999, p. 42). These researchers operate from the positivist research paradigm and are traditionally considered quantitative researchers. On the other side of the positivist research paradigm are those researchers who operate from an interpretative research paradigm and who hold that "the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated" (Cohen et al. 2011, p. 15). These researchers traditionally engage in what is known as qualitative re-

search. This research study is a qualitative study and uses a qualitative paradigm, which is constructivist in nature and emphasises the "socially constructed nature of reality" (Patton 2016, p. 99). In order to fully appreciate the nature of qualitative research, an overview of its history follows.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research "looks at how people make sense of what happens" (Smith et al. 2009, p. 45). Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2011; 2017) identify eight moments of qualitative research as depicted in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Eight Moments of Qualitative Research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; 2011; 2017)

1	The traditional period (early twentieth century to World War 2-related to Chicago School in sociology, which was interested in the other, the foreign, the strange)
2	The modernist phase (World War 2 to 1970s with attempts to formalise qualitative research)
3	*Blurred genres* (Geertz 1983, such as symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, semiotics, feminism)
4	Mid 1980s *crisis of representation* discussion in artificial intelligence and ethnography impact qualitative research
5	1990s narratives have replaced theories (includes autoethnographies)
6	Post-experimental writing
7	Further establishing qualitative research through various new journals, such as Qualitative Inquiry/Qualitative Research
8	Evidence-based practice emerges as the new criterion of relevance

Qualitative research is particularly suited to this study because I am interested in what Merriam (1998) calls holistic description and explanation. I believe, like Merriam (1998), that research which focuses on "discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 1).

Stake (1995) encourages qualitative researchers to emphasise time, place, and person in order to provide opportunity for vicarious experiences for the reader. Furthermore, he cautions against overstating findings in qualitative research. He employs two terms,

"petites generalizations" for general statements within a study and "grandes generaliza-tions" for general statements about issues found within the particular study. Stake (1995) calls on researchers not to make "grandes generalisations", but to draw conclu-sions in the form of assertions, which he later calls "propositional generalizations". He believes it is important for researchers to clearly outline the speculative and tentative nature of their assertions. The term naturalistic generalization was similarly introduced by Stake in 1982. He explains this as contributions arrived at through personal engage-ment with the life's affairs and asserts its importance, "more because of its embed-dedness in the experience of the reader, whether verbalised or not" (p. 86). This re-search study seeks to "make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (Mertens 2010, 225). In order to do this, that is produce good quality research, one needs to be a good qualitative researcher.

The good qualitative researcher, according to Merriam (1998), has three essential char-acteristics: tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity and communication skills. According to Merriam (1990), if these personality characteristics are present to some degree, skills can probably be cultivated and the more experience a person has in doing qualitative research, the more likely it is that the skills needed can be developed. Fortunately, in 2014, I had the privilege of being part of a research team on a national project entitled: *An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the Republic of Ireland* (NCSE 2016), which afforded me the opportunity to develop and refine the essential skills of the good qualitative researcher. As a qualitative re-searcher, I am interested in gaining an understanding of beginning teachers' lived expe-riences of parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. In order to do this well, I am aware of the importance of research integrity.

3.3 RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Research integrity is required in the design of qualitative studies to ensure rigour and enhance credibility in the field (Morse 2011). In my own institution, Mary Immaculate College, there is a Research Integrity Policy to which I adhered to in the conducting of this research study. This local policy is aligned to the National Policy Statement on En-suring Research Integrity (IUA 2014). The principles underpinning this policy are hon-esty, impartiality, fairness and responsibility (see Figure 3.1 overleaf).
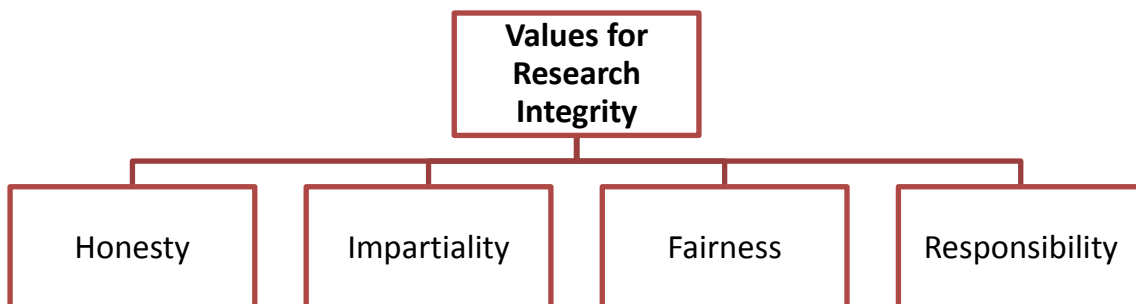
Figure 3.1 Values underpinning National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity (IUA 2014)

The national policy outlines four commitments (see Table 3.3) and is aligned with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA 2014; 2017). In June 2015, the National Research Integrity Forum was established in Ireland; this is a voluntary body and is co-ordinated by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). In keeping with the ecological theoretical framework underpinning this research study, the integrity of this research study is nested in an ecological framework of local, national and international commitment to responsible, respectful and honest research practices.

Table 3.3 Four Commitments of National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity (IUA 2014)

1	Standards	We are committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of our research, founded on basic principles of good research practice to be observed by all researchers and research organisations.
2	Education	Education and promotion of good research practice are the foundations of research integrity. We are committed to maintaining a national research environment that is founded upon a culture of integrity, embracing internationally recognised good practice and a positive, proactive approach to promoting research integrity. This will include support for the development of our researchers through education and promotion of good research practices.

3	Collaboration for continuous improvement	We are committed to working together to reinforce and safeguard the integrity of the Irish research system and to reviewing progress regularly.
4	Action to address misconduct	We are committed to using transparent, fair and effective processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

According to Merriam (1998), acting with integrity applies to all research methodologies and Meyer (2001) argues that decisions concerned with design requirements, data collection procedures, data analysis, and validity and reliability need to be made explicit in all research endeavours. Bassey (1999) encourages researchers to be creative and adventurous in choosing research methodologies and to be guided by considerations of research ethics.

3.4 RESEARCH ETHICS

Bassey (1999) discusses research in ethics under three headings: respect for democracy, respect for truth, and respect of persons. In respect for democracy, it is a given that in a democratic society, researchers have the freedom to ask questions, critique ideas and publish research findings. Bassey (1999) explains that with these freedoms come responsibilities in terms of respect for truth and respect for persons. There is an expectation that researchers "will be truthful in data collection, analysis and the report of findings" and "in taking data from persons, should do so in ways which recognise those persons' initial ownership of the data and respect them as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy" (p. 74).

From the outset, this research study has taken cognisance of the importance of ethics and was undertaken with a strong commitment to participants' welfare and best interests. Consequently, this research study is guided by five ethical principles of *non-maleficence,* that is the principle of 'do no harm'; *munificence,* that is ensuring that participants are fully aware that their involvement is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without giving reason and without consequence; *justice,* that is participants are at all times treated fairly and in a just and respectful manner; respect for autonomy, that is every care is taken by the researcher to ensure that relationships between participants and their school communities will not be adversely affected; and

beneficence, that is the research study will serve the best interests of beginning teachers and parents.

Ethical approval for this research study was sought and given by the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC). However, as researcher, I am acutely aware that just as ethical approval is essential to conduct this study, so too is ethical behaviour (Noddings 1984). Ethical behaviour is not something that is just required when writing a research proposal, but is essential throughout the entire research study. An Information Sheet (See Appendix D) was designed giving an overview of the research study, outlining participants' involvement, highlighting how information gathered would be anonymised, explaining consent and the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process without giving a reason, and how the information gathered would be used. Participants were invited to contact the researcher by email or by phone if they required further information on the research study and contact details of an independent person were also provided. This Information Sheet and a Consent Form (See Appendix E) were then used to recruit participants.

An ethic of care was employed throughout this research study where decisions were made "on the basis of care, compassion, and a desire to act in ways that benefit the individual or group" (Denzin and Lincoln 2013, p. 2017). This included identifying any *risks* that might exist for participants. From a participant perspective, anonymity was assured to enable the participants to speak frankly and freely without fear of being named in the thesis or subsequent publications. From a school, family and child perspective, assurances were given that no identifiers would be used in any future publications.

Each participant was invited to sign a consent form (see Appendix E) at the beginning of the research study and consent was also sought, verbally, at each phase of the data collection process. Participants were assured of confidentiality by using pseudonyms and an assurance was also given that no school or child would be identifiable in the thesis or subsequent writings or presentations. Participants were also informed, at the outset and also throughout the data gathering process that they had the right to withdraw from the research study at any point without giving a reason and without fear of consequence. All of this was designed to build relationships of trust between me, the researcher, and the participants.

According to Richards and Morse (2013), the onus is on the researcher to convince the reader that analysis, interpretations, and findings are truthful, and all have been conducted and realised with integrity. This leads the reader to trust the research or have trustworthiness in the research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), research design for validity is essential for legitimate study within the realm of qualitative research. However, terms like validity are more usually associated with quantitative research. Richards and Morse (2013) posit that, "validity is a term too often avoided in qualitative research because it is mistakenly seen as an indicator of attitudes towards analysis or interpretation that do not fit with qualitative methods" (p. 94).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the criteria for evaluating qualitative research should be different from those used to evaluate quantitative research and instead of borrowing terminology from quantitative research, qualitative research should use its own. They recommend that instead of referring to validity and reliability, as is done in quantitative research, the discourse in qualitative research should be that of *trustworthiness*. Like Lincoln and Guba (1985), Stein (2009) asserts that trustworthiness in qualitative research is equivalent to validity and reliability in quantitative research. Stein (2009) also asserts that building trust with participants is essential to the integrity of the research study and the trustworthiness of the data. In concurrence, Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) remind us that "qualitative research is characterized by an ongoing discourse regarding the appropriate and acceptable use of terminology" (p. 162). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest analogues for the traditional terminology used in quantitative research (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Quantitative vs Qualitative Terminology (Lincoln and Guba 1985)

Qualitative Terminology	Quantitative Terminology
Credibility	Internal validity
Transferability	External validity
Dependability	Reliability
Confirmability	Objectivity

For internal validity, credibility is suggested, where there needs to be confidence that the researcher credibly represents what the participants in the research study have said.

Transferability is suggested for external validity, where the researcher provides enough information on the case studies so that others can establish the degree to which things might be transferred or generalised to other cases. Dependability is suggested for reliability, where it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the research was conducted in a traceable fashion evidenced through documentation. Confirmability is suggested for objectivity, where assertions, findings and interpretations are clearly linked to the data. Table 3.5 outline show credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were addressed in this research study of beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents.

Table 3.5: Methods Used to Address Trustworthiness

Ethical Consideration	Approach Used to Address It
Credibility (internal validity)	Multiple interviews with participants; extensive use of data extracts in reporting; member checking; reporting of discrepant cases; triangulation of data; acknowledging personal biases.
Transferability (external validity)	Rich, thick description of research context, participants, data collection process and data analysis.
Dependability (reliability)	Clear and detailed articulation of data collection and data analysis processes; audit trail evidenced in NVivo document management system; use of Research Diary.
Confirmability (objectivity)	Audit trail evidenced through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

As discussed, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability ensure that a qualitative research study is trustworthy, or in quantitative terms valid and reliable, but one must be aware of possible threats to this trustworthiness. A possible threat to the trustworthiness of any research study is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to researcher bias. Potential bias may arise from who I am as the researcher and what I bring to the project that might in some way affect which participants are selected for interview, what questions are asked and how the subsequent data are analysed and reported. In order to manage personal bias, I embrace, as Maxwell (1996) recommends, identity and experience as valuable components of the research process. Maxwell (1996) believes that such experiential knowledge can be profitably capitalized on. Who one is has

a central place in the research as one brings one's own, "… thoughts, aspirations and feelings …" to the study (Kirby and McKenna 1989, p. 46).

3.5.1   THE THREAT OF THE RESEARCHER

In the introduction to this research study, I declared who I am as researcher. At length, I outlined that I was a beginning teacher, I am a parent and I am a teacher educator. I presented my philosophy of education, which is based on an ethic of care and a belief in the dignity of each person and the belief that everyone has a right to an appropriate education. I also detailed a module that I teach to student teachers in the final year of their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, clearly stating my commitment to engaging positively with parents, so as to provide the best possible outcomes for children with SEN. While it is possible that I, as researcher, may pose a threat to the trustworthiness of this research study, I agree with Robson (2008), who posits that this threat can be addressed through the practice of reflexivity.

3.6 REFLEXIVITY

According to Cohen et al. (2018), reflexivity is essential if the researcher is to "consciously and deliberately acknowledge, interrogate and disclose their own selves and the research, seeking to understand their part in, and influence on, the research" (p. 303). Finlay (2014) defines reflexivity as a "critical self-awareness of the researcher's historical and cultural situatedness" (p. 130). As a researcher, I maintained an awareness of personal bias throughout the research study and stated my own biases from the outset. Throughout the research process, I also wrote a Research Diary with *experience memos*, as suggested by Maxwell (1996) and Grady and Walston (1988). These memos form part of the data set and facilitate the articulation of my personal expectations, beliefs, assumptions and understandings. Moreover, in terms of reflexivity, not only did I have the support of two supervisors in reviewing my writing, I also had the support of a critical friend throughout the process who consistently challenged my assertions and interpretations. This proved particularly helpful when framing the research question.

3.7 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this research study, the research questions emerged from an extensive literature review, where a dearth of knowledge was exposed in terms of beginning teachers' lived

experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. This gap is the driver of this research study and the questions asked are inextricably linked to the conceptual framework, and in particular to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) and Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein 1995). The research question explores the space between home and school, the space inhabited by beginning teachers and families. Beginning teachers tell their stories about these shared spaces where they encountered parents across three phases of the research study. In determining what needed to be found out about what happens in these meso-spaces, much consideration was given to the type of research methodology required to do justice to the participants' stories and experiences. Different research questions lead us to particular research methodologies. An extensive literature review was conducted on research methodologies to seek out the best possible methodological approach to finding out how beginning teachers experience parents in their first two years of teaching, particularly parents of children with SEN. Making an informed choice of methodology is important. It is not that there is only one way to do research, but rather it is about choosing a methodology that allows congruence between the conceptual framework, data collection, data analysis, findings and discussion and is in keeping with who the researcher is. The salient question is, which methodology allows the researcher to make sense of the data collected. According to Richards and Morse (2013, p. 34)

> Qualitative research is not just a matter of performing techniques on data; rather, each qualitative method has a specific way of thinking about data and using techniques as tools to manipulate data to achieve a goal. Each component of the research process is linked to the next, and the chosen method dictates combinations of strategies to be used in particular ways to ensure consistency throughout the research process.

Ultimately, the research methodology most appropriate to the study being undertaken is significantly determined by the research question that is being asked (Cohen et al. 2011).

3.8 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE

When deciding on a methodology to use for one's research study, Richards and Morse (2013) suggest *an armchair walk-through* of one's research question. I found this a very worthwhile exercise in terms of considering all of the available methodological options. Essentially, an armchair walk-through of one's proposed research study is a conceptualising exercise of considering how one's research study might be undertaken using vari-

ous different research methodologies with a view to making a decision about the best methodological choice for answering the research question. Richards and Morse (2013) suggest that "although this type of conceptualising [armchair walk-through] will not detect every problem that may be encountered, it gives the researcher some sense of what may be learned by using different methods" (p. 36). Conducting an armchair walk-through supports the researcher to make an informed judgement about which methodology bests suits the research question being posed and whether the end result is an "insight into a problem, a rich description, a hypothesis, a theory to be tested further in quantitative research, or a qualitatively derives theory that is ready to use" (p. 36). Please see Table 3.6 below for an armchair walk-through of this research study of beginning teachers' experiences of parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. The research question is phrased differently depending on the methodology under consideration.

Table 3.6: Armchair Walk-through of Research Question (Adapted from Richards and Morse 2013, p. 37)

Methodology	Research Question	Setting and Participants	Strategies	Types of Results
Ethnography	What are the patterns of engagement displayed during beginning teachers' encounters with parents?	Parent-Teacher Meetings; Case-conferences	Unstructured audio recorded interviews and participant observations of beginning teachers encounters with parents; field notes and other documents	Description of the patterns of experiences beginning teachers have with parents
Grounded Theory	What is the process experienced by beginning teachers of parents?	Interviews; observations of parent-teacher encounters	Audio recorded interviews and observations	Theory about experiences beginning teachers have with parents
Phenomenology	What is the meaning of beginning teachers' lived experiences of parents?	Interviews at participants' convenience	In-depth audio recorded interviews; reflection on the phenomenological literature	In-depth reflective description of experiences beginning teachers have with parents
Discourse Analysis	What do words used by participants show about beginning	Parent-teacher Meetings; Case-conferences	Audio recording of exchanges between beginning teachers and parents	Critical account of the experiences beginning teachers have

	teachers' experiences of parents?			with parents
Case Study	How do beginning teachers make sense of their experiences with parents?	Interviews at participants' convenience	Interviews with beginning teachers	Vivid accounts of the experiences beginning teachers have with parents, showing similarities and differences

Following this armchair walk-through, I made the decision to use a case study approach. In particular, a phenomenological case study seemed the best fit, where the phenomenon of the lived experience of beginning teachers could be explored in detail. Even more specific and nuanced was the decision to employ interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in order to maintain the individual contribution of each participant within the overall case study approach. One of the advantages of a phenomenological case study approach is its uniqueness and capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts. In keeping with the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm, this research study endeavours to understand the lived experiences of a group of eight beginning teachers as they engage with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. The rationale for using IPA was heavily influenced by the works of Smith et al. (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2008) and includes the following reasons:

1. IPA is concerned with supporting participants to make sense of lived experiences.
2. IPA is compatible with a case study approach.
3. It supports the detailed examination of a set of case studies.
4. It involves in-depth research of a small number of participants.
5. It is concerned with detailed exploration of similarities and differences between participants.
6. It involves purposive sampling.
7. It involves the use of semi-structured interviews
8. It presents findings in narrative account

See Table 3.7 for a summary of this research study in terms of ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodology and method. What follows is an overview of case study and IPA.

Table 3.7: Summary of This Research Study's Perspectives

Ontology	Epistemology	Theories	Methodology	Method
Relativism	Constructivism	Phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography	Case Study using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)	Interview

3.9 CASE STUDY

Case study is an increasingly popular approach to research among qualitative researchers (Hyett et.al. 2014) and is now widely accepted as "a form of research, both in its own right and as an element in large-scale research designs" (Simons 1996, p. 226). Case studies can be quantitative but are more likely to be qualitative (Merriam 1998). Many scholars, including Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) who are situated in the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm, Flyvbjerg (2011) and Yin (2014) who are situated in a post-positivist paradigm, have contributed to the popularity of case study and the development of analytic frameworks. This research study belongs to the interpretivist or social constructivist paradigm of Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995), rather than the post-positivist paradigm of Flyvbjerg (2011) and Yin (2014), in keeping with the study's ontological and epistemological perspectives.

Issues of analytic and theoretical perspective extend beyond case study research but have particular relevance to case study research. It is essential to have a well-informed analytic framework to guide case study if case study is to be rigorous, legitimate and totally justifiable as research (Meyer 2001). The analytic framework guides what information needs to be collected and analysed and develops over time (Miles et al. 2014). It also helps to clarify key questions and directs literature searches. Equally, literature searches inform theoretical and analytic perspectives. The analytic framework is derived from "the orientation or stance you bring to your study" (Merriam 1998, p. 45). This orientation is the lens through which the researcher views the world.

Bassey (1999) posits that the question 'What is a case study?' is a good example of a question that is easy to ask and difficult to answer and goes on to warn that case study is difficult. Yin (2014) declares that the essence of case study is *enquiry in a real-life context*. According to Stake (1995), qualitative case study research is highly personal re-

search and has an emphasis on human experiences, contexts and issues. Merriam (1998) presents qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit" (p. xiii). Yin (2014) identifies three categories of case study: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Stake (1995) refers to two types of case study, intrinsic and instrumental, and also refers to collective case study, where more than one instrumental case is studied. Bassey (1999) conceives of three types of educational case study: theory-seeking and theory-testing case studies, story-telling and picture-drawing case studies, and evaluative case studies. This case study would be considered explanatory by Yin (2014), instrumental by Stake (1995), and evaluative by Bassey (1999).

"Determining when to use the case study as opposed to some other research design depends upon what the researcher wants to know" (Merriam 1998, p. 32). According to Merriam (1998), if you are interested in *process,* case study is a particularly suitable design and the *specificity of focus* makes it a very good choice of design for practical problems, situations, or puzzling occurrences that arise in everyday practice. Essentially, "case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (Merriam 1998, p. 19). Case study, according to Yin (2014), is likely to be the best choice to answer "how" and "why" questions. Like Yin (2014), I believe it is important to acknowledge that case study research has limitations and is often criticized, particularly in terms of generalization.

3.9.1   CRITIQUE OF CASE STUDY

Case study is often criticised on the grounds of lack of rigour and little basis for scientific generalisation. According to Yin (1994), "a fatal flaw in doing case studies is to conceive of statistical generalization as the method of generalizing the results of the case" (p. 27) while Stake (1995) considers case study a poor basis for generalisation. He sees the real business of case study as particularisation. Bassey (1999), who writes about the problem of generalisation and case study contends that research can be disseminated through 'fuzzy' generalisation and professional discourse. In 1996, Simons wrote about the paradox of case study. She welcomed the paradox between the study of the singularity and the search for generalisation and argued that from within a holistic perspective, there is no disjuncture. For Simons (1996), paradox "if acknowledged and explored in depth, yields both unique and universal understanding" (p. 225).

One of the advantages of case study is its uniqueness and capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts (Simons 1996). This case study, in keeping with the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm, endeavours to understand the lived experiences of a group of eight beginning teachers as they engage with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. In keeping with this commitment to understand the participants' experiences, the researcher is also adopting an approach to qualitative inquiry known as IPA, compatible with case study and congruent with the ontological and epistemological positions of the research question.

3.10   INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a recently developed and rapidly growing approach to qualitative enquiry, was initiated by Jonathan A. Smith during his doctoral research which focussed on the transition to motherhood (Smith 1996). According to Smith (2010), interpretative phenomenological analysis "believes in a chain of connection between embodied experience, talk about that experience and participants making sense of, and emotional reaction to, that experience" (p. 10). This lived experience, according to Smith (2010), "is the raison d'etre of IPA" (p. 14). This qualitative research approach, which has its origins in psychology, but is used more frequently in other disciplines, is congruent with the case study approach, and is committed to "the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (Smith et al. 2009, p. 1) or as Finlay (2014) puts it "to explicate *lived experience*" (p. 121). In this research study, the participants' major life experience or lived experience under investigation is that of being a beginning teacher and their lived experience of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. Becoming a beginning teacher provides opportunities for reflection and this research study focuses on the reflections of eight participants in their first two years of teaching. Meeting each participant more than once allowed for focused and attentive listening on the part of the researcher and enabled each participant to tell their story over time and as each one wished.

3.10.1 CRITIQUE OF INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The main criticism of IPA is that it can be too descriptive and does not focus enough on interpretation (Pringle et al. 2011). Brocki and Wearden (2006) reviewed fifty-two pub-

lished papers that employed IPA and concluded that sometimes there was a lack of attention afforded to the interpretative facet of the approach. In addressing this concern, Smith et al. (2009) insist that IPA "must be conducted thoroughly and systematically … and also be sufficiently interpretative, moving beyond a simple description of what it means" (p. 181). In this research study, I undertook in-depth, rigorous and systematic analysis, including extensive annotations (n=853) of the transcripts, at three levels of analysis: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. Appendix F shows evidence of all 853 annotations.

3.10.2 INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS

Smith et al. (2009) posit that IPA researchers focus on "… people's *experiences* and/or *understandings* of particular phenomena" and assume that the data collected "… can tell us something about people's involvement in and orientation towards the world and/or about how they make sense of this" (p. 46). They suggest that the phenomenological and interpretive aspects of IPA are reflective of the perceptions and views of the research participants. Considering that IPA research is concerned with participants' lived experience, ultimately, the focus is on understanding these experiences. In order to do this, exploration is required through the use of open rather than closed questions with a focus on eliciting how participants make sense of the phenomenon under investigation. In relation to this particular research study, *how* do beginning teachers experience parents? is a more appropriate question than *what are* the experiences of beginning teachers of parents? In using IPA, one needs to take cognisance of three theories which underpin it, namely, phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith 2010; Smith et al. 2009).

3.10.3 PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology is about gaining a deep understanding of our daily experiences (Van Manen 1990) or, as stated by Eatough (2012), "phenomenology aims to clarify, illuminate and elucidate the meaning of people's experiences in the context of what is often referred to as the lifeworld" (p. 328). According to Patton (2015), phenomenology "was first applied to social science by the German philosopher Edmund H. Husserl (1913/1954) to study how people describe things and experience them through their senses" (p. 116). Husserl, a mathematician and logician, was a philosopher who "devel-

oped a new perspective towards philosophical problems that he came to call phenomenology" (Giorgi 2008 p. 34). Husserl saw science as "a second-order knowledge system, which depends ultimately upon first-order personal experience" (Smith et al. 2009 p. 14). He was concerned with getting at the *eidetic reduction* or the *essence* of such experiences.

Husserl's initial work was expanded by Martin Heidegger to include the human life world. This in turn was further expanded by Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to include embodiment. According to Brinkman and Kvale (2015), "in qualitative inquiry, *phenomenology* is a term that points to an interest in understanding social phenomena from the actors' own perspectives and describing the world as experienced by the subjects with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be" (p. 30).The phenomenon under the spotlight in this research study is beginning teachers' lived experiences of parents. What is being sought is participants' perceptions of being a beginning teacher and how the beginning teacher experiences engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. There is indeed an assumption being made here that the important reality is what beginning teachers perceive it to be.

According to Denscombe (2014), research suited to phenomenology is small in scale, concerned with descriptive detail of authentic experiences and focuses on the participants' lived experiences. Husserl (1927) suggests every experience can be subjected to reflection and this "has helped IPA researchers to focus centrally on the process of reflection" (Smith et al. 2009 p. 16). Heideggar, in expanding the work of phenomenology, diverged from Husserl's teaching by setting out "the beginnings of the hermeneutic and existential emphases in phenomenological philosophy" (Smith et al. 2009 p. 16). This research study of eight beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents is particularly suited to phenomenology.

3.10.4 HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics, with its long history tracing its origins back as far as ancient Greece, informs and underpins IPA. When we speak of hermeneutics, we are concerned with the theory of interpretation. According to Smith et al. (2009), in order to understand participants' experiences, the researcher needs to interpret what the participants have to say. This research study is investigating eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of parents and, clearly, each participant will be making sense of this major life experience in a

unique and very personal way. Analysing participants' experiences "requires a process of engagement and interpretation on the part of the researcher and this ties IPA to a hermeneutic perspective" (Smith 2010 p. 10). The IPA approach supports the researcher in making sense of the participants' efforts to make sense of their major life experiences and is a "two-stage interpretative process, or a double hermeneutic" (Smith and Osborn 2008, p. 53). Within this double hermeneutic is a concern for the particular.

3.10.5 IDIOGRAPHY

"Idiography is concerned with the particular" (Smith et al. 2009, p. 29) and an idiographic study is "derived from the examination of individual case studies" (Smith and Osborn 2008 p. 56). This concern with the particular enables rich and detailed accounts of each case to be presented without losing any of the nuances consistent with each participant's lived experience of the phenomenon under exploration. The strength of IPA is that, even though many individual cases are being analysed, due to the intensity of the analysis, nothing of each individual case is lost. At the end of analysis, which is conducted line-by-line at three different levels, namely descriptive, linguistic and conceptual, there is still evidence of each individual case. This is as a result of the idiographic nature of IPA, where the particular always remains a focus for the researcher. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), "this ideographic commitment is unusual even among qualitative methodologies" (p. 363). As a researcher, I am concerned with maintaining the story of each participant and the idiographic nature of IPA allowed me to do that. The next section describes the research sample and how the participants were selected.

3.11   THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

The number of participants in an IPA case study tends to be small due to the commitment to in-depth analysis (Smith et al. 2009) and to "give full appreciation to each participant's account (case)" (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2012, p. 364). According to Brocki and Wearden (2006), for an IPA research study, participants are selected "in order to illuminate a particular research question, and to develop a full and interesting interpretation of the data" (p. 95). When one commits to IPA, one is required to dwell in the data (Bloomberg and Volpe 2016) and this commitment is intense, onerous and time consuming. As a detailed analysis of each case is required, in order to give full attention to

each participant's lived experience, Smith et al. (2009) recommend six to eight partici-pants and have even made an argument for undertaking a single case study. Usually, the sample is a homogenous group due to the small number of participants and the sample is selected purposively with a focus on examining divergence and convergence.

The sample for this research study was purposeful and participants were selected from a list of student teachers in the final year of their undergraduate ITE B.Ed. degree pro-gramme. These students had all completed an elective module on *Parent-Professional Partnership: supporting the learning and wellbeing of children with special educational needs* (see Appendix A for Course Outline) and indicated an interest in being contacted about research when they became beginning teachers. This elective module provides an opportunity for student teachers to critically examine evidence-based research on par-ent-professional partnership in order to support the learning and wellbeing of children with SEN. Opportunities are provided to explore, reflect and critically evaluate students own values, beliefs and, in particular, assumptions as they impact on partnerships with parents of children with SEN and other professionals. Students engage with parents and other professionals with a view to benefiting from their first-hand experiences of chil-dren with SEN. Becoming a reflective teacher is a central theme throughout the module, as is teacher as researcher.

The twenty students who had indicated an interest in become involved in research were contacted by email giving a brief outline of the research study (see Appendix G) and two attachments, namely an Information Sheet (see Appendix D) and a Consent Form (see Appendix E). I received eight replies and this group constituted my purposeful sample. The sample consisted of seven females and one male. Seven of the participants were between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-five years old and one participant was between thirty-five and forty years old. All of the participants had been taught by me, the researcher, in large groups in the second and third years of their undergraduate B.Ed. programme when they undertook two core modules on *Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs*. This was in addition to the elective module on parents in their final semester, where I taught them in a group of thirty-two. Trust had already been established with participants during the course of their ITE programme and this trust continued to develop during the course of the research study as I collected data during their first year and second year of teaching.

3.12 DATA COLLECTION

IPA lends itself to collecting data in a number of ways, but is particularly suited to the employment of interviews (Smith et al. 2009). Smith and Osborn (2008) describe semi-structured interviews as the exemplary method of data collection when employing IPA. Interviews have a long and established tradition in qualitative research (Flick 2014) and a unique way of capturing what people have to say. The research interview is very much in keeping with the ontological and epistemological orientation of this research study as well as being methodologically congruent with an interpretative phenomenological case study approach.

3.12.1 THE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

The research interview is "an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in an inter-action between the interviewer and interviewee" (Kvale 2008, p. 1) and when used well can be a powerful method of gathering valuable information about the human condition. According to Fontana and Frey (1994), interviewing is "one of the most common and powerful ways we use to try and understand our fellow human beings" (p. 361). Interviews allow us to enter into perspectives of other people (Patton 2002) and while similar to conversations are "more focussed, more in-depth, and more detailed than ordinary conversations" (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p. 108). Stake (1995) refers to the multiple views of the case study and declares that "the interview is the main road to multiple realities" (p. 64).The way to learn this *craft,* according to Kvale (2008), is through practising interviewing regardless of the type of interview being conducted.

There are many types of interviews, each having what Flick (2014) refers to as their own *logic.* Flick (2014) refers to focused interviews, semi-standardized interviews, problem-centred interviews, ethnographic interviews, and online interviews. It is interesting to note that Flick (2014) adds *online interviewing* as a type of interview from the previous edition of his book (Flick 2009). Kvale (2008) presents four types of research interviews: narrative interviews, focus group interviews, factual interviews, and confrontational interviews. Patton (2002) asserts that there are three types of interviews, each with its own set of challenges for the interviewer and each serving a different purpose: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardised open-ended interview. Similarly, three different types of research interviews are described by Streatfield (2000): structured, exploratory and semi-structured

interviews while Fontana and Frey (1994) refer to structured, group, and unstructured interviews. Like Flick (2014), Fontana and Frey (1994) add *new trends* in interviewing to their later book edition where electronic interviewing is discussed (Fontana and Frey 2009).

With all interviewing, regardless of type, it is essential that the interview is, what Rubin and Rubin (2012) refer to as, a *responsive* interview. Essentially, it is about offering the person being interviewed the opportunity to express their own personal perspective in their own words. Stake (1995) suggests that most people like to be listened to and while getting participants to agree to be interviewed might be easy, "getting a good interview is not so easy" (p. 64). Fontana and Frey (1994; 2005) put this succinctly when they say, "asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first" (p. 361). According to Brinkman and Kvale (2015), interviewing is a *craft* and one which the researcher must learn and hone.

Kvale (2008) outlines a three-stage process when interviewing: the pre-interview stage where themes are clarified, research topic is formulated and much reflection needs to occur; the actual interviewing stage where interviews are conducted; and finally, the post-interview stage where transcription, analysis, verification, and reporting occur. He emphasises the *interrelatedness* of the different stages of the interviewing process and strongly recommends that the three stages of the process are kept in mind at all times, as decisions taken at one stage can directly influence and affect possibilities at another stage. Kvale (2008) also emphasises the importance of the interviewer engaging with integrity with the interviewee and places particular emphasis on the integrity of the researcher. In all research studies, the quality of the data collected determines the quality of the outcome and when using interviews, the quality of the data collected is significantly determined by the researcher who interviews.

3.12.2 THE RESEARCHER WHO INTERVIEWS

"The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (Patton 2002, p. 341). This is also determined by the interviewer's competence (Flick 2014). Miles et al. (2014) ask the question, "How valid and reliable is the *person* doing the interviewing likely to be as an information-gathering instrument?" They go on to outline five *markers* for a good qualitative research interviewer: good familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study; a multidisciplinary ap-

proach, as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a single discipline; good investigative skills, the ability to draw people out, and meticulous attention to detail; being comfortable, resilient, and non-judgemental with participants in the setting; and a heightened sense of empathic engagement with a balanced heightened sense of objective awareness (p. 42). Kvale (2008) refers to the "expertise, skills and craftsmanship, of the interviewer" (p. xviii). Moreover, many studies highlight the importance of the need for the interviewer to be critically aware of his or her own presuppositions and have a balanced sense of objective awareness when conducting interviews (Kvale 2008; Rubin and Rubin 2012; Miles et al. 2014). This critical awareness will ensure sensitivity, not only to what is being said, but also to what is not being said by the interviewee. Who the research interviewer is is important, it matters. It is very possible that different knowledge would be produced if a different interviewer conducted the interview (Kvale 2008). Regardless of who does the interviewing, extreme care must be taken by the research interviewer to be ethical and ensure no harm comes to the person being interviewed (Fontana and Frey 1994). As an interviewer, I am conscious of my own story. A very early memory of school explains a little of who I am.

My first memory of school is being brought by my mother into the classroom on that first day and I could not wait for her and the other parents to go so that we could *get on with it.* Get on with what I am not so sure, but even at four years of age I had a sense that this was going to be exciting, fun and wonderfully challenging. All these years later and, metaphorically and literally, on the other side of the table, I have that same sense of excitement and challenge each autumn as I cannot wait to *get on with it*.

Education for me has always been a good thing, I am fortunate I know. I am blessed with having parents who value education and who taught us what it is to be kind. I am grateful to my parents for many things, but these two most particularly. Putting them together is an interesting combination, kindness in education. For me, this combination is particularly important when teaching children with what we call *disability* or *special educational needs*. Too often, in my experience as both a parent and a teacher, there is a lack of basic kindness shown to these children. The message often given, albeit unintentionally, is that they need to be *fixed* and who they are is not enough. How can a child have a sense of belonging and of being valued if they are not welcomed and accepted for who and how they are?

I am one of five children, the first four of whom were born within four years of each other. I vividly recall an incident when I was about four or five years old and we had just finished dinner. My three brothers and I stood up from the table and started to run out the door to play when my father said, 'Anne, you stay here and help your mother tidy up'. I remember in my mind thinking, this is not right! So I pulled myself up to my full height, stamped my small foot, and in my strongest voice said, 'Dad that is not fair!!!!' Even at such a young age I knew I was being asked because I was the girl and in my small mind, I reckoned anyone, boy or girl, could do what was required to tidy up after dinner. To be fair to my Dad he listened and told all four of us to wait and tidy up! You can imagine how popular I was with my brothers! Mind you, all of my brothers could cook, bake, iron and clean before they left home. That evening I realised life is not always fair, but sometimes speaking up can change things and while it might make you unpopular in the moment, it can pay dividends in the long run. It is good to have parents who listen to the voice of their children, especially small strong-minded children who at five years of age want to change the world.

Speaking of being a parent, my first child has what we refer to as *multiple disability* and when you become a member of this world of disability, your life changes. Having spent almost all of my professional career teaching children with *special educational need*s, I was now the parent of a child with such needs. Nothing prepares you for this.

The night before my first child was born, I wrote a letter welcoming my baby into the world. I wrote a letter to my child every birthday and recently, I reread these letters and discovered that it took me six birthdays to come back to the hopes and dreams that I initially held. My child's story is theirs to tell, but suffice it to say when your child goes to school you want the best possible experience for them, no more so than when your child with what we call *special educational needs* heads off to school.

3.12.3 ETHICS OF THE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Ensuring that no harm comes to the person being interviewed raises many ethical issues. Ethical issues permeate interview research, including the balance that constantly needs to be found between the search for knowledge and the need to respect the person being interviewed. Issues of *confidentiality*, *informed consent*, *risk assessment*, and *reciprocity* all feature as ethical issues in conducting research and in particular when conducting research interviews (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Fontana and Frey 2009; Flick 2014; Ru-

bin and Rubin 2012). Conducting a research interview carries responsibility and some would say *privilege* (Kvale 2008), particularly in terms of interpreting and reporting what the interviewee really meant. Fontana and Frey (1994) declare that, as field-workers, we need, in addition to using common sense, be responsible "to our subjects first, to the study next, and to ourselves last" (p. 373). Part of being responsible to our participants, the research study and ourselves, as researchers, can take the form of preparing for the data collection with one's participants.

3.12.4 DATA COLLECTION PREPARATION

Before I undertook the first interview with the eight beginning teachers, I did three things. I reviewed my learnings from a national project I had been involved in where I had done qualitative interviews, I agreed to be interviewed by a friend who was undertaking a Master's research study and I did a pilot interview to trial my interview schedule. The first endeavour was enlightening as I re-listened to myself interviewing participants; I made notes on the importance of clear, concise questioning, listening intently to what the participant is saying. I also became acutely aware of the skill of following up on what was being said, which later proved invaluable in terms of trustworthiness. As part of this process, I also listened to interviews by a number of colleagues who had been part of the team and realised the importance of pacing, pausing, probing, reframing a question and not giving one's own opinion. It also struck me how important it is to be aware of one's own biases and not to let one's own biases impact negatively on the interview process or on the interviewee.

In agreeing to be interviewed by my friend, I wanted to oblige and support his research, but I also recognised it as an opportunity to *be in the shoes* of my future participants. Using reflexivity, I documented in my Research Diary how I felt about the process and it proved an interesting and insightful experience. When I was asked to do the interview, I remember feeling obliged to say yes. It struck me that it would be awkward to say no and I feared upsetting my friend who needed participants for his research study. It made me conscious of how careful I would need to be when recruiting my own participants. It also brought ethical behaviour front and centre in terms of ethics being more than getting ethical approval. Before the interview I remember feeling a little worried and anxious about what I was going to be asked. This made me conscious of what my

participants might be feeling and I wrote a briefing note for myself which I used before each interview in an attempt to put the interviewees at ease.

When I sat down with my friend to begin the interview, I asked him about confidentiality and reminded him that I trusted him with what I was going to say. This prompted me to write a briefing note on trustworthiness for my own participants where I articulated my gratitude and clearly outlined my commitment to them and to what they were about to tell me. Interestingly, the participants when asked if they would like to view their transcripts said no and that they trusted me with what they had said. During the interview with my friend, I was conscious of understanding what was being asked of me and having time to answer without feeling hurried or being interrupted. I was also concerned about the possibility of being judged by the interviewer. This made me resolve to be careful not to give an indication of my own opinions or biases, for fear of my participants feeling judged by me. I found the experience of being interviewed a positive one and gleaned a lot in terms of the kind of experience I hoped my participants would have with me as interviewer. One other thing I was conscious of was how the interview would finish. I recall asking my friend what would happen with my data (interesting that I considered it *my* data!). This prompted me to write a debriefing note for my own research study, where I addressed these issues with the participants before we left the field including asking participants if there was anything they wanted to ask me. I also decide to write a thank you note to my participants after each interview for their time and consideration in support my research. See memo from my Research Diary below.

> Concerned about my own research and the impact of being interviewed on my human participants, I recently agreed to be interviewed for a research project of a friend. This was not my first time being interviewed, but this time I was doing it with my own research in mind. The interview was being conducted by my friend, whom I know and trust, and I was furnished with all of the relevant consent forms, interview schedules etc. However, I found it difficult and found myself asking many, many questions including, "do I really want to do this?" Right up to and including the interview I was concerned; what if the researcher (my friend) misinterprets what I am saying here, did I really explain myself clearly, I even surprised myself by some of the things I said during the interview even though I knew the questions in advance-but it wasn't until I actually answered them that the full extent of my thinking was exposed. Even after the interview, I wondered and worried if the interviewer would be selective in what quotes would be used and if what I had said would be treated respectfully. It brought into full focus the ethics of research and, in particular, the ethics of interviewing.

Memo from Research Diary (12th March, 2015)

Before I conducted the first interview of my own research study, I decided to conduct a pilot interview. This proved very useful and I gained some invaluable insights into improving my questioning. While my research questions, which had been derived from my literature review, remained relevant, I discovered that by reordering the sequence of questions the flow of the interview became smoother. Also, in transcribing this interview I became conscious of my need to ask more declarative questions, as in some instances I was a little hesitant and consequently, seemed to confuse issues a little for the interviewee. This pilot interview also made me aware of the importance of time and the need to monitor more closely how quickly the time seemed to pass. Importantly, I also realised that if I was asking participants to be interviewed for an hour, there was also a need to factor in the settling-in time before the recorded interview and the time needed to take leave of the field. Out of respect for my participants, I needed to make them aware of this time commitment in advance.

I approached interviewing my participants, not looking for the 'perfect' interview, but looking to provide opportunities for participants to tell their stories, with as little intrusion and influence from me, the researcher, as possible. I also began this with a view to learning and improving my interviewing technique. I was delighted that I would be meeting each participant more than once, in fact three times. I was focused and attentive so that each participant could tell their story as each one wished.

Data were collected from eight beginning teachers using semi-structured interviews over a three-phase cycle. Phase One interviews were conducted at the end of the participants' first year of teaching. Data are presented in Table 3.8 with reference to gender and teaching contexts.

Table 3.8: Phase One: School Contexts

Participant	Details of School Context
F1	Female Aged 20-25 Two teaching placements: 1. Senior Infant Class Teacher in urban boys' school from September to April 2. Special Education Teacher of 4th-6th class in girls' rural school from April to June.
F2	Female Aged 35-40; One placement as Special Education Teacher in urban co-educational school working across classes.

F3	Female Aged 20-25 One placement as Special Class Teacher in ASD class for young children in co-educational urban Gaelscoil.
F4	Female Aged 20-25 Worked as a substitute teacher all year in a variety of school settings as Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher.
F5	Female Aged 20-25 Worked as a substitute teacher all year in a variety of school settings as Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher
F6	Female Aged 20-25 1. Worked as a substitute teacher in a variety of school settings as Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher for September and October 2. Worked as a Special Education Teacher in a DEIS Band 2 school (disadvantaged area) from November to June.
F7	Female Aged 20-25 1. Worked as a substitute teacher in a variety of school settings as Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher for September and October and then as a Special Class Teacher in an urban co-educational special school for children with ASD.
M1	Male Aged 20-25 Class Teacher of 2nd-4th class for full school year Rural co-educational school

Phase Two interviews were conducted at the end of the participants' second year of teaching and Table 3.9 below summaries the teaching contexts.

Table 3.9 Phase Two: School Contexts

Participant	Details of School Context
F1	Female Aged 20-25 Special Education Teacher working with children in JI and 2nd class Boys' school (with all classes from infants to 6th class)
F2	Female Aged 35-40 Special Education Teacher working with children in 2nd, 4th, 5th classes Boys' school (with classes 2nd to 6th)
F3	Female Aged 20-25 Class Teacher of 3rd class (12 children) and 4th class(12 children) Co-educational Gaelscoil of 24 teachers and with 4 special classes for children with ASD.
F4	Female

	Aged 20-25 Class Teacher of 4th class Co-educational rural school
F5	Female Aged 20-25 Special Education Teacher; working with six children Co-educational rural school
F6	Female Aged 20-25 Class Teacher of 3rd class (20 children) Co-educational DEIS Band 2 school
F7	Female Aged 20-25 Special Class Teacher teaching five children with ASD aged 7-9; two SNAs in the classroom Co-educational School for Children with ASD
M1	Male Aged 20-25 Class Teacher of 4th class (27 children) DEIS Band 2 School with 28 teachers

As a researcher, I was very conscious of the relevance of the school settings and the implications for opportunities for engaging with parents. I also wondered about the relationship between the class grade being taught and the opportunities for engaging with parents, regardless of the school setting. A third curiosity was the relationship between those beginning teachers who were employed as class teachers and those who had the role of special education teachers.

Phase One and Phase Two interviews lasted between one and three hours and were conducted in venues close to the participants' homes and workplaces. Phase Three of the data collection consisted of a focus group with three of the participants and lasted one and a half hours. This interview took place in a venue close to where the participants worked.

Interviewing for my research study began on a sunny June afternoon in a small hotel in the west of Ireland. I had asked each participant to identify both the location and time that suited them best. This interview took place at 4.00pm, an hour after the beginning teacher had finished school for the day, and in a place close to where they lived. I left in plenty of time to travel the 65km journey from my own place of work and arrived eager to catch up with my past student and hear all about their first year of teaching.

This first participant was well known in the locality and was able to secure a private room for our interview. I am describing here what Stake (1995) refers to as the situational context with a view to helping the reader recreate in their own mind the scene at hand. In our interview room, which was large and bright, there was a large round table covered in a white tablecloth and surrounded by chairs. A member of the hotel staff apologised that they had not yet had time to clean the room after an earlier meeting, so on the table lay used glasses and half empty jugs of drinking water. Neither I nor the participant was bothered by this, we were just very grateful for a quiet space in a very busy hotel where we could speak privately. There was an abundance of plugs, so I was able to set up my two digital recorders; I used two digital recorders for all of my interviewing to avoid exclusive reliance on one device.

It took about twenty minutes to begin the recorded interview. During this lead-in time we each enquired after the other. There was a genuine interest on each of our parts as to the other's wellbeing. After this, I went through my briefing note in an attempt to put my interviewee at ease and thanked him for agreeing to be involved in my study. I reminded him of the purpose of the work and I explained that I would be using a digital recorder, as advised in the original information sheet, and checked that he was satisfied to continue with the interview. The participant gave verbal consent, in addition to the written consent already sent by email. I was conscious at this time of honouring the ethics of checking with each participant at the beginning of each interview that they were still happy to be part of the research study, as I had committed to in my initial ethical approval proposal. This was not just about initial ethical approval that a researcher receives before the field work is conducted, but also about ethical behaviour throughout the research process.

This first recorded interview in Phase One of my research study lasted 55 minutes. I am consciously referring to the recorded interview, as I realised, as I continued conducting interviews in the field, that what happens before the recorder goes on and after it is turned off often generates very valuable data. At the end of this first interview I asked the participant if there was anything he felt I had not asked that he would like to add. He shared a very interesting comment about how he felt parents perceived him as a beginning teacher, which I subsequently included as a question in all subsequent interviews. At the end of the interview the participant joined me in the hotel for something to eat. This became an important feature of my work in the field across all three phases of the

study. Sometimes it was just coffee, other times a meal; sometimes we ate before the recorded interview, sometimes afterwards. I was led by the participants, in keeping with Smith et al.'s (2009) view that interviewing is participant-oriented and participant-led.

As I left that first interview, I was conscious of how nervous I had been about beginning my data gathering. The excerpt below from my Research Diary serves as a post-interview memo, something I did before and after each interview across all three phases of the data collection:

> I'm happy with the way the interview went. I'm tired. It was my first interview and I was terribly nervous coming up to do it, wondering if I had enough prepara-tion done, were the questions good enough, and so on and so forth. M1 was so gracious and gave me so much of his time. So, yes, I am pleased with it and I am looking forward now to doing two more interviews on Wednesday and then two more on Friday.

Memo from Research Diary (26th June 2017)

Transcribing the first interview the day after the actual interview proved invaluable. It allowed me to revisit the data as I listened to myself ask the questions and to my first participant tell his story. It was almost as if I were transported back to the hotel where the interview had taken place and I could visualise the half empty glasses on the round table and hear the hum of the busy hotel in the background. I realised in listening to the audio and transcribing the words that some of the initial data gathered about type of school etc. would be better documented on a matrix before I recorded the session. This data, while very valuable in terms of giving context, would be much more easily record-ed on a chart.

Subsequent data collection in Phase One and Phase Two consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews. In Phase One there were more questions (see Appendix H for in-terview schedule), and a little more structure. In Phase Two there were fewer questions (see Appendix I) in the hope that the opening question, *please tell me about a memora-ble experience with parents you have had over the last 18 months*, would allow the par-ticipants an opportunity to talk in depth about something that happened to them, their *lived experience*, that would shed light on and bring meaning to this particular phenom-enon. In Phase Two of data collection, I sought to go deeper and the schedule, while planned, is different to the schedule used in Phase One of the data collection. In *going deeper*, I was attempting to implement the inductive epistemology of interpretative phe-nomenological analysis to the fullest extent (Smith et al. 2009).

As researcher, I endeavoured to interview at both a factual and a meaning level and where necessary either confirm or disconfirm as I interpreted what the interviewee was saying. I carried something that I learnt about myself from Phase One interviews into Phase Two, namely an acute awareness of my own assumptions and presuppositions. Husserl refers to bracketing, and I interpret this as being the necessity to be aware of one's own assumptions, presuppositions and biases and not allowing them to influence the participants' contributions.

As part of Phase Two data collection, I asked participants to bring an artefact that represented their relationship with parents. Participants' responses to this request were interesting. Five participants didn't comment at all on the request to bring an artefact; one gave an example of what she intended to bring and asked if that was okay; another asked for clarification and what I meant by an artefact; another expressed concern at the request to bring an artefact and said she would have to spend some time thinking about this. One of the advantages of using interpretive phenomenological analysis, is the opportunity to be creative and this request of participants to bring an artefact was an attempt on my part to be creative.

Sometimes the interviews took place in hotels near where the participants worked and sometimes they were conducted in my place of work, when a participant said this was more convenient for them. An interesting dilemma arose for me before I began my Phase Two data collection as illustrated in the Memo from my Research Diary.

> I emailed all eight participants inviting them to take part in the second round of data collection. Five of the participants responded, three of them immediately, and said they would be delighted to meet me for the second round. Within a week I hadn't heard from three of the participants and I really deliberated as to whether or not I would follow up the initial email with text message to their mobile phones. My dilemma was the tension between following up, which might appear a little pressurised, with not having their input for Phase Two. Having spent three days deliberating I decided to follow up with a text. I carefully worded text and included the message that there was no obligation whatsoever to follow up with me. To my delight, and, dare I say it, my relief, all three participants responded favourably. One participant had not received the original email, as it had gone into her spam folder; another apologised and said she had meant to reply to me but forgot to do so; the third said she would be delighted to partake and would explain to me when she met me why she hadn't replied.
>
> **Memo from Research Diary (3rd April 2018)**

Phase Three of the data collection involved interviewing three participants as part of a Focus Group. While all eight participants were invited and had indicated a willingness to participate, five had other commitments on the scheduled evening and only three were available. This was to be expected, as the planned evening was on a Friday in the second last week of the school year. The challenge in scheduling Phase Three was to offer a time to the participants that facilitated a meeting of those who needed to travel some distance, hence Friday evening from 5.30pm to 7:30pm was deemed the logical choice. All five who were unable to come responded with apologies and Ciara's response is indicative of the responses from all of the participants who could not make the focus group interview and be part of the final data collection session, "I am not around that day, I'm afraid, I'm flying to London that evening; but thank you for the invitation and I'm gutted to be missing it". This final phase was conducted to validate findings from previous phases. This phase was critical to the trustworthiness of the entire research process as it allowed participants an opportunity to comment on initial findings and continue to give voice in shaping the research study.

Using placemat methodology, participants were invited to write down a response to some or all of the characteristics of the beginning teacher that had been identified in the previous two interview phases. It is a methodology the participants had been familiar with from the parent-professional module. Placemat methodology is an active approach used with small groups of up to five people, underpinned by the principles of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is a peer mediated instructional arrangement where small groups work together in a way that promotes not only the individual's own learning but also the learning of others (Mercer and Mercer 1998). Foundational to cooperative placemat methodology are Johnson and Johnson's five basic elements of effective group work (Johnson and Johnson 1999). These elements are individual accountability, where each person has to contribute to the overall process; face-to-face interaction, where individuals are seated in a way that is conducive to conversation; collaborative skills, including social communication and critical thinking skills; processing a collaborative and academic task, where there is dual emphasis on academic and social skill development; and positive interdependence, where the individual's success and achievement is tied to group achievement.

The three participants were presented with the beginning teacher profile and given some time to reflect and individually respond to the characteristics presented by writing down

their responses with coloured markers. See Figure 3.2 below for an example of one of the responses.
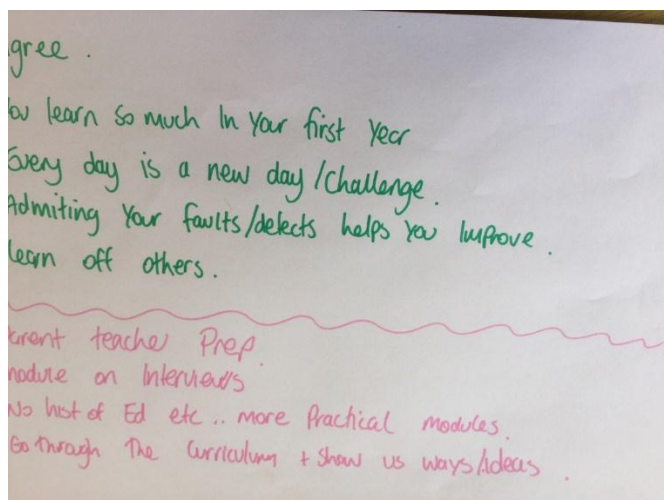
Figure 3.2: Placemat Response in Phase Three of Data Collection

Having committed their own individual responses to paper, each participant then spoke about what they had written. This happened without interruption or comment until each participant had responded to the Beginning Teacher Profile. A discussion then ensued where the participants responded to what each other had said, often extending or elaborating on what they had heard another participant contribute.

The second question posed to the participants concerned their considerations, as beginning teachers, when working with parents of children with SEN. The third question required the participants to consider what message they would like to convey to those who work in ITE in terms of preparation for working with parents. The cooperative learning placemat for these questions allowed each participant to write down a response, follow it with a verbal contribution and subsequently, enter into discussion on the topic in hand.

3.12.5 MANAGING DATA COLLECTION

To manage the large volume of data, I used NVivo 12 software (NVivo 2018). This document management system allowed me to upload all of my transcripts and audio interviews in order to forensically examine each line of transcript and audio, annotate them and code to initial categories, or what NVivo refers to as nodes. It also allowed me to code the same line of script to more than one initial node.

Phase One of the data collection yielded 52,755 words of transcript; Phase Two yielded 73,172 words; and Phase Three yielded 7,387 words. In addition, my Research Diary with my experience memos and pre- and post-interview memos also formed part of the data set. NVivo proved to be a useful document management system to do this. I was fortunate to have been able to undertake two group training sessions on the system as well as a full day one-to-one training with follow-up support. I was conscious of completing this training well before I undertook my first interview and well before engaging in data analysis. All the way through, I was conscious that NVivo, while invaluable as a document management system, was just that, a document management system. In no way was NVivo going to analyse my data, I, as researcher was the research analyst. I even recorded this in my Research Diary, as seen in Figure 3.4 below.
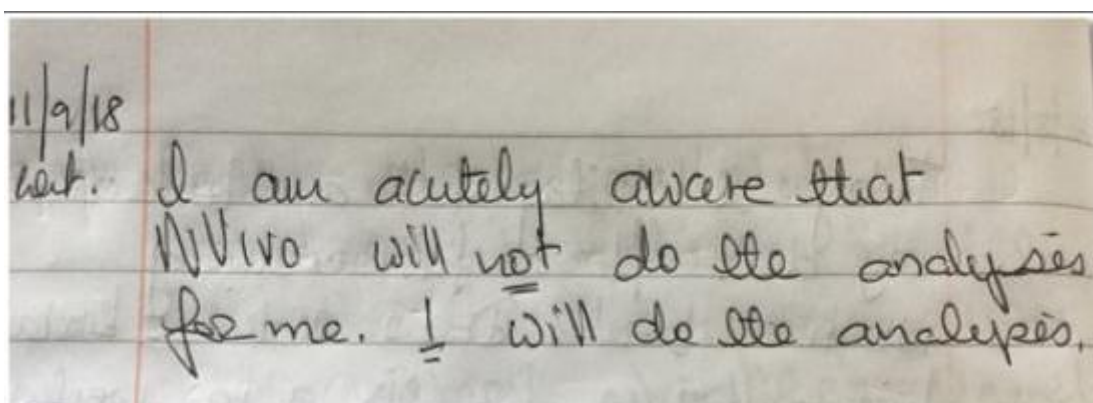
Figure 3.4 Memo from Research Diary (11th September 2018)

3.12.6 CONCLUDING COMMENT ON DATA COLLECTION

Leaving the field is something that we, as researchers, need to think about and plan for. As researchers, we put a huge amount of energy and planning into how we enter the field, leaving the field also requires consideration and planning. At the end of each phase of the data collection, I used a debriefing note, comprised of a few questions that I asked the participants. It was a sort of check-in to ensure that the participant's wellbeing was uppermost in my mind as I left them after our time together. I asked if there was anything they would like to add before we finished up; I asked if they had any questions they would like to ask me; I reminded them that neither they nor anyone they mentioned would be identified. I also offered to send them the transcript of their interview. That evening or the following day, I always sent a thank you email or text to express my gratitude for the time we had spent together. For the Focus Group interview, I arranged

tea/coffee and sandwiches on arrival and had a box of chocolates on each of their seats as a small gesture of thanks.

3.13   DATA ANALYSIS

According to Smith et al. (2009), there are four main approaches to qualitative data analysis: grounded theory analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and phenomenological analysis. While each approach can be presented as distinctive in its own right, there are also places where approaches overlap and share similarities. Table 3.10 below outlines the key features of these four qualitative data analysis approaches, taking IPA as an example of the phenomenological approach.

Table 3.10 Key Features of Main Data Analysis Approaches (Smith et al. 2009)

Approach	Suits	Features
Grounded Theory Analysis	- large data sample; - structured protocol; - high-level conceptual account	- open coding; - axial coding; - selective coding
Discourse Analysis	- deconstructing topics; - focusing on language	- coding to select relevant sections for analysis under the dimensions of context, variability and construction; - examination of language in context; - use of interpretative repertoires
Narrative Analysis	exploring the content and structure of people's stories	descriptive phase followed by interpretative phase resulting in the development of a coding frame
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	small fairly homogenous samples	- initial coding and noting; - subordinate themes; - superordinate themes

With IPA, which is used in this research study, initial coding is exploratory. It begins with reading and rereading and listening and re-listening to the first case. It is about actively engaging with the data and noting what strikes you about what the participant has said. Analysis of the first interview yielded an initial thirty codes (see Appendix J). In

creating these initial codes, I was conscious that this was not about analysing facts but rather exploring meanings. This is in keeping with Larkin and Thompson's (2012) reference to developing "an *organised, detailed, plausible* and *transparent* account of the meaning in the data" (p. 104). Things that mattered to this first participant included the positive experiences he had with parents as well as the challenges he encountered; the influence of his own parents and own educational experience; relationships with children, parents and staff in the school. These thirty initial codes not only provided an insight into this beginning teacher's lived experience of parents, but also provided a platform for subsequent analysis of the remaining seven interviews in Phase One of the research study.

In addition to initial coding, Smith et al. (2009) recommend that the first reading of a transcript should involve writing descriptive comments on what has been highlighted as being important. The second reading of the transcript should then involve writing linguistic comments. On the third reading of the transcript, they recommend writing conceptual comments. So, in addition to initial coding, I annotated each transcript, where I found myself engaging in analytic dialogue with each line of the transcript at a descriptive level, linguistic level and conceptual level. Initially, I coded a section of transcript and then afterwards I revisited the same section of transcript and wrote annotations. See Table 3.11 below for an example of an annotated script with descriptive, linguistic and conceptual commentary.

Table 3.11 Phase One Annotated Transcript with Descriptive, Linguistic and Conceptual Comments

Extract from original transcript: *"I only went to two all-girls' schools."*	
Descriptive Coding	This beginning teacher is describing her own primary and secondary schooling.
Linguistic Coding	The use of the adverb *only* is interesting in that the participant did not say *she went to two all-girls' schools*; she said *she only went to two all-girls' schools.*
Conceptual Coding	In interrogating this sentence conceptually and the use of the adverb *only*, I ask the question, is the participant's own schooling influencing her teaching? Is she aware that her own experiences of schooling might impact on how and who she is as a beginning teacher? The fact that the participant says, *she only went to two all-girls' schools,* leaves me wondering if she believes she has missed out on something. I am mindful, as the researcher and analyst, that participants' own schooling experi-

| | ences were a feature of Phase One interviews; so this is something that is coming through, not only across each phase of the interview, but also across phases of the interviews? My own knowledge as a teacher educator reminds me that who we are as people matters in teaching and the experiences we have had influence the type of teacher we become, or as Palmer (1998) puts it, "we teach who we are" (p. 1). |

However, I very soon found myself, quite instinctively, coding and annotating simultaneously. This is very much in keeping with Smith et al.'s (2009) story about a research analyst who having completed an IPA study "by following the steps suggested is in an IPA chapter realised that IPA wasn't about following a set of steps!" (p. 81). Smith et al. (2009) contends that while following a set of steps and guidelines is helpful, as one becomes more familiar with the IPA process, the steps, in and of themselves, become less important and "one is more able to recognise that IPA is an approach and sensibility, as much a way of thinking about and seeing, as of doing something" (p. 81). This highlights the complexity of initial analysis and how, as one engages more and more with the process, one becomes more skilled in managing the multifaceted nature of analysis and the ability to move from initial descriptive commentary to a more interpretative level of analysis.

To ensure trustworthiness and enhance triangulation, I regularly wrote memos in my Research Diary as I engaged in the process of data analysis. Below is an experience memo reflecting on the process of initial noting and coding of the data.

> It appears to me this initial noting and coding is about carefully and painstakingly exploring what the participant has said and documenting this initial analysis so that it can be examined and checked at any stage throughout the process and beyond. It is about examining what participants have said at a number of levels. I am interrogating the text descriptively, linguistically and particularly conceptually. This interrogation enables analysis to move from mere description, which has its place and is of value, to more interpretative levels of meaning. This interrogation of the text is a time of wondering, wondering what the participants meant by making this comment. In this wondering I draw on my own experiences, I reflect on what this comment triggers in me, I also draw on my own professional knowledge. According to Smith et al. (2009), as long as "the interpretation is stimulated by, and tied to, the text, it is legitimate" (pp. 89-90). In terms of research integrity, in interrogating and interpreting the text, probably more than anywhere else in this whole research process, I must admit to myself and to the reader who I am as researcher. I am the researcher, yes, but I am the researcher who is a parent, and, furthermore, I am the researcher who is a parent of a child with what we call special educational needs. When these beginning teachers comment on their experiences of parents I am conscious that I am being impacted by what they say. In addition to being a

parent, I am also the researcher who is a teacher and who was a beginning teacher. So, when these beginning teachers are commenting on their experiences I am reminded of my experiences as a beginning teacher. I acknowledge all of this and recognise that, yes, this makes me biased. Being biased is often synonymous with being prejudiced. However, it doesn't necessarily have to be about being unfair. Perhaps being aware of and acknowledging one's biases goes a long way to openness, transparency and trustworthiness in an analytic process that is by no means linear, but rather complex, multifaceted and iterative. However, while research integrity demands an acknowledgement of who we are as researcher, this is so that we can make sense of the data we are analysing; in no way is this about putting the focus on me, the researcher.

Memo from Research Diary (15th August 2018)

Having completed the analysis of the first interview from Phase One of my data collection, I proceeded to analyse the remaining seven, one after the other. The second interview yielded an additional eight initial codes to the original thirty from the first interview. The third interview yielded a further three, the fourth a further three, the fifth a further two, the sixth a further one, the seventh a further three and the eight yielded a further one initial code. By the end of Phase One analysis, I had annotated and conducted initial coding on 53,000 words of transcript and had generated fifty initial codes. On reflection, having analysed each interview as a separate entity, it is understandable that there would be additional and new codes emerging as additional initial coding occurred, some of which did not fit in with previous or subsequent analysis.

Turning initial codes into subordinate themes requires what Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) refer to as "dwelling in the data". However, as researcher, I found myself at times struggling not to *drown* in the said data. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) suggest that "your conceptual framework is the centre-piece in managing and reducing the data" (p. 197). I concur with this sentiment and remind myself that my conceptual framework, as discussed at length in Chapter Two, is an iterative and responsive framework that is always there giving strength and rigor to the work being undertaken. I consider my conceptual framework the *golden thread* that weaves its way through all of the work, sometimes to the forefront of my writing, other times taking more of a back seat. Here, the conceptual framework takes on something of what Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) refer to as a *repository*, within which the data resides. The analysis of this research study and subsequent findings reside in the ecosystem of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) or what Epstein (1995) refers to as "overlapping spheres of influence". It is here that the participants met parents; it is here that these eight beginning teachers lived out their experiences of engaging with parents.

Turning initial notes and explorative comments from original transcripts into emergent themes, or subordinate themes in IPA parlance, is both challenging and complex. Searching for concise phrases or statements to capture the essence of what has been said by participants presents a challenge in that the researcher is trying to retain what participants said on the ground while, at the same time, conceptualising what has been said into themes that encapsulate the nuances, contexts and complexities of the participants' lived experiences. According to Smith et al. (2009), "inevitably, the analysis is a joint product of the participant and the analyst … and the end result is always an account of how the analyst thinks the participant is thinking - this is the double hermeneutic" (p. 80). This means that IPA analysis is always subjective. However, this subjectivity can be interrogated and its rigour tested by examining how the claims were arrived at. In the interest of transparency and in order to provide an audit trail of my analytical thinking throughout the data analysis process, Table 3.12 below provides an outline of my thinking around four initial codes being turned into the subordinate theme of emotional aspect of their lived experiences of parents and an accompanying theoretical memo in an effort to make my thinking transparent.

Table 3.12 Subordinate Themes from Initial Codes

Subordinate Themes	Initial Codes	Theoretical Memo
Emotional Aspect	Overwhelmed Frustrated Satisfaction Empathy	Overall, there are at least 50 references from the participants and the emotional aspect of engaging with parents. Again, I'm not sure if this subordinate theme will survive to the next level of analysis, but, in particular, the sense of being overwhelmed has resonance with all but one of the participants and has 35 references from the seven to whom it mattered. I look forward to examining and exploring these comments in a more analytical way.

The next stage in the analytic process was transforming the subordinate themes into superordinate themes. This was about seeking connections across subordinate themes. At this stage some of my subordinate themes were discarded as they did not answer the research question. An example of this is the participants' struggles with school planning. While interesting and important in its own right, this emergent or subordinate theme did not contribute to the phenomenon under exploration. Smith et al. (2009) say that at this stage, "Effectively, you are looking for a means of drawing together the emergent

themes and producing a structure which allows you to point to all of the most interesting and important aspects of your participant's account" (p. 96). NVivo proved very useful at this juncture with its capacity to transform subordinate themes into superordinate themes, while still maintaining the ability to see how one nested into the other. At this point, some subordinate themes emerged as superordinate themes in their own right, while others merged together into a combined new one. See Table 3.13 showing the development of superordinate themes from subordinate themes and original initial codes.

Table 3.13: Superordinate Themes from Subordinate Themes from Initial Codes

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes	Initial Codes
Professional Domain	Professionalism	- professional judgement - maturity - learning as a teacher - response to parental disagreement - awareness of new SEN model - collaborative nature of teaching - valuing outside professionals - asking for help - Teaching Diploma
	Reflection-in-action	- trying to make sense - response to parental disagreement - understanding self - memorable experience - collaborative nature of teaching - learning as a teacher - lack of security of tenure - awareness of being young - valuing outside professionals

When it came to the process of analysing Phase Two data, I began by reading and listening to the first of the eight cases, as I had done with Phase One data. As I listened and read, I was brought right back to the moment in time when I interviewed the participant. I could recall the location, the atmosphere and the relationship between the beginning teacher and myself. As I listened, I wrote memos in my Research Diary. See the memo from 11 September 2018 as I struggled to come to terms with the challenge of analysing the data.

> Analysis is demanding and challenging. Analysis is, as I understand it, a combination of the participants' experiences, as articulated by them, and the researcher's

interpretation of this. So I ask myself, "is data analysis subjective? My answer is yes, I believe subjectivity, inevitably, plays a part in analysis, but this subjectivity must be subjected to a rigorous and explicit process of analysis. This rigour should allow the reader an understanding of and an insight into how I, as researcher, took what participants said and placed my own interpretation upon it. The reader, I hope, will be able to trace this iterative process of engagement with transcripts and audios from my initial annotations and thoughts, from description to interpretation, right through to the presentation of findings, and indeed subsequent discussions.

As I begin analysis of the data from Phase Two, I am feeling daunted and a little bit overwhelmed. I am just rereading Smith's (2009) chapter on analysis and struck by a couple of things namely, the analytic focus in IPA "directs our analytic attention towards our participants' attempts to make sense of their experiences" (p. 2). I like that with IPA there is no clear right or wrong way of conducting analysis, but rather are set of processes and principles to be adhered to and that innovation and creativity are encouraged (Smith 2009). The processes outlined by Smith (2009) include moving from the particular to the shared and from the descriptive to the interpretative. He also outlines some principles that characterise IPA namely, a commitment to an understanding of the viewpoint of the participants and a focus on personal mean-making in particular contexts. A heuristic framework for analysis is suggested, drawing on these processes and principles, and supported by a set of strategies. I will begin this process of data analysis with the strategy of close line-by-line analysis of each beginning teacher's experience of parents, particularly parents of children with special educational needs.

I began actively engaging with the data by reading and rereading the first transcript from Phase Two of my data collection in order to "ensure that the participant becomes the focus of analysis" (Smith 2009, p. 82). I also listened to the audio of this transcript in order to remember the person through hearing their voice. As I did this, I took time to record some thoughts and memories about the interview experience and also some of my own reactions and responses to what was being said. These comments serve to complements the memos I recorded immediately after each interview.

Memo from Research Diary (11th September 2018)

I began analysing and interrogating the data, line by line, at multiple levels, namely descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. NVivo proved very useful here as a document management system. Analysing data using IPA is complex and it can be overwhelming at times. In order to begin, one has to approach it from somewhere and this approach might initially appear linear, but in actual fact it is anything but linear. It is complex, it is multifaceted and multi-layered. Annotation was certainly time consuming but yielded real insight into the lived experiences of these beginning teachers as the engaged with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. Table 3.14 below is an example of one such annotation.

Table 3.14 Phase Two Annotation with Descriptive, Linguistic and Conceptual Comments

Extract from original transcript: *"I was making a mountain out of a mole hill, really I was kind of making it way more harder for myself."*	
Descriptive Coding	This beginning teacher, who is a special education teacher (SET) in a rural co-ed school, tells us about working with a child with speech and language difficulties and comments, "I was making a mountain out of a mole hill, really I was kind of making it way more harder for myself".
Linguistic Coding	Using the idiom *making a mountain out of a mole hill* is indicative of this beginning teacher feeling a little overwhelmed as she attempted to support a child in her care with speech and language difficulties. She further comments that she was really "kind of making it way more harder for myself" and that when she "just listened to the advice" of the speech and language therapist and "took on everything they said" which was to focus on her relationship with the child and "work with them every day build up their confidence", she found it much easier.
Conceptual Coding	In interrogating this beginning teacher's experience of working with a speech and language therapist, I wonder how much of an understanding this beginning teacher had of the role of the speech and language therapist. As a teacher educator, I fully appreciate that there is no expectation that the teacher fills the role of a speech and language therapist; however, a teacher has a lot to learn from an outside professional like a speech and language therapist and other professionals like occupational therapists or psychologists. In considering this beginning teacher's explicit encounter with a speech and language therapist, we can shift the focus to consider issues of confidence, upskilling and, ultimately, to the notion of professionalism and what it means to be a professional. Creasy (2015) refers to growing and developing professionally as a teacher and the importance of continuing professional development. This partnership between the beginning teacher and speech and language therapist provides opportunities for both professionals to learn about the other and the complementary roles played by each. I am also reminded of my own experiences as a beginning teacher when I worked very closely for a number of years with speech and language therapists. In my experience, not only did the child who was the focus of the therapy benefit, so too did many other children in my classroom for years to come. A teacher, working with another professional, has the potential to provide education and training where both professionals can build their knowledge base, skill base and also develop positive attitudes as we get an opportunity to consider things from different perspectives. Undoubtedly, we develop professionally as teachers when we engage with other professionals and, moreover, the children we work with benefit from the results of this

	collaboration and partnership. At a personal level, as a parent of a child with special educational needs who received speech and language therapy for many years, I recall the benefits of my child's teachers, therapist and our family working together to achieve specific targets and goals.

The conceptual analysis above of a beginning teacher's experience of working with a speech and language therapist moves the analysis from mere description to a more abstract level of both linguistic and conceptual analysis. In keeping with Smith et al.'s (2009) understanding of conceptual comments, this aspect of analysis involved a shift in focus from the beginning teacher's explicit commentary on her experience towards an understanding of the bigger issues of collaboration and partnership between teachers and other professionals. This joint working between teachers and other professionals is not for the sake of partnership, but rather for the sake of better outcomes for the children with whom we work. Moreover, shifting focus from the explicit experience leads to an interrogation of what it means to be a professional and indeed how professionals, such as teachers and speech and language therapists, can learn from and upskill each other. In addition, this conceptual analysis offers an opportunity for personal reflection as is seen in the commentary of my own experience and professional knowledge of being a teacher, being a beginning teacher, being a teacher educator and being the parent of a child with SEN, who received speech and language therapy for many, many years.

Having completed IPA analysis on the first case from Phase Two, I began actively engaging with the second case from Phase Two. In order to honour the integrity of the second case, and in keeping with IPA's idiographic commitment, I endeavoured to analyse it as a stand-alone case. However, I was aware of being influenced by the previous and first case analysis. Rather than considering this a problem, I accepted that much of the second case initial noting and coding would have similarities with the first case. Nonetheless, I also allowed new initial codes to emerge. In actual fact, I found myself revisiting the first case as a result of the second case analysis to interrogate the data and investigate if new codes also applied to the first interview. Moreover, I noticed that not all of the initial codes from the first case were utilised in the second. An example of an additional initial code being added to case three is what I termed *beginning teachers' awareness of parents' love for their children*. Having done an initial analysis on the first two cases, this was the first time I became aware of data from the beginning teachers that reflected this. So, my description in NVivo for this code, which sets the parameters

for inclusion, was *awareness of how precious children are to their parents and how much parents love their children.* I revisited the first two cases and discovered that there was evidence of this in Case Two, but not in Case One and I recoded Case Two accordingly. This is an example of how complex and detailed using IPA is; it takes a lot of time and really does require dwelling in the data and an ability, on the one hand, to bracket information and ideas from one case to the next, while at the same time considering the data as a whole. I approached each of the eight individual cases in this way, making efforts to bracket the codes emerging from previous cases, while at the same time being open to new emergent ideas. When I revisited previous cases with new codes in mind, some previous cases did indeed have data that could be coded to these new codes, while others did not.

As I coded the second case from Phase Two of the data collection, and as I added additional codes, I became aware of a need to merge or collapse some of these codes into each other. Almost instinctively, I was realising that there were similarities in some of the codes I was creating and there would be a need to reduce the number of codes in order to engage in a manageable second level analysis of the data. As I coded the third case from Phase Two of the data collection, I became aware of sometimes coding the same piece of text to more than one node. I realised that very often I coded text to the same three nodes (e.g. maturity, learning as a teacher, professionalism) and it is made me think that, in all likelihood, these three initial codes will probably merge or collapse into one subordinate theme at the next level of coding.

As I annotated each case, I found myself thinking about the implications for an elective module I teach to student teachers in the final semester of their B.Ed. programme. Below is an excerpt from this memo.

> Some parents will be around the same age as the beginning teacher however, many will be older; in fact some may be the same age as the beginning teacher's parents. This has implications for how a beginning teacher communicates and engages with the parents of the children they teach. I think this is something that needs to be addressed more explicitly in the communication section of our parent professional partnership elective.

Memo from Research Diary (12th September 2018)

Following initial coding and annotation, I engaged in the process of developing subordinate themes and subsequently, superordinate themes.

Analysis of Phase Three data, a Focus Group, was conducted, once again, using IPA. I began by reading, re-reading, listening, re-listening, followed by initial noting and coding at descriptive, linguistic and conceptual levels. What followed was the same process used in the previous phases of data analysis, namely the development of subordinate themes followed by superordinate themes.

Having a set of themes from the extensive analysis each of the three phases of the data collection, it was now about looking for patterns and connections across cases and within cases. I found this to be a particularly creative task and one that moved the analysis to a more theoretical level and really pushed interpretation into the space of higher-order concepts. The final result of this process was a set of themes that acted as repositories for what was shared across cases and phases, while still representing what Smith et al. (2009) refer to as "unique idiosyncratic instances" (p. 101). At this stage of the analysis, the conceptual framework of this research study was to the forefront of my thinking as I deliberated, relabelled and reconfigured themes over and over being mindful of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) and Epstein's overlapping sphere of influence (Epstein 1995). While, in some ways, it could be argued that I was getting further and further away from the data, I did not find this to be the case. Having dwelled for so long in the process of data analysis, sometimes to the point of drowning, I was satisfied that my familiarity with the participants' stories would remain with me as I entered the next stage of the process of telling the story, or rather stories, of the data.

3.13.1 CONCLUDING COMMENT ON DATA ANALYSIS

According to Smith et al. (2009), each stage of the analysis takes the researcher "further and further away from the participant and includes more of you [the researcher]" (p. 92). While this is not necessarily a problem, and indeed is an essential part of the analytical process, as researcher, I needed to be conscious of this shift in emphasis and remain as true to the participants' voices as possible throughout the process. Analysis of all three phases of the data collection using IPA proved to be a rigorous and demanding forensic examination of what participants had said, literally word-by-word and line-by-line, at descriptive, linguistic and conceptual levels. This allowed for dwelling in the data and a familiarity with the data that contributed to the overall trustworthiness of the process. Having a three-phase design to the data collection enabled in-depth interview-

ing to occur with participants over a period of their first two years of teaching and facilitated what Yin (2016) refers to as a method of triangulation. The generosity of the participants with their time and commitment allowed for triangulation and validity checks, probing, and further exploration of initial findings from one phase to the next. During the data analysis, I realised that who I am as a person, parent and teacher educator **does** matter. I found myself reacting sometimes to what participants said and had to be careful not to let this impact negatively on the data collection process or data analysis process, as revealed in the memo below from my Research Diary.

> As a teacher educator, I really find the comment from this beginning teacher, that this child who is struggling to learn her tables is getting "the same amount of support as everyone else in the class in maths", difficult to take. I found it hard to hear at the interview, I found it hard to hear the number of times I listened and re-listened to the interview, and I find it hard to comprehend as I read and reread the transcript. At the actual interview I struggled to bite my tongue because I wanted to engage with the beginning teacher around the logic of her statement about supporting this child. Even as I do an initial analysis on the transcript, I am struggling not to comment and give my opinion on what this beginning teacher is saying and, more importantly, on her thinking behind what she is saying.

Memo from Research Diary (18th June 2018)

3.14 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), it is important to acknowledge the limitations of a research study. They describe the limitations of a study as "those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from your research" (p. 164).

From the outset, it must be acknowledged that this was a small-scale study of eight beginning teachers who were interviewed a number of times, but a larger sample could yield further insights, both confirming and contrarian to the findings of this particular research study. Also, in terms of methodology, this was a qualitative case study using semi-structured interviews as a data gathering method. It is likely that a mixed-methods study would yield further confirming and disconfirming data, which would add to the robustness of the claims made. Furthermore, this research study explored beginning teachers' perspectives. Ideally, further studies would look at parents' lived experiences of beginning teachers. Moreover, researching children's experiences would complete the circle. Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests seeking multiple perspectives or views in order to achieve as much understanding as possible about that which we study. In terms of

trustworthiness, efforts were made to address issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, as outlined earlier in this chapter.

In addition, as researcher, I must, once again, declare my own personal biases of being a beginning teacher, being a parent of a child with SEN and being a teacher educator in ITE. I made efforts to acknowledge my biases from the outset and I also used a Research Diary throughout the research study to document and interrogate my own thinking. Both of these measures, combined with feedback from my two supervisors and a critical friend, were endeavours to address these personal biases. Nonetheless, it must also be acknowledged that every research study has limitations and explicitly acknowledging these limitations is an essential part of research integrity and trustworthiness.

3.15   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter tells the story of how I explored eight beginning primary school teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. It began with an overview of traditional research approaches and their ontological and epistemological considerations and implications for the research being undertaken. The constructivist research paradigm was then examined and the rationale for its suitability for this research study presented. What followed was a discussion on integrity and ethics and the need for ethical considerations to be integral to all aspects of research, from planning, to data collection, to analysis, to write-up, and dissemination. Trustworthiness is a thread running through this chapter. It is considered from the design of the research to the use of interview as the method of data collection across three phases and finally, the use of IPA to analyse the data. The data collection process and the analyses of the data are discussed in detail and extensive use is made of memos from my Research Diary to illustrate the complexity of processes involved in both.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of this research study, namely a case study that explored eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents during their first two years of teaching. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). According to Smith et al. (2009), IPA findings are "discreet in the sense that the interpretative account provided is a close reading of what the participants have said … without reference to the extant literature" (p. 112). The Discussion Chapter, which follows this chapter, will contextualise the findings in the wider context of the extant literature, conceptual framework and implications for theory, policy, practice and further research.

Yin (2016) states that it is a challenge to know how best to present qualitative data in order to communicate effectively with audiences and cautions against overlooking the seriousness of this challenge. Moving from analysis to presentation of findings needs to be carefully considered. According to Smith and Osborn (2008), the findings section of a research study is where "the analysis becomes expansive again, as the themes are explained, illustrated and nuanced" (p. 76). This putting back together into a coherent whole is not just a single endeavour but, rather as Stake (2010) observes, something that occurs from "the beginning of interest in the topic and continues still into the hours at the keyboard writing up the final report" (p. 137).

This findings chapter is about telling the story of the data. The case study findings allow the researcher to become the storyteller giving voice to the beginning teachers who told their stories about their lived experiences of engaging with parents over a series of interviews. The findings reported here are guided by the research questions where the research questions act as a lens through which the participants' stories are viewed (Breakwell 2012). As already discussed in the previous chapter, Phase One of the research study was conducted with eight beginning teachers at the end of their first year of teaching. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were used to ask questions that had emerged from the literature review. These questions focussed on the challenges experienced by the beginning teachers in their first year of teaching; the nature of parent-teacher partnership; the use of technology to communicate with parents; and implica-

tions of parent-teacher partnership for teacher education, particularly ITE (see Appendix H for Phase One Interview Schedule). Phase Two of the research study was conducted with the same eight beginning teachers towards the end of their second year of teaching, again using semi-structured interviews. In this phase the beginning teachers were asked to recall a memorable experience of engaging with parents. They were also invited to discuss an artefact they were invited to bring that represented their lived experiences of engaging with parents (see Appendix I for Phase Two Interview Schedule). See Table 4.1 below for an overview of participants, the roles they had and the classes they taught during their first two years as beginning teachers.

Table 4.1: Overview of Beginning Teachers' Roles and Classes

Beginning Teacher	Year One	Year Two
Audrey	Class teacher in large urban boys' school from September to April Special education teacher in girls' rural school from April to June	Special education teacher in large urban boys' school
Bernadette	Special education teacher in large mixed urban school	Special education teacher in large boys' urban school
Ciara	Special education teacher in ASD class	Class teacher in Gaelscoil
Denise	Substitute class teacher and Special education teacher	Class teacher in small rural school
Lisa	Class teacher in mixed rural school from September to March Substitute class teacher and Special education teacher from April to June	Special education teacher in mixed rural school
Fiona	Substitute class teacher and Special education teacher September and October Special education teacher in large urban school from November to June	Class teacher in urban mixed school in area of socio-economic disadvantage
Gemma	Substitute class teacher and Special education teacher for September and October Class teacher in urban girls' school from November to June	Special education teacher in mixed special school for children with ASD
Michael	Class teacher in small rural school	Class teacher in large urban school in area of socio-economic disadvantage

The final phase of the research study was conducted using a focus group approach with three of the beginning teachers during the final week of their second year of teaching. The final phase of the data collection was used to check the trustworthiness of the pre-

liminary findings of the first two phases of data collection, as well as expand on some of the issues already highlighted by the participants. This phase concluded with asking the participants to provide advice for initial teacher education (ITE) about preparing beginning teachers to work with parents, particularly parents of children with special educational needs (SEN).

4.1   ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

As with all stages of a research study, the findings stage requires integrity and trustworthiness in terms of an ethical reporting. In reporting findings, there is "an ethical duty to ensure that the results of the research are reported fairly, credibly and accurately, without misrepresentation or unfair selectivity" (Creswell 2013, p. 279). According to Cohen et al. (2018), reporting of findings must be "honest, true, fair and in a format that audiences of the research will be able to access and understand (e.g. lay or professional audiences)" (p. 139). Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) talk about findings being trustworthy and refer to the researcher now assuming the role of storyteller whose goal is "to tell a story that should be vivid and interesting while also accurate and credible" (p. 207). What follows is a narrative account of the findings, presented as themes. This narrative combines the researcher's own narrative with extensive direct quotes from the participants. In this chapter the beginning teachers' own words will feature largely in an effort "to build the reader's confidence that the reality of the participants and the situation studies is accurately represented" (Bloomberg and Volpe 2016, p. 208). Each theme is presented with what Denzin (1989) calls "thick description" in a way that is as true to the experiences of the eight beginning teachers who told their stories about their lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN.

4.2   FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEW DATA

Following in-depth within-case and across-case analysis of the three phases of interview data, using IPA, three themes emerged. These three superordinate themes, to use IPA parlance, were beliefs of beginning teachers on their lived experiences of engaging with parents, influences on beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents and realisations of beginning teachers on their lived experiences of engagement with parents. Table 4.2 below outlines the three superordinate themes and their nested and interrelated subordinate themes.

Table 4.2: Superordinate Themes and Related Subordinate Themes

Superordinate Themes	Beliefs	Influences	Realisations
Subordinate Themes	Engagement with parents benefits children	School culture	Learning happens on the job
	Engagement with parents is challenging	Special educational needs	Engagement with parents is emotional
		Participants' parents	Communication is central to successful engagement between home and school
		Initial Teacher Education	

The findings are presented, initially, at group level and, in keeping with the idiographic element of IPA, also at the individual level. These thick, rich descriptions and interpretations allow the reader "to experience the life" (Patton 2015, p. 538) of these eight beginning teachers as they tell their stories of their lived experiences of engaging with parents. Smith et al. (2009) emphasise the importance of claims being accurate and evidenced and the need to represent recurrent themes in a consistent and meaningful manner. This ensures trustworthiness.

Within each superordinate theme there are subordinate themes, based on initial coding and noting. Data collection and initial noting and coding were participant-oriented and participant-led and subsequent themes (subordinate and superordinate), while still participant-oriented, were more researcher-led. According to Smith et al. (2009), each stage of analysis takes the researcher "further away from the participant and includes more of you [the researcher]" (p. 92). Therefore, the findings in this chapter comprise a double hermeneutic or two-stage interpretation, where the researcher's analytic interpretation is an effort to make sense of the participants' efforts to make sense of their lived experiences. This narrative account is supported with verbatim extracts from the participants to ensure the reader is experiencing the voice of beginning teachers as they tell us their stories about their lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN.

The beginning teachers articulated the following two beliefs about parents: engaging with parents benefits children and engaging with parents is challenging (see Figure 4.1). What follows is a reporting on each of these findings. Discussion on these findings will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.
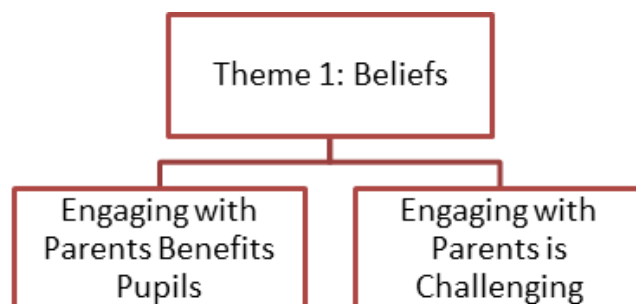
Figure 4.1 Theme 1: Beliefs

4.3.1 ENGAGING WITH PARENTS BENEFITS CHILDREN

All of the beginning teachers espoused a belief that engaging with parents benefits children. At the end of his first year of teaching, Michael, who was teaching in his local four-teacher rural school , referred to parents being "the number one educators" and said he believed that children benefited from his engagement with their parents "because if their parents are happy with them at home, they [children] are more likely to be good in class, aren't they?" In interpreting this comment, it is clear that "being good in class" mattered to this beginning teacher. In interpreting and understanding why this mattered, it is important to know that Michael was teaching three classes in a multi-grade class situation during his first year as a beginning teacher. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that "being good in class" was important to him in order to manage teaching three year groups every day so that the children would learn successfully. On his own admission, Michael knew and was known to all the families and was "very involved in the community" and the families knew "their children were coming into a teacher who was dedicated every day". Michael went on to talk about a parent who was a scientist and came into the classroom every Thursday to teach the children their science lesson and commented that "she did it way better than any teacher could do it. She had microscopes, she had agar plates, she had all the equipment …we did super stuff. There's no possible way any teacher could do it just as good as she did". He believed that engagement with this parent benefited all of the children in his classroom, in terms of their

knowledge and understanding of science. In interpreting Michael's story, it is reasonable to assume that not only did he believe engagement with parents benefitted the children, as he overtly stated, but this engagement also benefitted him as a teacher. From his comment, "There's no possible way any teacher could do it just as good as she did", he believed that this parent did him a service in the teaching of science.

Michael made a comment during his first interview when he said "it will be interesting for me next year when I have to go and work on those relationships [with parents]". Here Michael expressed an awareness of the school context he finds himself in, where he knows and is known by the families of the children he teaches and consequently, that 'getting to know you' phase has already happened. In that moment of reflection, Michael was wondering what it would be like when he found himself in a different school context and, as he said himself, where he would "have to go and work on those relationships". The design of this research study meant I met Michael again when he was in a school setting where he had to "work on those relationships". The second time I met Michael was almost a year later, towards the end of his second year of teaching, where he had been teaching in a large urban school of twenty-eight teachers. Despite the change in school context, he still held the belief that the children benefitted from engagement between home and school as illustrated by the following extract:

> So, I'll give you an example. I only rang a parent back yesterday evening. Her child was getting bullied on the bus on the way home. I told her what she needed to do. I said, 'I can't go to the bus stop with your child, but if that was my child, I'd be looking for different ways to get them home or something. To get him out of that danger, could you collect him for a few weeks?' She did what she was supposed to do, and I left it then for five weeks. And I rang yesterday evening as a follow-up and I said, 'How are things going?' And she was so delighted with the call. She thanked me out and out for calling her and said things are fine again. I said, 'I just wanted to follow up with a call'.

Michael believed that engaging with this parent benefitted the child in terms of sorting out the issue of the child being bullied. Across both phases of the data collection, Michael espoused a belief that engaging with parents benefits children and even though the school context was different from one year to the next, he still held the belief.

All of the beginning teachers spoke of the benefit to children of being happy when the teacher engaged with parents about positive things that had happened in school. Some participants had a quiet word with parents when they collected their child from school, like Audrey who met parents "every morning when the kids got dropped off to the classroom and when they were collected". She recalled:

> So, if something happened during the day that was good, it'd be like, 'Oh, make sure you tell Mom', you know, that kind of way. Or, 'Make sure you tell Gran', or whoever is collecting them. It would always be something like, 'Oh, you did great writing today' and then you'd be like, 'Oh, okay, I'll tell Mom'; so it definitely benefitted them.

Audrey also mentioned "the flip-side" of this engagement and described how sometimes telling parents about negative incidents that happened in school caused the children "a lot of anxiety that Mom would find out at the door". She pointed out that she only did this if she considered the incident serious, like "hitting in the yard". It is important to note that this beginning teacher is talking about her experiences as a class teacher of young five and six-year old children, where parents were more likely to bring their children into the classroom each morning and collect them in the afternoon. When Audrey went on to teach older classes, she reported not having as much contact with parents on that informal and daily level. Gemma also spoke about how beneficial it was to informally meet parents at the school gate "like if a girl fell, I'd run out with her and say, 'She fell in the yard today, but she's fine'". Gemma was referring here to older children whose parents would not be collecting them from the classroom, like they would with the younger ones.

Ciara, who taught in a special class for children with ASD talked about meeting parents every morning and afternoon for the month of September and how this benefitted the children in terms of her learning about the children from their parents. She then reported that this stopped when school transport was provided for these children and those informal, daily encounters no longer happened. Gemma who was a substitute teacher in a special school also said, "and I never met those parents because most of the kids went to school on a bus". As a substitute teacher, she had to make a phone call to parents if she needed to speak to them about something and this was like cold-calling as she did not have the benefit of having a relationship with them.

When Ciara was no longer meeting the parents of her children with SEN on a daily basis, she began engaging with them daily through the use of a communication diary because she believed the children benefitted from this. She said:

> I would write how they got on so their parents could ask them about it. Um, so something we did specifically, like, a specific art thing or if we went to see the fire brigade or if went swimming or a specific story we read. And then other things, there might be toileting accidents or if they had a bad or a good day, um, if they- how they coped on the yard, uh, interacting with the other people. If we went to watch something in the school hall, how they dealt with that, or whatever. So what I'd write is either stuff they can specifically try asking about or stuff they need to know, that the child may or may not

be in good form, but that's kind of rare for most of them once they get into the school routine.

Like Ciara, some of the other beginning teachers reported the benefit to children when they engaged with parents via the school diary. In particular, they spoke of the benefits to children when parents informed them of things that happened at home; this was particularly true of engagement between the beginning teachers and parents of children with SEN. This came through very strongly from Bernadette in both her first and second interviews. Bernadette believed children benefitted when she and the parents engaged with each other using a communication diary. She was a Special Education Teacher (SET) during the first year and second year of her teaching in two different schools and she used the diary in both settings. She reported that:

> And then, with some of the children I was working with, I had a communication diary. So, we used to just send notes. There was one child, you know, his sleep might have been affected at night, so it was always beneficial to know these things … and it was hugely beneficial because you were working together as opposed to just kind of tipping away by yourself.

Using IPA allows you to interrogate data at a number of levels, providing an in-depth analysis of a participant's contribution. Analysis of Bernadette's account, at the descriptive level, the linguistic level and the conceptual level, allows Bernadette's belief in the benefit of engaging with parents to become evident. At the descriptive level of interpretation, Bernadette described the engagement between home and school, where a parent of a child with SEN informed the teacher that the child had not slept well the previous night. At a linguistic level, not only does the participant use the word "beneficial" denoting a benefit or something positive, she qualifies it with the adverb "hugely", which emphasises the extent of the benefit. In interpreting this comment at a conceptual level, it is clear that Bernadette is referring to the benefit to the child of her knowing that he did not sleep well the night before as this knowledge impacted on how she related to the child that day. In employing the double hermeneutic, it seems that Bernadette also benefitted as a teacher as indicated by a follow-up comment where she spoke about "just tipping away by herself" when she was not "working together" with parents. This beginning teacher believed engaging with parents benefitted the children and moreover, this benefit also extended to her as a teacher.

One beginning teacher, Denise, spoke of the benefits to children's learning when she engaged with their parents. Specifically, she used to send home Homework Sheets and Newsletters. Denise had worked as a substitute teacher for her first year of teaching and

said one of the advantages of this was picking up "nice ideas" along the way. She reported meeting the parents of children with SEN more often, but believed that all children benefitted when their parents knew "where their child is going and what's going on". Lisa also spoke about how she believed engaging with parents benefitted children and she regularly phoned home to tell parents about things that had happened in school during her first year of teaching when she was a class teacher, as evidenced by her comment "Oh, definitely, because they [children] know well then that, like, if something happens, I am going to ring home".

Lisa still held the belief about the benefits to children of engaging with parents during her second year of teaching when she was a SET. At one point, she found that one parent was unable to come and meet with her face-to-face or take phone calls because of work. Because of her belief in the importance of home-school engagement and the benefit to children, in this case a child with SEN, she engaged in email correspondence with this child's mother. She noticed that this mother used to send her emails late into the evening, ostensibly, when her child had gone to bed and she had some time to do this. Lisa commented that this engagement really benefitted the child, especially when it came to supporting the child's speech and language development.

Gemma spoke about the importance of getting the "teacher and parent on the same page" and told the following story about how engagement between home and school benefitted a particular child:

> One parent asked me to meet them because she felt that the child was playing one of us off the other. And the child was so bright and so well-able. But she was just kind of a bit needy at times, just attention, just looking for attention and she might say something at home and something at school. Like, she'd opt out and then once I'd met with the parents for the first time, we kind of said, 'Okay, these things are happening'. Then I knew what to look out for and I kind of knew the questions to ask the child. Or I'd send a note home saying, 'Oh, she didn't do this today; maybe have a chat at home'. And the child knew then that she wouldn't get away with it.

In interpreting Gemma's account, the issue of a united approach between home and school is highlighted and this can only be achieved when home and school engage with each other and have as their shared goal a commitment to the learning, development and wellbeing of the child.

An interesting nuance emerged in interpreting Fiona's belief on the benefits to children of engagement between home and school.

> In some cases, it benefitted them, I suppose, because they [parents] saw we were doing a lot in school for them [children]. And then they, kind of realised it was important. But in some cases, like, the parents just didn't really … didn't really care what we were doing in school, so I don't know … did it benefit that much. I suppose, in some cases it did benefit, in other cases it didn't.

Fiona made an assumption here that some parents "didn't really care" but went on to say that perhaps some of the parents did not come into the school because they "didn't really have a good experience in school" and that this might explain their reluctance to engage with teachers. In terms of assumptions, a few participants were conscious of not making assumptions about parents as illustrated by Ciara's comment:

> It is just so important [not to make assumptions]. No two parents are remotely the same or have the same expectations … just don't go assuming you know about someone's background or their wants or needs for their children.

In summary, all of the participants held the belief that children benefit from engagement between home and school. In addition to this belief, almost all of the participants also held the belief that engaging with parents is challenging.

4.3.2 ENGAGING WITH PARENTS IS CHALLENGING

Almost all of the beginning teachers spoke about engaging with parents as being a challenge. In Phase One of the data collection, Audrey said she found herself asking herself "How am I going to do this?" and went on to describe an incident with a parent that left her crying and questioning herself in terms of "What am I doing wrong?" In Phase Two, the same beginning teacher spoke of her frustration with the parents of a child with ASD, when the parents would not agree with decisions about strategies and resources that she, in her professional opinion and in collaboration with other more experienced teachers in the school, believed would meet the child's needs. She believed that the parents' insistence that their child be treated the same as everyone else and not be singled out for support resulted in his needs not being met. Denise also spoke of the challenge of meeting parents and how her reaction to seeing a parent coming was "Oh, my God, here's a parent coming! What do I do?" Fiona said, "Especially starting off at the start, I was really nervous going into these meetings because I just didn't want to say something stupid, you know". A few of the participants recounted how they were aware of being young and worried how the parents might view them, as illustrated by Gemma, "You're kind of worried that they'll have preconceptions [because of your youth]"

In terms of challenges, Lisa, recalled an incident with a parent that happened during her first-year teaching and how she "was very upset … and cried the whole evening … and was in an awful way". This beginning teacher also talked about a challenging encounter with the parents of a child with English as a second language, where the help of an older sibling and Google Translate were used to try and communicate with parents. Denise reported feeling challenged by a parent whom she believes could not accept that her child was struggling with learning. She said "I've come across a parent like no other this year. I really don't know how to go about her or how to handle her. She's a very overbearing parent … this parent is the mother of a child with dyslexia". One beginning teacher, Gemma, said "I'm going to be honest, I dreaded the parents. When they nab you sometimes, it's so hard to get away. And sometimes you don't know whether it's going to be positive or negative. Like, I would see parents walking towards me and I'd nearly be sick". She went on to describe how nervous she was the first time she had to make a phone call to a parent and recalls "Like, the first time I had to ring a parent I was so nervous, but that kind of comes with experience and now I wouldn't be as daunted by it". Gemma articulates how she coped with feelings of being challenged by "picking a few things to work on" in terms of developing positive relationships with parents.

Bernadette did not display any sense of being challenged by parents, across either phase of her interviews. In this discrepant case, Bernadette who is a parent herself, said at the end of her first year of teaching:

> When I do meet them [parents], you just realise, being a parent maybe myself, that we're all kind of in the same boat … I think we all, kind of, hope that we're doing the right thing by our kids. We all have different views, different ways of being, but the one thing we have in common is our love for them, do you know, that kind of way.

When Bernadette spoke of parents at the end of her second year of teaching, she said:

> I find them [parents] extremely easy to work with and very understanding, I feel if, if you're, if you nip things in the bud and if you come at it as 'this can be solved' approach or 'this isn't the end of the world' approach, they're very on board.

She does, however, go on to say "I enjoy … I enjoy working with parents, but I don't miss my last year having to deal with them every day. I don't miss that". Here she is referring to being in a previous school during her first year of teaching where meeting parents was a daily feature of her work as a SET. Even though she was also a SET in her second year of teaching, she did not meet parents on a daily basis, highlighting that

school context is a factor in determining parent-teacher engagement, with different cultures, practices and even expectations around parental engagement in different schools.

4.3.3   CONCLUDING COMMENT ON THEME ONE

Two beliefs emerged from analysis of the data. All participants believed that when home and school engage children benefit. The perceived benefits included academic achievements as well as social and behavioural achievements. This belief was evident both within and across all cases throughout the research study. In addition, almost all of the beginning teachers held the belief that engaging with parents is challenging. However, there was one discrepant case and this participant, Bernadette, displayed no evidence of finding parents challenging during her first year and second year of teaching. In terms of understanding this discrepant case, Bernadette is older than the other seven beginning teachers and the preponderance of the data suggests that being a parent herself is significant. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

4.4 THEME TWO: INFLUENCES

Five subordinate themes make up the superordinate theme of *influences*. Figure 4.2 outlines the five influences on beginning teachers' engagement with parents that emerged from the data analysis. Results under this theme are presented both at group level and at individual level, giving within case analysis and across case analysis of the findings.

Figure 4.2 Theme 2: Influences

Each individual school culture played a part in whether or not beginning teachers even got to meet parents. Denise summed this up very well when she said of engagement with parents "it's been up and down, depending on the school". The nature of participants' engagement with parents varied from school to school and included school events like barbecues, cake sales and fundraisers. In addition, some of the beginning teachers reported being involved in meetings with parents about religious sacraments like First Holy Communion when they were teaching second-class and Confirmation when they were teaching senior classes. Audrey and Michael spoke about parents who volunteered to come and work in their classrooms. All of the participants referred to engaging with parents through the use of technology. Use of technology varied from school to school with most schools using Text Alert to inform and remind parents about things, while other schools used Blogs, Apps and Twitter. Some of the beginning teachers, Gemma, Lisa and Ciara, relied on phone calls a lot to engage with parents, as was the culture of the school.

Consistent across all school cultures was the parent-teacher meeting. Almost all of the beginning teachers held these meetings with parents during their first year of teaching. Two of the participants, Denise and Gemma, did not engage in parent teacher meetings with parents due to the fact that they were substitute teachers during parent-teacher meeting times in schools. Gemma commented that missing the parent-teacher meetings meant that she "didn't meet them [parents] enough, you know". However, both of these beginning teachers were involved in parent-teacher meetings during their second year of teaching. Participants found the meetings tiring, as illustrated by Audrey's comment that "I never thought a parent-teacher meeting could be so draining". The one discrepant case here was Bernadette who, while admitting to feeling "a little nervous" about meeting parents, welcomed these meetings as she saw them as opportunities to gain "so much more information" about the children. She referred to parents as "the experts" who "can give you so much insight". Throughout the research study, Bernadette proved to be a discrepant case when it came to perceiving parents as challenging.

Within each school setting, a number of factors, outlined in Figure 4.3, contributed to the nature and frequency of engagement with parents.
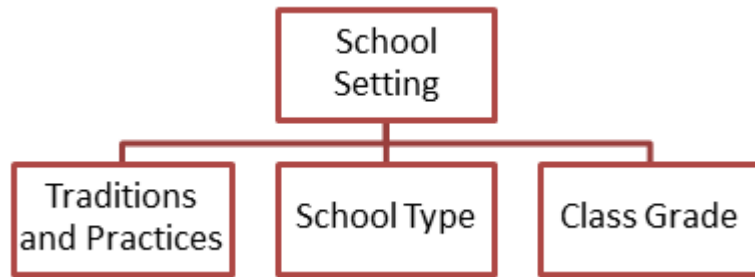
Figure 4.3: School Setting Factors Which Influence Engagement with Parents

4.4.1.1 TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES

The beginning teachers reported a variety of traditions and practices that they experienced in various school settings. These traditions and practices influenced both the nature and frequency of their engagement with parents. Michael talked about his first-year teaching in a four-teacher rural school and described the following traditions and practices in terms of engagement with parents:

> Our parents don't come into the school, the children assemble outside of the school … so I wouldn't see them [parents] unless I want to see them or they want to see me … If I wanted to say something, they were always at the gate, so I could go out at 3 o'clock and I could say something to them then.

Bernadette described how she was a SET in two similar urban mainstream schools and, despite having the same role in both schools, traditions and practices in each school meant that she "never met parents" in one school and had weekly, if not daily, contact with parents in the other school. This beginning teacher found this difference "weird" and couldn't understand that different schools' tradition and practices of meeting parents varied so greatly. In her first school, parents, she said, knew they were welcome, and parents were encouraged by the teachers to come to the school, whereas things were different in the second school. She recounts an incident in the second school where, having come from a school where parents were welcomed and encouraged to call, she felt other teachers in the school "frowned upon" the fact that she was meeting one parent at lot and she felt that the staff "were kind of going, oh, look at her, she is wasting her time". Traditions and practices vary from one school to another and the findings from this research study assert that they are a contributing factor to the nature and frequency of engagement with parents.

4.4.1.2   CLASS GRADE

All of the participants found they had much more engagement with parents when they were teaching the younger class grades as opposed to the middle and particularly the senior class grades. Denise said that in the "younger classes, they [parents] tend to come in more because they're picking them up and dropping them off". Similarly, Audrey spoke about having daily contact at the classroom door with parents of the Junior Infant class she was teaching during her first year. Ciara who taught young children in an ASD class said she had "huge contact with parents … it was daily contact". Interestingly, Ciara is referring to the month of September when these young children were brought to school and collected from school by their parents. In October, school transport had been organised to bring the children to and from school and Ciara no longer had this daily contact. Gemma echoed the influence that class grade had on the nature and frequency of engagement with parents. She was referring to teaching at the other end of the school when she said "they're [children] at the senior side … it's so hard to meet the parents … it's not like Junior Infants, when you're literally handing out the kids and you have the word". Undoubtedly, class grade influenced the nature and frequency of these beginning teachers' engagement with parents.

4.4.1.3   TYPE OF SCHOOL

The type of school participants found themselves in also influenced the nature and frequency of parent-teacher engagement. This applied, particularly, to a few participants who found themselves teaching in schools in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Fiona recalled that while working in such a school:

> It was, kind of, hard to meet the parents anyway … the principal really, kind of, encourages parents to come into the school … so, we, kind of, have a school policy where, you know, we, like, once a week stay for an hour after school … and if they [parents] want to come in and talk to us about anything, they can just meet us then.

Despite this open-door policy only eight parents from 400 pupils turned up to a maths evening that had been organised in the school. Fiona gave a number of reasons why she thought parents did not come to the evening, which ranged from parents not being interested to possibly having had negative experiences of school themselves. Fiona went on to say how "working with parents in a rural school is completely different to working with parents in a disadvantaged school". The evidence from this research study suggests that the type of school participants found themselves in was a contributing factor to the nature and frequency of engagement with parents.

4.4.2 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All of the beginning teachers reported that they had more engagement with parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) than any other parents. This can partly be explained by the fact that seven of the eight participants, worked as special education teachers (SETs) across their first two years of teaching. Audrey, Bernadette, Lisa and Gemma worked as SETs across both years, Audrey, Lisa and Gemma for part of Year One and all of Year Two and Bernadette for all of both years, Ciara was a SET in Year One, while Denise and Fiona were SETs for part of Year One. Michael was the only beginning teacher who did not work as a SET either year, but was a class teacher for both years. However, even when the participants were employed as mainstream class teachers, they reported that they met more with parents of children with SEN than parents of children without SEN. While there is no database in Ireland that tracks where beginning teachers work, anecdotally, many work as SETS, which is in keeping with the findings of this research study.

4.4.2.1 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

One of the reasons that SEN influences teacher engagement with parents is because many children with SEN require an individual education plan (IEP). While IEPs are not yet a statutory requirement in Ireland, they are considered best practice and most schools in Ireland have IEPs for children with complex needs. IEPs are working documents that outline a child's abilities, skills and talents and the nature and degree of their SEN (NCSE 2006). They also outline how these needs impact on a child's educational development. IEPs include targets, teaching strategies, resources and supports that the child requires to successfully meet specified learning goals. The purpose of an IEP is to support the child to access a broad and balanced curriculum and provide for a continuum of support. The IEP is a collaborative process requiring teachers to engage with parents (NCSE 2006).

All of the beginning teachers engaged in the collaborative IEP process during their first two years of teaching. Audrey, who was a mainstream class teacher and taught Junior Infants in her first year of teaching, recounted that 25% of the children in her class had IEPs and she met with the parents of these children on several occasions throughout the school year as they engaged in the IEP process. Ciara described how she met with parents of children with SEN four times during the school year for IEP meetings and re-

called how "intense" these meetings were. She said the IEP meeting is "really an important meeting because there's lots of needs" and the IEP process helped to prioritise these needs. Similarly, Gemma, who was a mainstream class teacher during her first year of teaching, spoke about four IEP meetings with parents of children with SEN during the school year.

Lisa used the same word ("intense") as Ciara to describe her experience of IEP meetings. She was describing her experience as a mainstream class teacher and, while she found these meetings intense, she also said, "It was really worthwhile". Similarly, Fiona who worked as a SET during her first year of teaching referred to how challenging she found the IEP process and commented that "I had to carry out a lot of the assessments, meet the parents and just generally put stuff together for their IEPs and then implement all of the programmes they were going to be doing for the year; so, that was a big challenge because I felt, kind of, a bit lost at the start". Fiona went on to say that she received great support from a colleague during her first year with the IEP process, particularly with meeting parents.

4.4.2.2   COMMUNICATION DIARY

Five of the eight beginning teachers used a communication diary for children with SEN. Gemma, who was a classroom teacher during her first year of teaching, recalled using the communication diary with one child in her class. This child had SEN and Gemma "used to try and write it every day". Participants like Ciara, who was a special class teacher and taught a small numbers of young children with ASD, used these diaries for every child every day. Ciara also recalled how valuable it was when a parent used the communication diary to let her know about something that has happened at home like "if they had a bad morning, I wouldn't push too hard in school". Ciara demonstrated great sensitivity in her use of the communication diary as illustrated in the extract below:

> I would be very careful how I worded things, just to be very sensitive around the fact that, especially for the younger children, that their diagnosis might necessarily not even be six month old … the terminology we use all the time, OT, SLT, Physio, fine motor, gross motor. All these terminologies that we use in our sleep, the TEACCH and all that. That's very overwhelming for a parent who wouldn't know it, especially parents of the younger children. You just have to be very, very sensitive that this is a life-long journey for them.

Ciara demonstrated awareness that parents of young children may have just received a recent diagnosis of ASD and was conscious of being sensitive and careful in her en-

gagement with them. The evidence from this research study suggests that communication diaries were very useful in developing positive parent-teacher engagement, especially when used to support two-way communication between home and school.

4.4.3   PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

All of the beginning teachers articulated their own personal philosophies of education and how their beliefs and values underpinned the type of relationships they had with the parents of the children in their care. These philosophies were evident across all phases of the data collection. Bernadette said that she believes "every child is first and foremost a child, never give up on a child; that's the premise from where I come from". She continued with a reference to how her younger self "had no concept of what parents would be going through" but how she is "doing her very best to understand what it's like [to be the parent of a child with SEN]". Ciara, talked about her belief that education is much more than scores in Maths and English and how important it is to have a holistic view of the child and this influences how you talk to parents about their child. Lisa said she believed that "definitely, it's important to have a relationship with the parents" and talks about how this belief underpinned her willingness to engage with parents, particularly in her first year of teaching when she was a substitute teacher in a number of schools and when meeting with parents was not always possible and depended on so many factors like the length of the substitution, the class grade and the culture of the school.

Fiona talked about how all she wanted was "the same thing as they [parents] want at the end of the day". She said how she "actually would like to have more interaction with parents … because once you have a parent on board and once you're able to talk things out, there's no issue". This beginning teacher discussed how she was really bothered about a child with SEN who missed a lot of school. She stated that she found this difficult because she cares about the children she teaches and said, "It wouldn't be difficult, I suppose, if I didn't care". Gemma talked about her belief in being honest with parents and how she believed this helped the parents "to be more honest" with her. Participants' personal educational philosophies influenced how they engaged with parents and this was evident across all phases of the data.

4.4.4 PARTICIPANTS' PARENTS

Three of the beginning teachers spoke of how their own parents engaged with their teachers when they themselves were in primary school and how this had influenced their own engagement with parents. Audrey recalled how involved her own parents were in her schooling and how her own mother was the first to be up to the school "like, if anything went wrong, she was first to be in with, 'what's the story?'" This beginning teacher assumed that when something goes "wrong" in school, the parent will call wanting to know "what's the story?". Michael referred to his mother who was a teacher herself and how even before beginning school "my mother had us counting, the ABC, we had our sight words and all that and we found school easy". This participant said he expected parents to be involved in their children's learning, even before they came to school. Lisa talked about meeting fathers during her first year of teaching and being surprised by this as she recalled "My dad did not go to one parent-teacher meeting". She went on to talk about how parents were much more engaged in the school she taught in and how different this was to her own school days, referencing her mother by saying "Mam said when I was going to school parents had no say really". Lisa spoke about how her own parents engaged with teachers across all phases of the data collection and in Phase Two indicated a belief that parents:

> are just way more clued in now and they have these apps, they have email and they have parent council meetings, they've the concerts so they're seeing the teachers more so I think they're way more- not involved, that's not the right word but they're- they're seeing the teachers more so they're kind of, they're more included in the work that has been done, you know.

These beginning teachers' recollections of how their own parents engaged with teachers had an influence on how they themselves viewed parents and engaged with them.

4.4.5 INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

All eight beginning teachers spoke about the influence their ITE programme had on them in terms of engaging with parents. The participants had all completed four years of ITE and graduated with a B.Ed. Degree. As part of their B.Ed., in their final semester of College, all of them choose to undertake an elective module on parent-professional partnership. When asked if their B.Ed. Degree programme had prepared them for working with parents, all of the participants said yes, but they qualified this by saying that it was the elective module in their last semester of College on parent-professional partner-

ship that had prepared them. In particular, all of the participants recalled how they were influenced by the parents they met on the module. Lisa's account of meeting these parents is indicative of all of the participants' comments. In remembering these parents, Lisa said:

> I still remember those parents coming in for that elective we did. Those parents were just so honest and it was just brilliant. I was thinking of one of them actually a few weeks ago. I loved that elective, I really did. And we all did. It was really good. It felt like everyone was really enjoying it. I loved it. I still even have this big folder of all my notes. It was the one module in College that looked for what we wanted. I remember we all got to talk about our experiences because we were freshly back from that big school placement, which you had learned so much on.

Michael also spoke about the parent-professional partnership elective module and said "I was lucky I did the parent module … I've used so much from that module". Bernadette reported that she "felt so prepared" and spoke at length about how the parent-professional module helped her "to be myself" and influenced how she worked with parents, as illustrated in the following extract:

> It [parent-professional module] really opened my eyes and my heart, I think, to children with special educational needs. Having met parents as well you get such an insight as to what's going on and how they're feeling. So I think from that module there was an awful lot of learning but also the insight gave you an empathy when you met parents coming in that, you know, you realise that they're coming in here and they're dealing with an awful lot of things at home and they want the very best for their child. You want the very best for their child so you know you work together to try and achieve it.

All of the beginning teachers said that the elective module they took in the final semester of their B.Ed. programme on parent-professional partnership should be available to all B.Ed. students. Denise spoke for all of the participants when she said, "It's something that I think should be offered to all students".

Ciara and Audrey said while they believed an elective module in College on parent-professional partnership did prepare them for working with parents, nothing can really prepare you. Ciara reinforced this by saying, "nothing quite prepares you like experience". Fiona commented on the same elective module and said that:

> I think we did get a lot of preparation on it [working with parents] in College but I don't think that you can really know until you get into the job. And everyone is different, just like every child is different. There could be amazing parents, there could be parents that you know, are a bit more difficult. But at the end of the day, you're just going to have to sort that out as you go and the only way the college could prepare you is just, kind of, by giving you confidence to deal with it. And I think we did get that.

All of these beginning teachers felt that a module focusing specifically on parent-teacher engagement was necessary for them to have confidence in meeting with parents. Notably, all of the beginning teachers referred to meeting with parents and hearing their stories as the highlight of this parent-professional partnership module.

4.4.6   CONCLUDING COMMENT ON THEME TWO

In summary, this theme outlined five distinct influences on beginning teachers' engagement with parents that emerged from analysis of the data. Evidence showed that school culture influenced the nature and frequency of the participants' engagement with parents. Moreover, these beginning teachers reported that they had more engagement with parents of children with SEN than any other parents. All of the beginning teachers articulated their own personal philosophy of education and these philosophies impacted on their engagement with parents. Some of the beginning teachers recalled memories of how their own parents had engaged with their teachers in primary school and this too exerted an influence on their own engagement with parents. Finally, all of the participants reported that they were influenced by their ITE programme, particularly an elective module on parent-professional partnership that they had undertaken in the final semester of their B.Ed. programme.

4.5 THEME THREE: REALISATIONS

Reflection in teaching was something that was actively encouraged and required when all of these participants were student teachers in College. From their first introduction to Microteaching in the first semester of their four-year B.Ed. programme, right through every school placement and in many taught modules, these participants engaged in the practice of reflection. Not surprising then, was the emergence of realisations as a theme from analysis of the data based on their reflections and reflective practice. All of the beginning teachers indicated that they reflected on their engagement with parents during their first and second years of teaching. However, some of the participants, like Lisa, indicated that reflection played a bigger part during the first year, while in the second year "you do reflect a bit but not as much, I find anyway". Three realisations based on reflection emerged from responses to research questions inviting participants to recall memorable experiences of engaging with parents, discussing an artefact they had chosen to represent their engagement with parents. The realisations that emerged from these reflections are outlined in Figure 4.4.

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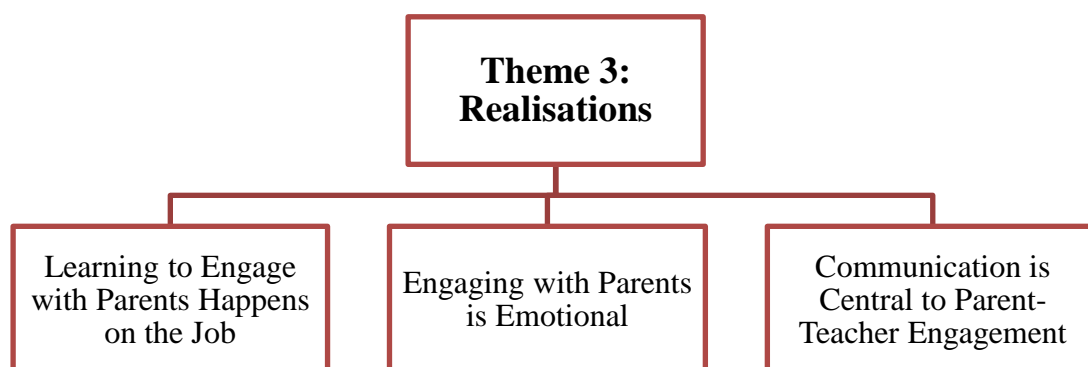
Figure 4.4 Theme 3: Realisations

4.5.1   BEGINNING TEACHERS LEARN ON THE JOB

All of these beginning teachers spoke about how much they learned about engaging with parents from doing their job. This is no way contradicts that these beginning teachers indicated that their ITE B.Ed. programme also prepared them to work with parents, as reported in Section 4.5.5 above. Learning on the job came about in a number of ways. All of the participants spoke about learning about engaging with parents from their colleagues, and in particular their principals. They also all told stories of how much they learned from actually engaging with parents. Moreover, participants commented on how learning on the job differed between their first year and the second year of teaching.

4.5.1.1   LEARNING FROM COLLEAGUES

All of these beginning teachers reported learning a lot about engaging with parents from their colleagues and, in particular, from their principals. Some of the participants had been assigned mentors, particularly if they were in a school for a substantial length of time. This contrasted with participants who were substitute teachers and usually spent short times in schools, sometimes only one day. Nonetheless, all of the beginning teachers indicated that they could ask colleagues for support, and in particular, their principals. Lisa talked about having "a fantastic principal" and Fiona talked about her principal who supported beginning teachers in her school and that he "even would sit in on some of the meetings [with parents] if we wanted, so that we don't feel like we're kind of under pressure or exposed, like, that kind of way". Fiona recounted how she felt

comfortable asking her principal to sit in on a meeting with her after having a difficult experience with a parent. Not only did she learn about engaging with parents through observing her principal during the meeting, she also had the opportunity after the meeting to discuss with the principal how she, herself, had engaged with the parent. For beginning teachers, like Fiona, just starting out in the profession, an opportunity like this to reflect and unpack encounters with parents is to be welcomed.

Michael spoke about a challenging encounter with a parent and how the parent "reported" the incident to the principal. As a result, a subsequent meeting was called where both parents, the principal and Michael met together. Michael reported feeling very supported by the principal at this meeting and how he learned the importance of record-keeping and being prepared when meeting with parents. Audrey told a similar story of a difficult encounter with parent and how she had the confidence to say to the parent, "Okay, look, let's go up and we can have a chat with the principal". She reported how supportive the principal was of her that day and how she learned a lot about deescalating situations from how her principal engaged with that parent. Lisa also spoke about how her principal supported her when she saw her upset after a difficult encounter with a parent. A parent had visited the school and Lisa reported that:

> She just came to the door, like, it was a Tuesday, actually, and I remember I was just with the class and she knocked on the door and I knew by her that she wasn't happy. She just pulled me out and she said 'I'm not happy' and, do you know, your heart just, the floor just wants, you just want it to swallow you and she just said 'My daughter, you corrected her yesterday, you shouldn't have corrected her and you have shattered her confidence'. And when I heard that I was, like, everything you learn in College, like, you're just, I can't believe I have shattered a girl's confidence … I should have said something back, but I just didn't.

Lisa said that she was so upset after the meeting that she "cried the whole evening, I was in an awful way". The principal phoned the parent and invited her to a subsequent meeting, which she sat in on, and Lisa learned that follow-up meetings can help to resolve issues.

As well as learning from a supportive principal, Lisa also reported learning a lot about engaging with parents from supportive teachers in her school. She talked about having a mentor with whom she could discuss her engagement with parents and from whom she could seek advice. She also spoke about "two or three teachers and it is nice just to rant to them and get their opinion, you know". Likewise, Denise talked about how "fantastic" the other teachers in the school were to her after a difficult encounter with a parent

and how invaluable it was to discuss the incident with them. Bernadette was very grateful to a colleague during her first year of teaching as she recalled:

> I just constantly went and asked for a second opinion what I was doing and, you know, I was lucky to be beside the SEN coordinator and it was like 'Do you mind? Sorry, excuse me, do you know? Do you mind?' And she was 'Come in, come in, come in' so, it was lovely that way. She was very open and gave a lot of her time.

Fiona also spoke about a very supportive colleague with whom she had a good relationship and how this colleague acted as a mentor and would even sit in on meetings with parents with her. She said that this colleague "was really good at like, kind of, supporting me in the meetings and kind of facilitating the conversation between all of us". The learning opportunities here for Fiona around engaging parents and facilitating dialogue were immense. In particular, Fiona spoke about how much she learned about engaging with parents from a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher in her school. She talked about this colleague as "having a great relationship with parents and she's really able to talk to people". Fiona said, "I always listen to her". Fiona received a lot of support both from colleagues and her principal and learned a lot about engaging with parents in the school. Fortunately, Fiona taught in the school during her first year and second year of teaching, firstly as a SET and then as a class teacher during her second year and this learning continued from one year to the next.

4.5.1.2 LEARNING FROM ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

All of these beginning teachers reported that they liked working with parents and all spoke about how much they learned about engaging with parents from actually engaging with parents. All of the participants recalled meeting more mothers than fathers. This was consistent both within and across cases. Two participants spoke about diversity amongst parents and, as already mentioned, Audrey, said that the parents of the children with English as an additional language (EAL) just did not come into the school and therefore she did not engage with them. Lisa, by contrast, recounted meeting one mother of a child with EAL who came to see her and how her older child was present to act as translator. As Ireland is becoming more diverse, this has implications for parent-teacher engagement in order to best support the learning and wellbeing of children.

When asked to reflect on a memorable experience with parents, the beginning teachers told stories at length about both positive and negative encounters. Almost all of these encounters were with parents of children with SEN. This is interesting in and of itself, in that, at the time of the second interview when this research question was asked, four

of the beginning teachers were SETs, so you would expect their memorable experiences to be about parents of children with SEN. However, the remaining four participants were class teachers. Three of these four teachers also spoke about parents of children with SEN, corroborating the finding that SEN influences parent-teacher engagement.

In reflecting on their learning from engaging with parents, a majority of the beginning teachers reported becoming aware of parents' love for their children. These beginning teachers reflected on the joy expressed by parents when their children, in this case children with SEN, achieved something, sometimes this was an academic achievement, at other times it was social. Fiona recounted a memorable experience of a mother who came into the classroom to hear her child with dyslexia reading an essay he had written and how this mother was so full of love for her child and how proud she was of him as is clear from the extract below:

> She was so delighted. She was so happy. She just said that she'd never forget, you know, the feeling of him actually achieving this. She said it was such a milestone because, you know, he has such a good imagination. And he, she said he'd be at home telling her all these things, and she'd be like, yeah, so, you know, write it down. And then when he'd write it down, he'd struggle to read it back because his spellings were wrong. He'd struggle to read it back. He'd start getting frustrated with her. But she said now she'll just never forget that, you know, he just read it with so much confidence and he was so happy. It was just such a lovely moment.

Similarly, Gemma told a story about meeting both parents of a child with ASD and how they were so overwhelmed and pleased at seeing their child be part of the Christmas show. She said the parents "were just so happy to see the show, they were so overwhelmed by what their child was doing". The parents went on to say how their child was "always happy going to school". This caused Gemma to reflect on the encounter and she commented "okay, she's happy in school, so I'm doing something right, you know". This learning from engaging with parents helped Gemma appreciate how precious children are to their parents and that for many parents of children with SEN, what might appear to be small achievements, actually are significant achievements for these children and their families.

Three of the beginning teachers recounted negative memorable experiences of engaging with parents. Audrey told a story about the frustration she felt when the parents of a child with ASD would not agree to recommendations that she, in her professional opinion, had suggested. These recommendations had been made in collaboration with other more experienced teachers in the school. She believed that the parents' insistence that

their child be treated the same as everyone else resulted in his needs not being met. In reflecting on this encounter, Audrey learned how parents and teachers do not always agree about the best approach to supporting the child's needs and how difficult this can be for teachers and for parents.

4.5.2   ENGAGING WITH PARENTS IS EMOTIONAL

All of the beginning teachers experienced a range of emotions and emotional responses to their engagement with parents throughout their first two years of teaching. This section outlines how these emotions featured in participants' stories.

4.5.2.1 POSITIVE FEELINGS TOWARDS PARENTS

All of these beginning teachers reported having positive feelings towards parents and demonstrated positive emotions when they spoke of their lived experiences of engaging with parents. Parents were referred to as "brilliant" (Audrey), "absolutely fabulous … extremely easy to work with" (Ciara), "so lovely" (Denise), and "nothing but nice" (Fiona). All eight participants said that they liked meeting and working with parents and believed engaging with parents benefitted the children. Gemma commented "I do [like working with parents], I have to say. I was apprehensive and nervous [in the beginning], and you can still, kind of, can be nervous about, just in case something, but I do think it's very beneficial and I do enjoy it". Bernadette spoke about being grateful that parents "give you all the information on the child ... they know the person [child] so much better than you do".

Lisa spoke of having more positive experiences with parents in her second year rather than her first year of teaching and mentioned how it mattered to her that parents got "to see what you're doing, the hard work you put in". This beginning teacher found "the challenge of the unknown" a difficult aspect of teaching in her first year, but also said that the unknown is the "part I love about the job because it's not the same every day". This particular participant also had a negative encounter with a parent in her first year of teaching which she describes as being "awful, absolutely awful". By contrast, Michael reported having very positive personal emotions around working with parents in his first year of teaching, which he credited with the fact that he was teaching in his local school where he knew and was known to many of the families. He reported less positive feelings about his lived experiences of parents in his second year of teaching when he

worked in a DEIS school where he did not know and was not known by the children's families.

4.5.2.2 SATISFACTION

The majority of the beginning teachers reported feelings of satisfaction in their relationship with parents. In particular, Lisa recounts how satisfying it was when she "went to one session with one child and a parent and the speech and language therapist". As a result of this session, a three-way communication system was established, where the teacher, the parent and the speech and language therapist emailed each other on a regular basis in order to support the child's speech and language development. This participant noted that this three-way communication system supported a positive relationship between the parent of the child with SEN and herself. Gemma reported feeling happy and satisfied when the parents of a child with SEN thanked her for their child's education throughout the year and enquired if she would be teaching their child again the following year. When the beginning teacher responded that she didn't know yet, one parent said "I really hope you are", which left this beginning teacher feeling very positive about herself and her relationship with these parents. Michael reported feeling very satisfied when three parents of children in his care told him he was doing a great job and their children really liked coming into school to him every day. By contrast, the same beginning teacher reported being dissatisfied when a parent said his child found the classroom very rule-based.

4.5.2.3 SURPRISE

Three of the beginning teachers reported being surprised in terms of their lived experiences of engaging with parents. In her second year of teaching, Bernadette spoke of her surprise when a father came in one day to a meeting, because "it's rare that the dads come in". Ciara expressed her surprise at being asked her opinion by a parent and said, "it just felt so strange for someone to be asking me … and really, like really, taking what I have to say on board". At Christmas time, Lisa was surprised and delighted with a very personal note from the parents of a child with SEN who wrote thanking her for the work she had done with their child. Denise assumed parent-teacher meetings should be conducted in a particular way and was surprised when a parent, who asked for a meeting, came in prepared with her notes and folders. She said:

> It was the strangest meeting I've ever been in. She ran the show. And she had her notes and her folders and her laptop and you know, it was complete role reversal on what I thought it should've been, you know.

These beginning teachers experienced surprise, for some it was pleasant, for others, like Denise, not so pleasant. It was just one of a range of emotions experienced by the participants as they engaged with the parents of the children in their care.

4.5.2.4   EMPATHY

Four of the beginning teachers displayed empathy with parents, with some of the participants revealing empathy for parents across all phases of the data collection. Bernadette, at the end of her first year of teaching, said, "You know, having met parents as well, you get such an insight as to what's going on and how they're feeling … the insight gave you an empathy … and you realise … they're dealing with an awful lot of things at home and they want the very best for their child". This beginning teacher, at the end of her second year of teaching, continued to show empathy and said "but the common thing between all of us all the time is, you know, the heart, the love that we have for our children, do you know". Lisa commented on how hard it must be for parents sometimes and agreed to communicate with one parent through email as she found it difficult to come to the school for meetings or take phone calls. Gemma empathised that often parents "are probably at home wondering what's going on". At the end of second year, Denise recalled an experience with a parent who popped in one morning to tell her that her son was ill and would be out for a few days. The parent was asking for work to do at home with her child, but the teacher empathised with the mother's situation and said, "Look, I'll sort it with him next week … take the weekend and get him better".

4.5.3   COMMUNICATION IS CENTRAL TO PARENT-TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Through the use of artefacts and telling stories of memorable experiences of engagement with parents, participants identified communication as central to successful engagement.

Two of the beginning teachers, Lisa and Gemma, choose communication diaries as their artefacts to represent engagement with parents and indicated that communication between home and school was essential to working well together. Lisa commented that "it's the core of our relationship, really". More specifically, they both indicated that

two-way communication where home and school worked together was the best way to support the child. These communication diaries allowed them, as teachers, to send a note home and the diaries also facilitated parents dropping a line to the teacher. While Michael also chose a diary to represent his engagement with parents, his choice was a Teacher's Diary. Reporting that every communication he had with parents was recorded in this diary, he said "everything goes through this diary … if I was speaking to a parent, I'll write down what he or she said …". Not quite the same as emphasising the importance of two-way communication, nonetheless, he highlighted the value he placed on communicating. Corroborating his belief that communication is central to successful parent-teacher engagement, Michael identified communication as the most important characteristic of the ideal beginning teacher.

Fiona's artefact was the classroom door and she said "I think it is such a powerful thing" indicating that, for her, this symbolised where parents and teachers meet so as to communicate with each other about the child. Ciara and Denise chose a School Report and Audrey a Behaviour Chart that summarised an observation session of a child's behaviour that she found challenging. Both of these documents represent information about children that can be used to facilitate communication between parents and teachers. Audrey remarked that the Behaviour Chart gave her confidence when communicating with parents about their child's behaviour.

While Bernadette's choice of artefact, a heart, did not directly point to communication, she did identify communication as being something she valued in her engagement with home and spoke about a number of parents with whom she communicated regularly and in particular one mother who "needs a lot of reassurance herself, do you know". Bernadette's artefact symbolised the love she had for the children she taught and the love their parents had for them as she commented "we all have different views, different ways of being, but the one thing we have in common is our love for them, do you know, that kind of way".

Communication proved very central to all of these beginning teachers' engagement with parents. All of the participants identified communication with parents as being important and the findings of this research study suggests that communication happened in a myriad of ways from sending notes home, to informal chats at the beginning and end of each day, to formal meetings and the use of communication diaries.

4.5.4   CONCLUDING COMMENT ON THEME THREE

In summary, this theme outlined three realisations that emerged from the data analysis. The first was that these eight beginning teachers learned about engaging with parents from doing their job. Essentially, this was achieved through learning from colleagues, especially school principals, and learning from actually engaging with parents. Secondly, participants demonstrated that engaging with parents is emotional, with a range of emotional responses being highlighted from all phases of the data analysis. Thirdly, communication came across as being central to parent-teacher engagement, a finding which is very much in keeping with research in this field on the importance of communication between home and school (Syriopoulou-Deli et al. 2016).

4.6   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This findings chapter has told the story of the data, through three themes: beliefs, influences and realisations. In an effort to behave in an ethical manner, these beginning teachers' own words featured largely in this chapter in order "to build the reader's confidence that the reality of the participants and the situation studies is accurately represented" (Bloomberg and Volpe 2016, p. 208).

The first theme comprised two beliefs, namely that when home and school engage with each other, children benefit and the belief that engaging with parents is challenging. There was one discrepant case to the latter belief, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. The second theme, influences, outlined five distinct influences on these beginning teachers' engagement with parents. These influences were school culture, SEN, participants' own personal philosophies of education, memories of how their own parents had engaged with their teachers in primary school and their ITE programme, particularly an elective module on parent-professional partnership they had undertaken in their final semester. The third theme addressed three realisations that emerged from the data. These were that beginning teachers learned about engaging with parents on the job, engaging with parents is emotional and that communication is central to positive home-school engagement.

The story that has emerged from analysis of the data merits discussion and the next chapter presents a discussion on these findings. If research findings are what Denzin (1989) refers to as thick description, then discussion on the findings is about what Patton (2015) refers to as thick interpretation. In the next chapter, discussion on the find-

ings, or Patton's (2015) thick interpretation, is contextualised within the wider extant literature on parent-teacher engagement and the ecological conceptual framework that underpins the entire research study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.0   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research study was to make a contribution to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement and, specifically, how beginning teachers in Ireland engage with parents. A case study approach was employed where eight beginning teachers were interviewed during their first two years of teaching. The data gathered over three phases were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The findings, which were presented in the previous chapter, were conceptualised under the three themes of beliefs, influences and realisations. If research findings are what Denzin (1989) refers to as thick description, then discussion on the findings is about what Patton (2015) refers to as thick interpretation. In this chapter, the research questions are revisited and discussion on the findings, or Patton's (2015) thick interpretation, is contextualised within the wider extant literature on parent-teacher engagement and the ecological conceptual framework that underpins the entire research study. In addition, there is a discussion on teacher agency and lifewide learning, with particular reference to the themes that emerged from analysis of the data. In writing this discussion, I adopt Yin's (2016) advice to use plain words and minimise research jargon. This, he posits, is not difficult when a research study is qualitative in nature, as the study "is likely to cover human affairs taking place in everyday settings" (Yin 2016, p. 284). Implications for theory, policy and practice and future research will be addressed in the final chapter.

5.1   PHASE ONE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Phase One of this research study explored eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents through semi-structured one-to-one interviews at the end of the participants' first year of teaching. This interview schedule and the questions asked were derived from the themes that emerged from the literature review on parent-teacher engagement and beginning teachers (see Appendix H for Phase One Interview Schedule). In order to establish context, the first question gathered data on where the beginning teachers had been teaching for their first year. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) remind us that all that happens in teaching "is shaped by the contexts in which

they occur" (p. 524). Three of the participants, Bernadette, Ciara and Michael, had just one school context for the full year from September to June. Audrey had two school contexts. Fiona and Gemma spent September and October as substitute teachers, where they were employed sometimes as class teachers and other times as special education teachers (SETs); this was followed by nine months in one school context. Lisa spent seven months in one school followed by three months as a substitute teacher, as both a class teacher and SET. Denise spent the entire school year as a substitute teacher, as both a class teacher and as a SET. When these beginning teachers acted as substitute teachers, substitution lasted anything from one school day to two or three weeks.

All eight of these beginning teachers spent some time as classroom teachers during their first year of teaching. As classroom teachers, all of the participants taught children with and without SEN. All except one of the participants, Michael, spent time as special class teachers during their first year of teaching, where all of the children they taught had SEN. Consequently, many of the parents they engaged with during this first year were parents of children with SEN. Moreover, all of the participants reported having more engagement with parents of children with SEN than with other parents when they were class teachers. Hence, the emphasis in this research study on parents of children with SEN which is reflected in the title of this thesis, *A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Experiences of Engagement with Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs*.

In response to the first question asked in Phase One of the data collection on how their first year as a beginning teacher had been, six of the eight participants identified engagement with parents as a challenge. This is not surprising given that, for most participants, this was the first time they had the opportunity to meet with parents. As a student teacher, there are few opportunities to meet with parents and even when it does happen it is under the supervision of the class teacher during school placement, so finding these encounters challenging is very much in keeping with the wider extant research literature. This challenge, identified by all of the participants in this research study, is an internationally recognised challenge (Broomhead 2013; and Brown 1998; Evans 2013; Hudson 2012; Levin 2006). In fact, Evans (2013) reports that one of the most significant challenges faced by beginning teachers is engagement with parents. A study in Finland (Aspfors and Bondas 2013) mirrors these findings and deems relationships between beginning teachers and parents to be one of the most significant challenges and

negative factors for beginning teachers. In Australia, Hudson (2012) found that begin-
ning teachers were also challenged by working with parents, as did a study by Hudson
et al. (2008) in Scotland. As far back as 1996, an American study by Love indicated that
98% of beginning teachers surveyed stated they wanted to engage better with parents
(Love 1996). Caspersen and Raaen (2014) posit that this challenge comes from the fact
that beginning teachers cannot draw on experience like more senior teachers can.

Participants in this research study were aware of their lack of experience, not necessari-
ly during their first year of teaching but certainly at the end of their second year of
teaching, as illustrated by Lisa's comment "you really overthink everything in the first
year … you definitely mature in your second year … the little things that upset you and
you're, like, that happens every day now". The maturity that Lisa referred to was ech-
oed in Michael's comment "oh, my goodness, how green we were [in year one]". This
maturity in their second year of teaching, as identified by the participants themselves,
allowed them to draw on their experiences from their first year and it is reasonable to
assume that each year and indeed each encounter with parents contributed and will con-
tinue to contribute to a repertoire of skills and confidence in terms of engagement with
parents. By the end of the participants' second year these beginning teachers had gained
some experience from their engagement with parents during their first year of teaching
that benefitted them in Year Two.

During their first year of teaching, however, there were two discrepant cases, Michael
and Bernadette, when it came to finding engagement with parents challenging. Smith et
al. (2009) asks what do we need to know about participants that help us interpret and
understand discrepancy. Michael had one placement during his first year of teaching
and this was in his own local school. He had gone to school there himself and was from
the local community. He reported that he did not find engaging with parents a challenge
and he put this down to the fact that he had a relationship with all of the children and
their families. This relationship meant that the parents knew him before he taught their
children and many also knew Michael's family. Michael spoke of meeting the children
and families outside of school and believed the parents were "positive towards him".
Interestingly, Michael moved away from his locality for his second year of teaching and
experienced engagement with parents differently. At the end of his second year of
teaching he spoke of how his engagement with parents was different and how he felt
"more detached in the job I'm in this year". In terms of the reason for this more de-

tached feeling, one has to look at the different contexts Michael found himself in. For his first year he taught locally where he know and was known by everyone. For Michael, this was as positive thing; he spoke about the "genuine craic and genuine fun" he had with the children. He talked about the parents and families being his neighbours and perceived this as being a positive thing. One might not always think of teaching in one's local community necessarily as being positive, but for this beginning teacher it was. However, Michael did feel challenged by parents in his second year of teaching. He told a story of how engagement with parents during his second year of teaching ended up with the need for the school principal to intervene. A parent was dissatisfied with a decision Michael had made about their child not being allowed to go on a school trip and the parent "went up to the principal and reported it". The principal sat in on the meeting and Michael said after forty minutes and evidence presented to the parents in terms of records, reports and interventions, the parents accepted the decision. Michael said he felt very supported by the principal especially when the principal said to the parents, "Do you see how much work this teacher is doing for him [the child]?" This variable within Michael's case highlights how context really matters in teaching and how the same person can feel challenged or not challenged depending on the context within which they find themselves. It also shines a light on the interplay between person and environment, emphasising the ecological nature of teaching.

There was one other beginning teacher, Bernadette, who reported not feeling challenged by parents. During her first year teaching, Bernadette was a SET in a large urban mixed school. At the end of Year One, Bernadette spoke of her very positive experience with parents and the fact that she "actually didn't have any issues with parents". What do we need to know about Bernadette that might explain this discrepant case? Bernadette put her comfort with parents down to a number of things including being a parent herself and "being open to suggestions from them [parents] about their children" and "most definitely the parent-professional partnership [elective module] in College". This discrepant case might be explained by the fact that Bernadette is herself a parent and brings an empathy and understanding to her engagements with parents. As Bernadette was the only participant who was a parent, all we can conclude is that the one participant who was a parent reported not having "any issues with parents". An extensive trawl of the literature did not unearth any research on teachers as parents and the impact of this on parent-teacher engagement. That is not to say such a phenomenon does not exist and perhaps points to the need for research exploring whether or not beginning teachers who

are parents themselves contribute to better parent-teacher engagement. In situations like this, where assertions are being made, Yin (2016) advises engaging in rival thinking where a degree of scepticism should be employed. Perhaps, teachers who are parents can positively contribute to parent-teacher engagement, but perhaps if Bernadette were not a parent, she would still have reported not having "any issues with parents". Moreover, Bernadette was a mature student in college and when she credits the parent-professional partnership module with contributing to her comfort level with parents, perhaps it was that, as a mature student, she engaged more with the course on offer and reaped the benefit of such engagement. We should also consider that perhaps, because Bernadette had been a mature student in College and consequently, a more mature beginning teacher, parents might have engaged with her in a different way than if she had been a twenty-two-year-old newly qualified teacher. Parents' perceptions of beginning teachers is certainly an area worth researching, as is whether or not teachers' age is a factor in how parents perceive and engage with them.

At the first interview participants were also asked about the nature of their engagement with parents. In keeping with the ecological theoretical framework underpinning this research study, based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 199; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) and Epstein (1999), these findings will be discussed through this ecological lens. The theoretical framework for this research study is based on the work of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006), which focuses on the quality and context of the child's environment, and Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein 1999). As already mentioned in Chapter Two, Epstein added a sociological perspective to Bronfenbrenner's theory, and created an interdisciplinary and dynamic view of engagement between home and school as presented in her framework which outlines six types of engagement. In discussing the findings from Phase One of this research study, in light of the ecological framework, it appears that two types of engagement were evident between beginning teachers and parents from Epstein's framework (see Figure 5.1)

1.	• Parenting
2.	• **Communicating**
3.	• **Volunteering**
4.	• Learning at home
5.	• Decision-making
6.	• Collaborating within the community
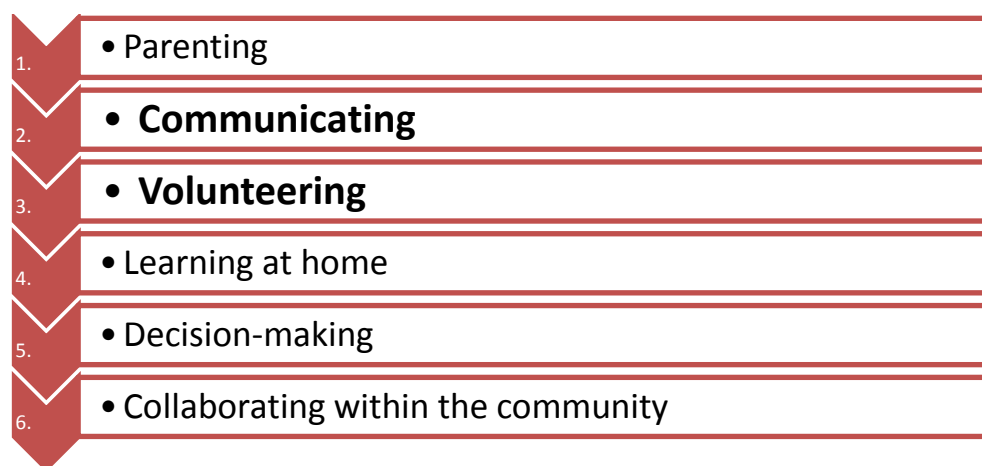
Figure 5.1 Epstein's Home/School/Community Engagement Framework (Epstein 1995) - Evident from the Findings

The first was communicating (number (ii) on Epstein's framework), which was emphasised by all of the participants, and the second, volunteering (number (iii) on Epstein's framework), which was reported by just two of the participants, Michael and Audrey. None of the other four elements of the framework were in evidence across any of the phases of this data collection. This suggests that parenting, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community are areas that could be developed as teachers progress in their teaching career, in order to develop partnership, collaboration and engagement with parents, so as to support children to reach their potential.

As already mention, all eight beginning teachers identified communication with parents as being important, not only in Phase One interviews, but also in Phase Two interviews and in the Phase Three focus group interview. This finding is in keeping with the findings of a study by Hornby and Blackwell (2018), which identified communication as key to parent-teacher engagement. Walker and Dotger (2012) concurred and stated, "communicating with families is a central facet of the teaching profession" (p. 71). This is echoed by Gartmeier (2017) who identified communication between teachers and parents as an important feature of teachers' professional lives. Azad and Mandell (2016) also posit that cultivating and nurturing positive relationships between home and school depends on effective communication. Moreover, a study by Syriopoulou-Delli et al. (2016) found that both teachers and parents identified communication between home and school as being critical for positive educational outcomes for children with SEN. All of the eight beginning teachers reported that communicating with parents of children with SEN was indeed foundational to supporting these children's needs and believed the children benefitted when home and school communicated well. The use of a

communication diary was deemed to be particularly useful by a number of participants and many valued this mode of contact because it allowed for two-way communication.

Two-way communication between home and school enables parents to hear from education settings and enables education settings to listen and respond to parents and value their perspectives and insights into their child, particularly if their child has SEN. The National Parents Council (NPC) in Ireland, advocating for parents to be actively engaged in their children's education, recommends that "all communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful" (NPC 2013, p. 4). According to O'Connor (2008), when dialogue is not two-sided, an incomplete perspective is only available on the child. However, when parents and personnel from education settings are in dialogue and the conversation is two-way, a fuller picture of the child is presented, and home and school have a better chance of working together in the best interests of the child.

In this research study of eight beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents, all of the participants reported that technology was used in their schools to communicate with parents. This technological or third space, as it is referred to by Grant (2011), is where digital communication like Texts, Twitter and Email were utilised to link the spheres of home and school and is in keeping with the research literature on the use of technology to support home-school communication (Richards et al. 2016). See Table 5.1 below for full outline of technology used across Phase One and Phase Two of the research study to support parent-teacher communication.

Table 5.1 Technology Used to Support Parent-Teacher Communication

Teacher	Michael	Audrey	Bernadette	Ciara	Denise	Lisa	Fiona	Gemma
Email	X			X		X		
Text	X		X		X		X	
Blog	X				X			
Website	X	X			X			X
Twitter		X			X			
Apps						X		

When reporting on the use of technology in communication with parents, all of the participants referred to it in the context of how the school used these digital modes to inform parents about what was going on in the school. Fiona spoke about how a text was sometimes sent home to parents to remind them that there was swimming the following day and that the children needed to bring their swimming gear. Michael referred to the fact that in his school a reminder was sometimes sent by the principal about an upcoming fundraising event. One beginning teacher, Lisa, reported using email with one parent to communicate. This parent, who was the parent of a child with SEN, was not in a position to come to the school very often because of work commitments and email communication afforded them the opportunity to be in weekly communication with their child's teacher. This proved valuable at a time when their child was receiving speech and language therapy and email facilitated regular correspondence. In fact, this communication became three-way, when the speech and language therapist also communicated via email.

The discussion above has highlighted that all these beginning teachers used technology to communicate with parents, albeit in the majority of cases this communication was one-way communication. Evidence during this phase of data collection also highlighted something about the use of technology by parents that merits comment. An interesting comment by Lisa highlighted how teachers can sometimes feel under pressure when parents use technology to communicate with each other about what is happening in school. She said, "I think now there's a lot more pressure for you to get the work done because they [parents] know a lot more because of Facebook". It is not unusual nowadays for a group of parents to set up a Facebook or WhatsApp account where school issues and, indeed, sometimes teachers are the topic of conversation. This highlights, perhaps, the need for a dialogue between schools and families about the appropriate use of technology to enhance support and encourage learning, while being respectful of everyone's interests.

The second type of engagement, from Epstein's ecological framework, evident in this research study was volunteering. During their first year of teaching two participants, Michael and Audrey referred to parents being involved in their schools as volunteers. Michael went into great detail to describe how a parent of one of the children in his class came into school over a series of weeks and taught science. He spoke of how this parent "did it way better than any teacher could do it". Audrey was the only other par-

ticipant who spoke about a parent volunteering in her school. An important develop-ment in volunteering in Irish schools is worth mentioning here, where it is now neces-sary for parent-volunteers to be vetted by The National Vetting Bureau in order to work with children. One of the participants referred to this and how many schools were reluc-tant to go this route, possibly because of the time it takes to have a person vetted, the cost and the paperwork involved.

In Phase One of the data collection, participants were also asked if they felt their under-graduate programme had prepared them for working with parents. All of the eight be-ginning teachers reported that they felt prepared when they left college and credited, in particular, an elective module on parent-professional partnership, in their final semester, for this confidence. This finding is not in keeping with the extant literature where be-ginning teachers feel unprepared after their ITE programme for engagement with par-ents (Evans 2012; Hornby and Blackwell 2018; Hudson 2012). However, it is in keep-ing with a study by Walker and Dotger (2017) who found that when student-teachers in college were specifically supported to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions for family-school partnership, they felt confident about their ability to communicate with families. Unfortunately, according to Epstein and Sanders (2006), most teacher education programmes do not support beginning teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for positive parent-teacher engagement. This suggests that preparation at ITE level can and should specifically address parent-teacher en-gagement, so as to better support beginning teachers with this endeavour.

Another finding from this research study was that participants met mostly mothers through their engagement with parents. This finding is very much in keeping with the literature in this field, which is limited (Lashewicz et al. 2017). Fabiano (2007) suggests that perhaps fathers are not as involved as mothers because they are not specifically in-vited to become involved. Meanwhile, Morgan (2017) suggests that fathers may not en-gage with schools due to work commitments, or perhaps they see parental involvement as the role of mothers. A study by Hornby and Blackwell (2018) identified parents' own negative experience of school as a barrier to their engagement with the teachers of their own children. This, of course, applies to both fathers and mothers. Perhaps, we need to conduct more research into why fathers do not engage more with their children's educa-tion or perhaps, we might investigate how fathers are involved in their children's educa-

tion, as a father not meeting with a teacher does not necessarily mean they are not involved in their children's education.

Phase One of this research study allowed me, the researcher, to reconnect with these eight beginning teachers a year after we had worked together in the final semester of their ITE programme. For me, it was a privilege to meet with these graduates a year into their lives as beginning teachers. From the participants' perspective, all eight commented on how they were looking forward to meeting up. They also reported how beneficial it was to have an opportunity to look back on their first year of teaching with someone who knew where they had come from and was willing to ask them how they were and listen to the stories of their first year of teaching. It suggests to me, as a teacher educator, that perhaps we could make more of a conscious effort at ITE level to reach forward into that first year of teaching to support the transition between ITE and induction.

5.2   PHASE TWO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Phase Two of this research study was conducted at the end of the eight beginning teachers' second year of teaching. As in Phase One, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with each participant and began with asking each participant about their school placements for their second year of teaching (see Table 5.2 for an overview of the participants' second year of teaching). Interestingly, all eight beginning teachers had contract posts for the full year, meaning each had only one placement as opposed to only two participants, Michael and Bernadette, having one placement the previous year. Half the participants were employed as class teachers in mainstream schools and the other half were employed as SETs, three in mainstream schools and one, Gemma, in a special school. Unfortunately, there is no national data with which to compare the placements of this small cohort of beginning teachers during their first two years of teaching. However, anecdotally, this is in keeping with the stories that abound about beginning teachers where many are substitute teachers and have short contracts during their first year of teaching and then secure lengthier and more permanent contracts during their second year. Ciara continued to teach in the school she was in during her first year and went from being a SET in Year One to being a class teacher in Year Two in the same school. The other seven beginning teachers found themselves having to apply for jobs in other schools. For all of the participants, the experience of their first year of teaching and for many, the fact that they had completed their Teaching Diploma contributed to them finding security of tenure for their second year.

Table 5.2 Overview of Beginning Teachers' Second Year of Teaching

Teacher	Placement
Audrey	special education teacher in boys' urban school
Bernadette	special education teacher in boys' urban school
Ciara	class teacher of 16 third and fourth class children in rural co-ed school
Denise	class teacher of fourth class children in rural co-ed school
Lisa	special education teacher working with 6 children with SEN in rural co-ed school
Fiona	class teacher 20 third class children in co-ed school in an urban socio-economic area of disadvantage
Gemma	special class teacher teaching five 7-9 year olds in co-ed school for children with ASD
Michael	class teacher of 27 fourth class children in co-ed school in an urban socio-economic area of disadvantage

During this phase of interviews each participant was invited to share a memorable experience they had had with parents. I did not specify a positive or negative experience, but left this up to each person being interviewed. Participants were also asked to bring an artefact with them that represented their relationship with parents and were asked if these artefacts tied into their memorable experience in any way. These questions were formulated as a result of preliminary findings from the first set of data gathered and were an attempt at digging deeper into what had already been touched on in the first round of interviews. The memorable experiences and request for an artefact were attempts at probing more deeply what mattered to these beginning teachers at the end of their first two years of teaching.

Of the eight beginning teachers, three recalled negative experiences and five recalled positive experiences with parents. Six of the participants spoke about memorable experiences with parents of children with SEN; Ciara and Michael's memorable experiences were with parents whose children did not have SEN. Of the six beginning teachers who spoke about memorable experiences with parents of children with SEN, two were negative experiences and four were positive. What was very evident from all of the stories was the fact that all of the beginning teachers considered parent-teacher engagement an essential part of their work, which is very much in keeping with a study by Hornby and Blackwell (2018) who found that teachers perceive parent-teacher engagement as "something that they cannot afford not to do" (p. 117). There was no question from any of the participants that engaging with parents was an option, all spoke of the value and benefit of home and school working together. In addition, all of the participants be-

lieved that engaging with parents benefitted the children, which is in keeping with the extensive literature in this area (Broussard 2000; Catsambis 1998; Epstein 1983, 1984, 1986; Evans 2013; Fan & Chen 2001; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 2007; Henderson and Berla 1994; Jeynes 2005; Love 1996; Marjoribanks 1979; Sheridan et al. 2016; Wilder 2014; Zablotsky, Boswell, and Smith 2012).

In terms of home and school working together, an interesting finding emerged around participants' awareness of parents' perspectives. Jucks and Pauler-Kuppinger (2017) posit that in order to engage well with parents, teachers need to have an appreciation of parents' perspectives. These authors argue that parents' perspectives can be different to that of teachers' and it behoves teachers to be aware of this and endeavour to develop the competency of perspective-taking. Buhl and Hilkenmeier (2017) also refer to the "ability to acknowledge and include others' perspectives" in order for parents and teachers to be able to engage with one another (p. 103). Some participants demonstrated an awareness of parents' perspectives and indeed a realisation that having the perspective of a parent can actually support the teacher to make informed decisions, as illustrated by Bernadette:

> I started to meet with parents and that, again, was opening the doors to, like, so much more information. You know, some things you were, kind of going, 'yeah, I think maybe I'll do what I had planned there', you know. And in some cases, it was a case of, 'actually, no, I don't think that, you know, I was thinking of doing this, but, actually, leave it with me, or have you any ideas?'

Bernadette demonstrated a willingness to seek parents' perspectives and intentionally asked parents if they had "any ideas". She then either went along with what she had originally planned to do with the child or revisited her decision based on the engagement she had with the parent. Bernadette, across all phases of data collection, emphasised the importance of relationship with parents and consistently sought out their perspectives on their children. Likewise, Ciara emphasised relationship with parents and talked about how "it's really important you have a good relationship with the parents", while acknowledging that "parents were the number one challenge, because it was a new thing for me". She was working with a small group of young children with ASD and spoke of the importance of not making assumptions about parents and how as a young teacher you need to try and empathise and consider things from the parent's perspective:

> It's important not to make assumptions. I know we learned about that in College, but it is just so important. No two parents are remotely the same or have the same expecta-

tions. You have no idea of anyone's life and you don't need to know, but don't just go assuming you know about someone's background or their wants and needs for their children.

Making assumptions is something that all of these beginning teachers would have covered in their elective module on parent-professional partnership in the final semester of their ITE programme and it is interesting to see this coming through in their conversations about parents. The Oxford Dictionary defines an assumption as what we take for granted as true, without any proof. Bassot (2016) posits that our assumptions give meaning and purpose to who we are and what we do. Ciara's memorable experience also relates to an awareness of perceptions and perspectives. She spoke of meeting with a parent who was upset about the possibility of their child having to repeat a year in the same class. Ciara spoke of being acutely aware of the fact that she herself is not a parent and how this issue was causing great angst and upset at home. Christianakis (2011) posits that teachers often do not reflect on the reality of parents' lives and suggests taking the time to consider a parent's perspective can support positive parent-teacher engagement. In this instance, Ciara did take the time to consider this parent's perspective and her perspective-taking is also evidenced in her choice of artefact, a school report, which parents received before coming to parent-teacher meetings. In explaining her choice of artefact, this participant spoke of how parents perceived the school report in different ways. Some accepted it without question and when they came to meet her, they put it to one side and listened to what she had to say. Others were very concerned about "where the ticks were" and held the report in their hand and "questioned everything". This caused Ciara to be aware of how the perspectives of parents differ not only from each other, but particularly from her and how important it was not to make assumptions.

Audrey also appears to have made an assumption about a parent without perhaps fully considering why a parent might be presenting in a particular way. Audrey acknowledged that "all parents were different" and commented that "it was just so weird to see the difference in some parents in comparison to others". She commented that she tried not to get "frustrated with parents that didn't really want to do anything". There is an assumption being made here that some parents "didn't really want to do anything". Audrey told a story about meeting with parents of a child with ASD and the frustration she felt when the parents would not agree to strategies and resources that she, in her personal opinion, believed would meet the child's needs. She felt that the parents' insistence that their child be treated the same as everyone else resulted in his needs not

being met. This beginning teacher's artefact, an observation chart, links in with this memorable experience in that Audrey explained that she chose this as her artefact because it gave her confidence in discussing a child with his or her parents. It provided evidence for the suggestions she was making and therefore she felt more confident in her recommendations. Audrey also made the comment that she "personally believe[s] that some parents are in complete denial about if their child has needs". Interpreting this comment was a time of wondering for me, wondering what the participant might mean by denial and wondering why I was bothered by it.

In this wondering, as the analyst, I drew on my own experiences, I reflected on what this comment triggered in me and I drew on my own professional knowledge. According to Smith (2009), as long as "the interpretation is stimulated by, and tied to, the text, it is legitimate" (pp. 89-90). In terms of research integrity, in interrogating and interpreting the text, probably more than anywhere else in this whole research process, I must admit to myself and to the reader who I am as researcher. I am the researcher, yes, but I am the researcher who is a parent, and, furthermore, I am the researcher who is a parent of a child with SEN. When these beginning teachers commented on their experiences of parents, I was conscious that I was being impacted by what they were saying. In addition to being a parent, I am also the researcher who is a teacher and who was a beginning teacher. So, when these beginning teachers were commenting on their experiences I was reminded of my experiences as a beginning teacher. I acknowledge all of this and recognise that, yes, this makes me biased. Being biased is often synonymous with being prejudiced. However, it doesn't necessarily have to be about being unfair. Perhaps being aware of and acknowledging one's biases goes a long way to openness, transparency and trustworthiness in an analytic process that is by no means linear, but rather complex, multifaceted and iterative. However, while research integrity demands an acknowledgement of who we are as researcher, this is so that we can make sense of the data we are analysing; in no way is this about putting the focus on the researcher.

Some of the participants, like Denise, were really shaken by some of the engagements they described as their memorable experience. In telling her story, Denise described the afternoon after meeting with this parent as "the worst Friday I ever put down". The experience she described was with a mother of a child with SEN who came into the school for an arranged meeting.

I've come across a parent like no other this year. Um, I really don't know how to go about her or how to handle her. She's very, she's a very overbearing parent, and … and it was the strangest meeting I've ever been in. She ran the show. And she had her notes and her folders and her laptop and, you know, it was complete role reversal on what I thought it should've been, you know. And then she, kind of, nit-picked everything we were doing, and, you know, wants all these things for the child that just aren't feasible. And then she handed, she was talking about maths and how maths is a concern, and, and then she hands me a page. Actually, I don't have the page, but I have a picture of it, because the principal has it in the office. He was like, "I can't ... we have to keep this for ... " He'd never seen anything like it. She handed me a spreadsheet of the child's mental maths results from September to the, the day of the meeting. And highlighted in grey is what the child hadn't finished, which wouldn't be uncommon for the child not to finish it. And highlighted in yellow was what was done and not corrected. And she handed it to me and to the other two learning support staff. Now, I don't know what I'm getting when I picked it up and I looked at it and I put it down, and then I looked at it again, and my mouth nearly fell to the floor. I thought, "Oh my God." And that she had taken the time to do it, and it really, for a long time, tainted my view of working with parents. Any parent comes to the door I'm still a little bit like, you know … I'll always remember it, I think, forever.

Denise said this experience made her "question, you know, am I staying on top of it? Am I doing enough? Um, you know, am I … I don't know. It just really …". This beginning teacher is questioning herself and doubting herself and this experience has really impacted on her emotionally. Even though Denise found this encounter difficult, she was also able to say the following about parents:

I think with parents, like, I think sometimes we forget that they are people too and they have lives and they have their own things going on and, like, sometimes, you know, doing the reading isn't top of the priority list and you sometimes just have to swallow that.

This demonstrates that this beginning teacher, despite having had a challenging and difficult engagement with a parent that left her questioning and doubting herself was still able to take the perspective of the parent. Denise's artefact was the spreadsheet that the mother had brought to the meeting, but in addition, she also brought a card signed by the children she had taught and their parents to thank her for all of the work she had done. She said that, "I couldn't just bring that [spreadsheet]. I did bring a lovely card that I got from the parents of the first class that I taught …what I thought was lovely was that it was from the moms and dads and girls". She told me that she felt it was important to bring the card as well as it represented all of the positive experiences she had had with parents. Lisa referenced a thank you card as her memorable experience. She spoke about receiving a card from a mother of a child with SEN at Christmas time, where the parent thanked her for the work she had done with her child the previous term. She commented, "yeah, the mom was delighted, so that was a kind of memorable experience for me". Similarly, Gemma recalled a memorable experience where two par-

ents of a child with SEN who came and thanked her after a Christmas Show. She describes the experience as follows:

> It was my first time seeing them [parents] in weeks, because they had been away, and they were just so happy to see the show, they were so overwhelmed by what their child was doing, and they were so enthusiastic and thanking me and it was just a very pleasant and a different kind of experience because they were in the classroom instead of always, you know, ringing or meeting them for, like four in a meeting, so it was, it was lovely. Um, they were saying that, it was great, like, the show. They were saying that their daughter was really engaging in it, and they could see that she was happy, and they were saying she's always happy going to school, she's always waiting for the bus to collect her, and things like that, so that made me feel, okay, do you know, she's happy in school, so I'm doing something right, you know.

Gemma talked about how this encounter helped her to believe in herself as a teacher and feel that she "was doing something right". The feeling is in contrast to Denise, whom we discussed earlier, who doubted herself as a result of the encounter she had with a parent. However, what both of these memorable experiences highlight is that engaging with parents is an emotional experience for beginning teachers and they need support in processing these encounters. Both Lisa and Gemma's artefact was a Home-School Diary, which they used for two-way communicate with parents. Lisa described the diary as representing "the core of our relationship, really" while Gemma said, "It's very practical and we fill it out every day … I think the parents really enjoy having something to read. Parents also use the diary to tell about things their child does at home". Denise, Lisa and Gemma highlighted the satisfaction they felt when parents took the time to thank them for the work they had done with their children. It could be argued that these parents had the ability to acknowledge the teachers' perspectives which in turn supports positive engagement between home and school (Buhl and Hilkenmeier 2017).

Phase Two of this research study on beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN has highlighted the need for beginning teachers to acknowledge and be aware of parents' perspectives. Gartmeirer et al. (2017) posit that parents and teachers differ in many respects, including their relationship to the child and their responsibility for the child. Perhaps being able to consider a parent's perspective is something that needs to have a specific focus in teacher education, at all levels of the teacher education continuum. Broomhead (2013) recommends that parental perspectives should be included in all teacher education programmes.

The third phase of this research study explored three of the eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents using a focus group interview. While all eight participants were invited to partake in this phase of the data collection, only three were available to do so. The reason for this was that the focus group interview was scheduled to occur the last week of June when schools were finishing up for the school year and many of the participants had other commitments connected with school. Nonetheless, meeting with three of the participants served the purpose of this phase of this research study, which was to validate the findings of the previous two phases of the data collection and to intentionally take leave of the research field.

Phase Three was critical to the trustworthiness of the entire research process and I used a co-operative learning strategy, called placemat, to gather data. This co-operative learning strategy, already explained in the Methodology Chapter, is an active methodology used with small groups of up to five people, underpinned by the principles of cooperative learning. This co-operative strategy allowed each participant to respond in writing to findings from the previous phases of the data collection and then enter into a discussion which allowed for elaboration on what each had written. This phase of the research study validated the finding that school context and culture determined to a great extent the nature and type of parent-teacher engagement that these beginning teachers found themselves involved in as illustrated by Gemma's comment that "this is how teachers and parents relate in this particular school". This is very much in keeping with the literature in this field where the culture of the school is a determinant in how engagement between home and school is conducted. According to Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000), all that happens in schools "is shaped by the contexts in which they occur" (p. 524). These contexts include the settings or the individual school cultures that teachers find themselves in.

Support from colleagues was highlighted in this phase of the data collection where all three beginning teachers recalled how they felt supported by the staff they worked with in all of their school settings in the previous two years. As far back as 1993, Calderhead suggested that for professional growth to be a reality, much needs to be done around developing a "collegial, supportive ethos" within schools (p. 99). The development of this "collegial supportive ethos" in turn supports the "professional development of young teachers" (Calderhead 1993, p. 99). The findings of this research study demon-

strate the support experienced by the participants in their school settings with all of the participants describing the support received from colleagues and, in particular, their school principals around reflecting on their engagement with parents. Phase Three of the data collection validated this finding where all three participants acknowledged the value of being able to reflect on their engagement with parents with a colleague or school principal.

During the focus group interview participants also reiterated that they felt prepared on leaving college for working with parents. This, they credited to the elective module, *Parent-Professional Partnership: supporting the learning and wellbeing of children with special educational needs*, which they took in the final semester of their B.Ed. Programme. In the previous two phases of the data collection, all eight participants spoke of the value of this module in preparing them for engaging with parents. This contradicts the research in this field where beginning teachers are considered unprepared, on leaving college, for working with parents (Murray et al. 2008). However, it is in keeping with the extant literature (Broomhead 2013) that tells us beginning teachers benefit from preparation for working with parents at ITE level, especially when they get an opportunity to meet with parents.

One of the things that Smith et al. (2009) say about writing the discussion section of an interpretative phenomenological analysis study is that while "the findings should always be related to relevant literature … often this discussion will include a dialogue with literature which was not referenced in the introduction to the study" (p. 181). I find myself in this position, where the concept of agency and, in particular, teacher agency has emerged in my thinking and merits exploration and discussion.

5.4   TEACHER AGENCY

The concept of agency has its roots in social science but can be traced back to the time of the Enlightenment and has been associated with many terms including selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom and creativity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). In particular, Giddens (1984), an influential social scientist who, according to Etelapelto et al. (2013), popularised the concept of agency, considered agency a conscious act by an individual that requires intentionality or intentional choice. This intentionality focuses on the capacity of the individual to act in a given situation. However, criticism of Giddens' conceptualisation of agency abounds and is

based on a lack of acknowledgement of the context within which the individual operates. Archer (2000; 2003) criticised Giddens' conceptualisation of agency on the grounds that it was too narrow and did not separate the individual from the social. Etelapelto et al. (2013), having analysed the concept of agency across four major research traditions (social science; post-structural; socio-cultural; identity and life-course), emphasise the social and the individual's capacity and suggest a conceptualisation of agency from a socio-cultural perspective. This perspective "takes individual agency and social context to be analytically separate, but mutually constitutive, and in complex ways highly interdependent" (Etelapelto et al. 2013, p. 45). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) also acknowledged the social aspect of agency and conceptualised agency as "a temporally embedded process of social engagement" (p. 962) informed by the past, while oriented towards the future and the present.

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conceptualisation of agency was built on by Priestly et al. (2015) to develop an ecological model of teacher agency. This ecological model conceptualises teacher agency as "something that is achieved by individuals, through the interplay of personal capacities and resources, affordances and constraints of the environment by means of which individuals act" (p. 19). This ecological conceptualisation of agency is particularly relevant and congruent with the theoretical underpinnings of this research study which explored eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, in the first two years of their teaching. As I listened to the interviews from the participants from this research study over and over again and as I used IPA to analyse what had been said at descriptive, linguistic and conceptual levels, I was struck by how the personal capacities of individual participants and the situations they found themselves in were playing out. One that comes to mind is Bernadette's feeling of being "frowned upon" by colleagues in one school when she was regularly meeting a parent by comparison to how the same engagement with parents had been encouraged in the school in which she had previously taught. Similarly, I recall how Michael reported not seeing parental engagement as a challenge in his first school, because he was a local and knew all of the families, to finding himself in a very different scenario in his second year of teaching where he found himself having to meet two parents with the principal present to resolve an issue concerning their child. Context matters when it comes to teacher agency.

In addition to context, the research on teacher agency also posits that beliefs matter when it comes to teacher agency. Biesta et al. (2015) addressed the role of beliefs and teacher agency in a paper which drew on the results of a large-scale two-year Scottish study on Curriculum for Excellence. The paper focussed on "teachers' beliefs in order to get a sense of the individual and collective discourses that inform teachers' perceptions, judgements and decision-making and that motivate and drive teachers' action" (p. 624). The findings of the study concluded that "teacher agency is highly dependent upon the personal qualities that teachers bring to their work" (p. 636) and this includes their beliefs. Biesta et al. (2015) concluded that "teachers' beliefs matter for the extent to which and the degree in which teachers are able to achieve agency within the particular educational ecologies in which they work" (p. 637).

I had a troubling question about whether or not this ecological concept of teacher agency could extend to the area of parent-teacher engagement. While Biesta's (2015) study focused on beliefs about teachers' action in relation to curriculum and my research study focussed on beliefs in relation to parent-teacher engagement, I wondered if the concept of teacher agency could also apply to teachers' action in this domain. This prompted me to contact Professor Gert Biesta, first author of the paper above on beliefs and teacher agency. In an email (April 2019) from the author, Biesta clarified the point that teacher agency covers any aspect of a teacher's work and, for him, this includes engagement with parents. Biesta went on to say that the key ambition with his work on teacher agency was to get a sense of what helps and hinders teachers coming into action. The findings of a study by Oolbekkink –Marchand et al. (2017) concur with the findings from Biesta et al.'s (2015) study and conclude that teachers' beliefs are important in the achievement of teacher agency. One of the strongest beliefs that came through in this study on beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents was that engaging with parents benefits children. This belief is in keeping with the research literature in this area, which is replete with references to how children have better outcomes when schools and parents engage with each other (Catsambis 1998; Epstein 1983, 1984, 1986; Evans 2013; Fan & Chen 2001; Henderson and Berla 1994; Hill et al. 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2002; Jeynes 2005; Love 1996; Marjoribanks 1979; Sheridan et al. 2016; Wilder 2014; Zablotsky, Boswell, and Smith 2012).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) posit that teachers' professional agency is constructed situationally and that there are "constraining and enabling contexts of action" (p. 964).

These contexts include the settings or the individual school cultures that teachers find themselves in. The findings from the eight beginning teachers in this research study highlighted how school contexts, and, in particular, school cultures, were influential in determining the nature and type of parent-teacher engagement that occurred. The findings suggested that, in actual fact, the beginning teachers felt the school context determined whether or not engagement between parents and teachers even happened. One beginning teacher recalled how she was employed as a SET in two schools and how she "never met parents" in one school and had "weekly, if not daily contact with parents" in the other school. Considering context is not new. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000), almost twenty years ago, highlighted how context influences what goes on in schools and claimed that all that happens in teaching "is shaped by the contexts in which they occur" (p. 524).

According to Priestly et al. (2015), in order to develop teacher agency not only does the individual capacity of the teacher need to be supported, but there also needs to be a focus on developing school cultures that support teachers, including beginning teachers, to develop their agency. For beginning teachers this support often comes in the form of support from colleagues and, in particular, school principals. One very strong finding from this research study was that all eight beginning teachers reported being supported by colleagues and especially school principals when it came to engaging with parents. Lisa talked about having "a fantastic principal" and Fiona talked about her supportive and understanding principal. She recounted how she felt comfortable asking her principal to sit in on a meeting with her after having a difficult experience with a parent. Not only did she learn about engaging with parents through observing her principal during the meeting, she also had the opportunity after the meeting to discuss with the principal how she, herself, had engaged with the parent. A study by Oolbekkink-Marchand et al. (2017) found that support and trust from school management was an important factor in the achievement of teacher agency.

As a teacher educator, I advocate for an ecological understanding of teacher agency to support beginning teachers to develop positive engagement with parents. This ecological approach takes cognisance of the interplay between the beginning teacher and the context within which they find themselves. As an extension of this ecological understanding of teacher agency, I also suggest exploration of another ecological concept,

lifewide learning, which allows for learning from across a person's life to be taken into consideration in terms of agentic behaviour.

5.5   LIFEWIDE LEARNING

As a teacher educator I am particularly concerned about how our student teachers are prepared to become beginning teachers; this is my job which I am passionate about. This concern also emanates from being a parent; when I work with student teachers on school placement my litmus test is always, would I like my child to be taught by this teacher? As a responsible citizen, I am also concerned about the preparation of our teachers, because I believe teachers matter in our society and the research tells us that the quality of our education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Barber and Mourshed 2007). To this end, I am concerned with preparing student teachers for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead of them and, in terms of this research study, I am concerned with how best to prepare them for engaging with parents and, in particular, parents of children with SEN, as all of the participants in this research study reported having more engagement with these parents than any other parents. The findings from this research study of eight beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents highlighted that these beginning teachers drew on and were influenced by learning from a number of different places in order to engage with parents. In addition to the learning from their ITE programme, participants also drew on learning from past experiences. They drew on experiences from home where they called on learning from how their own parents engaged or indeed did not engage with schools. All of the participants reported meeting more mothers than fathers and more than one participant commented on how their own fathers had not engaged with school when they were young. Participants also drew on the learning that they gained from the school contexts within which they worked, especially from the support they received from school principals. Several participants talked about how principals and in some cases more senior SET sat in on meetings they had with parents and how much they learned from this. This highlights that our beginning teachers learn how to engage with parents from a number of different places. Consequently, in this section, I would like to argue for a *lifewide* concept of learning in ITE in the preparation of student teachers for working with parents.

According to Jackson (2012), the term lifewide learning was first explicitly used by Jost Reischmann in 1986 in the context of presenting his all-embracing concept of adult

learning. Reischmann (2014, p. 286) posits lifewide learning complements the concept of lifelong learning and argues:

> Lifewide learning is understood as the everyday happening continuous life process of adults, which builds and changes personalities, caused not only by formal and self-directed intentional learning, but also by unintentional, but nevertheless important and effective learning. It is argued that the learning of adults, in contrast to traditional children school learning, is typically based on many situations and sources merged and mixed "widely" into concrete life.

This concept of lifewide learning is ecological in nature, which is in keeping with the conceptual framework underpinning this research study and encompasses learning that occurs across a person's life, not across time as lifelong learning does. This type of learning involves many learning spaces (Barnett 2010) and includes learning from all human experiences such as study, family, work, volunteering, travelling, relationships etc. (Jackson 2011). According to Barnett (2010), lifelong learning (learning across time) and lifewide learning (learning across spaces) are related and characteristically intermingle, where a person experiences both lifelong and lifewide learning. While the term lifewide learning might be relatively new, the concept is not and can be traced back to Dewey (1916) who as a pragmatist recognised the close connection between education and life.

Lifewide learning is very much related to the personal development of individuals, something that is "a desirable feature for today's graduates … it enables people to improve themselves cognitively, socially and personally" (Soylu et al. 2016, p. 134). In Barnett's (2010) study with students in Surrey University, mentioned above, he found that students, in addition to developing knowledge and skills, also developed their dispositions and qualities. This development of dispositions and qualities, according to Barnett (2010) equates to the fact that the students were developing as persons. Soylu et al. (2016) posit that lifewide learning supports the development of problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking, effective use of technology, conflict-management and decision-making. All of these can contribute to effective and positive engagement between parents and teachers. Moreover, they support and enable the development of an ecological conceptualisation of teacher agency, which was discussed previously in this chapter. Placing an emphasis on lifewide learning in ITE combined with a focus on developing an ecological conceptualisation of teacher agency is worth considering in terms of supporting our beginning teachers to engage with parents.

In ITE, conceptualising learning as lifewide learning would allow for the inclusion of student teachers' experiences from a variety of settings, including past experiences. The value of past experiences came through in this research study where participants spoke about their own parents' engagement with teachers and how these experiences influenced their own engagement with parents. The participants also spoke of the learning they had experienced in college and how what they had learned about parents, especially through meeting parents on their elective module in their final semester, also influenced how they engaged with parents. Interestingly, in the second year of their teaching, all of the beginning teachers spoke of how the experiences from their first year influenced how they continued to relate and engage with parents.

In adopting a lifewide approach to learning in ITE, not only would there be the expected emphasis on learning that comes from scheduled courses, programmes and modules, it would also allow for the inclusion of learning from other places like work and leisure. This means that a student doing part-time work outside of college could draw on the learnings gained from having to take a customer's perspective into consideration or resolving conflicts. What about the student who is also a part-time music teacher or who coaches the local soccer team at weekends? What of the interactions with the parents of these children, whether in the child's home or on the pitch side-line? Will lifewide learning not honour these spaces as learning spaces that can contribute to how these individuals develop in their chosen profession and ultimately, contribute to the kind of beginning teacher they become?

In terms of becoming, Barnett (2010) concluded that in addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, students also displayed qualities and dispositions that he characterised by the notion of being and becoming. He reported that the students displayed qualities of enthusiasm, confidence, empathy, care, energy and self-reliance as a result of their lifewide learning while they were students at the university. These are all qualities that beginning teachers need in order to positively engage with parents, so as to support the best possible outcomes for the children they teach. Barnett (2010) also reported evidence of students developing the following dispositions as a result of their lifewide experiences: a willingness to learn about oneself, a preparedness to put oneself into new situations, a preparedness to be creative in interpersonal situations, a willingness to help others, a willingness to adjust one's approach and a willingness to keep going even in arduous situations. Here, I am making connections between these dispositions and the

dispositions required for beginning teachers to achieve teacher agency when engaging with parents.

As I write this section on lifewide learning, I am conscious of my own story as a teacher educator. In particular, I see how my own learning spaces contribute to how I work with student teachers in their ITE programme to engage with parents. My own learning comes from a number of spaces including the learning I experienced as a teacher, where I met with parents on a very regular basis. Sometimes I met parents weekly and in one case that comes to mind, I met a parent on a daily basis for a number of weeks when a child needed to be supported around behaviours that challenged both his mother and me. On reflection, I think the support was as much for the child's mother and for me, his teacher, as it was for the child himself. I am also aware that for me, much of my learning about working with parents comes from my own experience being a mother of children who engaged with teachers at preschool, primary and post-primary school level. As I have already mentioned, I am also the parent of a child with SEN and undoubtedly, this is something that I draw on and that informs all of my practice when it comes to working with student teachers.

In addition to my learning spaces already described as both a teacher and a parent, I also learned a huge amount from working at national level as a parent representative on supporting the development of disability services for children and young people in Ireland. This learning space brought me into contact with health service and education providers, policy makers and parents who were striving to provide disability health services for children and families where a national unified approach to the delivery of services is employed, regardless of where a child lives, what school they attend or the nature of their disability or developmental delay. This work, which still continues, is about equity and is about services working with children and families, using a family-centred approach to support a child to reach their potential. Another learning space that contributes enormously to my work with student teachers on parent-teacher engagement is my research, including this research study. I am a lifelong, as well as lifewide learner and, as already mentioned, I have a plaque on my desk at work, which quotes Michelangelo, *I am still learning*.

As already stated, the aim of this research study was to make a contribution to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement and, specifically, how beginning teachers in Ireland engage with parents. As to be expected, some of the findings of this research study suggest that, in the main, the beginning teachers found engaging with parents challenging, which is in keeping with the research literature. However, in spite of the challenges faced, all eight of these beginning teachers felt their ITE programme had prepared them well for engaging with parents. Moreover, all of the participants accepted engagement with parents as part of their role, whether they found themselves working as a class teacher or as a SET. This held true in all school contexts, including mainstream schools, special schools and special classes in mainstream schools. In addition, these beginning teachers meet more parents of children with SEN than any other parents.

In this research study of eight beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents, the findings suggest that an exploration of teacher agency and lifewide learning are two areas that merit focus and consideration in teacher education and in particular ITE. How can we best prepare our student teachers to positively engage with parents at the beginning of their teaching careers? Do the findings of this research study have something to contribute to this preparation? What follows in the next chapter is are implications for theory, policy and practice and future research.

CHAPTER SIX: REFLECTIONS, LEARNINGS AND REC-OMMENDATIONS

6.0   CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Yin (2016) cautions against a conclusion being just a restatement of the research findings and posits that a conclusion to a thesis is an analytic phase that "captures the broader significance of a study" (p. 235). He refers to a conclusion as "some kind of overarching statement or series of statements that raises the interpretation of a study to a higher conceptual level or a broader set of ideas" (p. 235). This is when inferences from the research as a whole can be made. Keeping in mind Yin's (2016) exhortations about how to conclude a thesis and adopting Borton's (1970) reflective framework (see Figure 6.1 below) of What?/So what?/Now what?, this final chapter endeavours to offer a summary of the work undertaken and raise the interpretation of beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN, to a broad set of ideas.
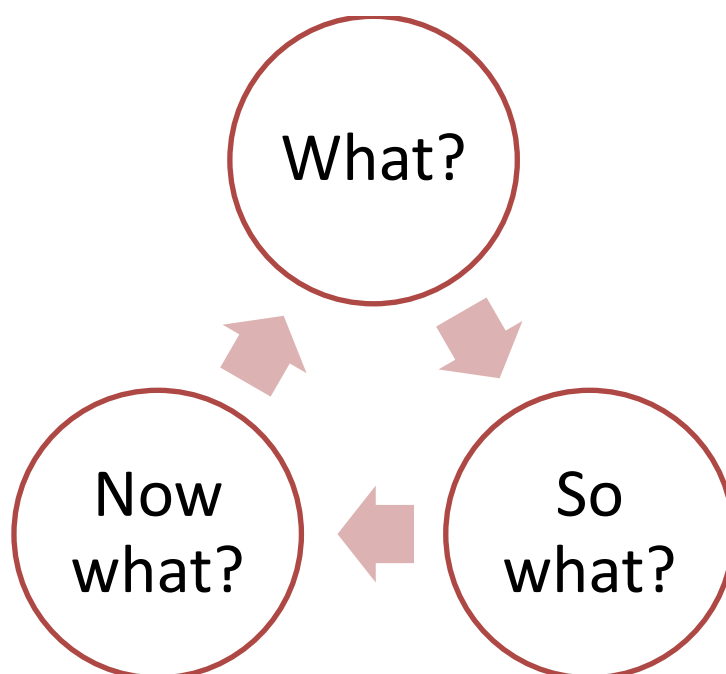
Figure 6.1 Borton's Reflective Framework (1970)

6.1   WHAT?/SO WHAT?/NOW WHAT? REFLECTIVE FRAME-WORK

In adopting Borton's (1970) reflective framework, I address what happened in this research study (What?), what was learned (So what?) and what might be done differently, as a result of what has been learned (Now what?). Borton's *What?* is presented as Reflections, followed by the *So what?* as Lessons Learned and concluding with *Now what?* as a series of Recommendations (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1 Summary of Concluding Chapter using Borton's Reflective Framework (1970)

Borton's Reflective Framework (1970)	Concluding Chapter of Research Study
What?	Reflections
So what?	Lessons Learned
What now?	Recommendations

6.2   WHAT? - REFLECTIONS

This section begins with the *What*? of this research study and reflects on the conceptual framework followed by reflections on the methodological approach used and the data analysis employed.

6.2.1 REFLECTING ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

I defined the conceptual framework underpinning this research study rather broadly to include the issue of research integrity, the theoretical framework, a review of the literature and an outline of the research questions. I am satisfied that this broad definition served this research study well as it allowed not only for the framework to be a product, but also a process, as identified by Ravitch and Riggan's (2017). I was continuously mindful of this process from the inception of the research right through to its completion.

6.2.1.1 REFLECTING ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The issue of integrity in research formed part of the overall conceptual framework of this research study. Every effort was made to act with integrity and make ethical decisions before, during and after the gathering of data. From the inception of this research study, there has been a strong commitment to participants' welfare and best interests. In reflecting on the research study through the lens of integrity and ethics, I am satisfied that participants had the opportunity to commit to each phase of the data collection pro-

cess. All of the eight participants were available for Phase One and Phase Two of the data collection. When it came to Phase Three, only three participants were able to attend the focus group, but I have confidence that this small group was sufficient to validate the findings of the two previous phases and, in actual fact, had all eight participants been available, it would probably have been too many and I would have had to have facilitated two focus groups. Meeting the participants two or three times also helped to build relationships of trust between me, the researcher, and the participants. I am very grateful that all participants stayed with the process over the two-year period. Throughout the research study, I endeavoured to keep ethics at the forefront of my mind and committed to ethical data collection, analysis of data and reporting of the findings. From beginning to end, every effort was made to respect truth and persons.

6.2.1.2 REFLECTING ON THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In reflecting on the theoretical framework, which is ecological in nature and an amalgam of the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) and Epstein (1999), I believe it has served its purpose well. It has been dynamic, iterative and flexible and open to revision, expansion and correction as new insights emerged during the research process. As anticipated, it provided a clear and systematic platform for examining beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. I am especially grateful for correspondence received from Epstein (December 2016), where she communicated that she had developed her theory of overlapping spheres of influence, "to extend Bronfenbrenner's work by adding a sociological perspective, creating an interdisciplinary and dynamic view of high school, family and community partnerships contributions to student success in school".

I dare to offer an emergent framework of my own, as a result of this research study (see Figure 6.2). My framework is ecological in nature and builds on Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) nested ecosystem and Epstein's (1995) overlapping spheres of influence. My thesis is that in order for beginning teachers to engage successfully with parents, they need to be aware of their own agency and how learning from all parts of their lives (lifewide) influences this engagement. It could also be argued that parents also bring their own agency and their own lifewide learning to the table when they engage with teachers. The framework is represented as a flower within an ecosystem that is community. This community is analogous to Bronfenbren-

ner's (1979; 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) meso/exo/macro/chrono systems and a nod to Epstein's (1995) community. Community in this framework is the local community as well as the wider community, where things like legislation, policy, guidelines and curriculum influence parent-teacher engagement. The stem of the flower represents lifewide learning that both parent and teacher bring to engagement with one another. The parent and the beginning teacher are represented by petals. These petals are surrounded by agency and this agency will be exercised in different ways at different times in people's lives. There is potential for other petals to be added to this framework, like the principal, other in-school professionals and external professionals, like the psychologist or speech and language therapist. In the centre is the child with their own agency and the engagement between all of these people is to support the child's development, learning and wellbeing. This model can only grow in the right conditions. It will only flourish when people engage respectfully with one another, are able to take each other's perspective into account and believe that when parents and teachers engage with one another children can benefit.
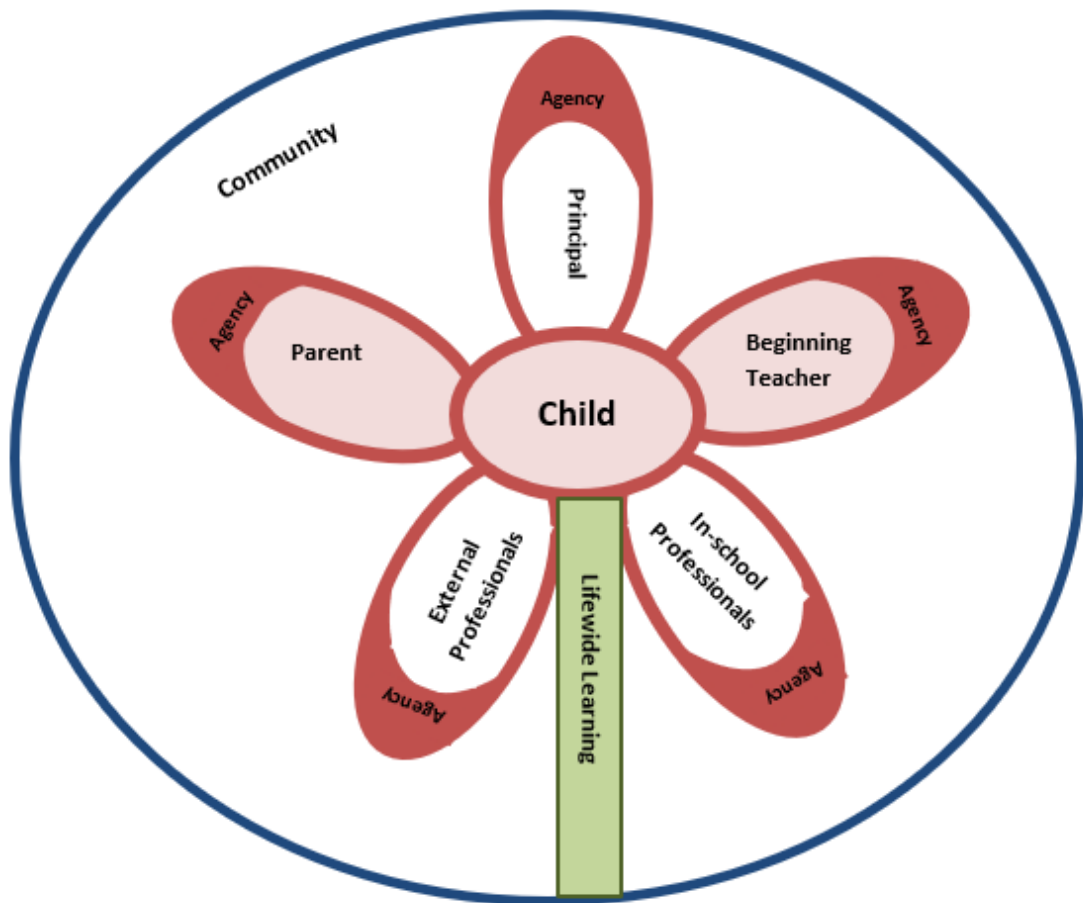
Figure 6.2 Emergent Ecological Framework of Beginning Teachers' Engagement with Parents

6.2.1.3 REFLECTING ON THE LITERATURE REVIEW

I am aware of the essential role the literature review has played in this research study and how it has allowed me to learn from the experience and expertise of previous researchers. The literature review presented information on what was already known about the research being undertaken and highlighted the dearth of knowledge about beginning teachers' engagement with parents. It identified the gap and supported the rationale for this endeavour. In reflecting on the literature review, I am also cognisant of the value of the Literature Input Table. While this took time to do, it meant that the reading I engaged in was captured in a critical way and could be used in the writing of the thesis. The literature review also allowed me to devise my research questions, as follows:

- How do beginning teachers engage with parents in Ireland?
- What is the learning for initial teacher education?

6.2.2   REFLECTING ON THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Methodologically, this research study adopted a qualitative case study approach using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Interpretative phenomenological analysis is compatible with case study approach, involves in-depth research of a small number of participants and supports the detailed exploration of a set of case studies (Smith and Osborn 2008). Eight beginning teachers took part in my study but reflecting on this, five to six, as recommended by Smith et al. (2009) would probably have been better. The volume of data gathered and the nature of analysis using IPA was very challenging. However, when eight participants responded to my initial invitation to take part in the study, I did not want to say to two of them that I had enough people. Also, I was very fortunate that all eight stayed the course of the two years, and had one or two dropped out, I would have been left with a very small number. I am very satisfied with the case study approach to this research study. It has been very much a traditional case study with all of the benefits of understanding complexity in particular contexts. In marrying case study with IPA the uniqueness of each case could still shine through at the end of the process.

6.2.3   REFLECTING ON THE DATA COLLECTION

In reflecting on the data collection, I am aware of the rich data collected over the three-phase cycle of research study and the generosity and commitment of all eight participants. There was such value in meeting participants more than once and being able to go back and member-check or explore something in more detail. This led to a stronger relationship and what I felt was very honest discussion. Meeting the beginning teachers, after having been their lecturer, may have created a power imbalance but the ongoing relationship as they became my co-professionals led to very open conversations. Moreover, the focus group interview at the end, even though only three of the eight beginning teachers were available to participate, allowed for a reflective leaving of the field. It also allowed an opportunity for the participants to express a request that the findings of this research study would inform ITE in supporting the preparation of student teachers to engage with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. Parents of children with SEN was the group of parents these eight beginning teachers engaged with most during their first two years as beginning teachers.

In reflecting on the data collection, I am reminded, not for the first time, of the graciousness and generosity of the eight beginning teachers who came on this journey with

me over the two years of the data collection process. A memo from my Research Diary, which I kept throughout the research study, captures this:

> Some researchers talk about interviews as being gifts, and actually, that is how I feel this afternoon. I am very conscious that these participants are giving up of their time, which they do not have to do, and I am looking forward to collecting some very rich data.

Memo from Research Diary (26th June 2016)

6.2.4   REFLECTING ON THE DATA ANALYSIS

In reflecting on the data analysis of this research study, I am cognisant of the myriad options that were open to me in analysing the rich data yielded from three phases of data collection. From four main approaches to qualitative data analysis, grounded theory analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and phenomenological analysis, I chose interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

I found IPA demanding and at times overwhelming, but it also appealed to my analytic brain. Initially, I found myself following steps and engaging in analytic dialogue with each line of the transcript at a descriptive, linguistic and conceptual level. However, I very soon found myself, quite instinctively, coding and annotating simultaneously. This highlights the complexity of data analysis and how, as one engages more and more with the process, one becomes more skilled in managing the multifaceted nature of analysis and the ability to move from initial descriptive commentary to a more interpretative level of analysis. To ensure trustworthiness and enhance triangulation, I regularly wrote memos in my Research Diary as I engaged in the process of data analysis:

> Analysis is demanding and challenging. Analysis is, as I understand it, a combination of the participants' experiences, as articulated by them, and the researcher's interpretation of this. So I ask myself, "is data analysis subjective? My answer is yes, I believe subjectivity, inevitably, plays a part in analysis, but this subjectivity must be subjected to a rigorous and explicit process of analysis. This rigour should allow the reader an understanding of and an insight into how I, as researcher, took what participants said and placed my own interpretation upon it. The reader, I hope, will be able to trace this iterative process of engagement with transcripts and audios from my initial annotations and thoughts, from description to interpretation, right through to the presentation of findings, and indeed subsequent discussions.

Memo from Research Diary (11th September 2018)

Having used IPA for this case study, I am struck by how the analytic process allowed for in-depth analysis within and across cases, while still maintaining the idiographic or particular nature of each case. However, IPA is not for the fainthearted!

6.2.5 REFLECTING ON THE SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), it is important to acknowledge the limitations of a research study. From the outset, I was aware that this was a small-scale study of eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. Consequently, findings from this research study may not be representative of the national or international state of play with respect to parent-teacher engagement, and therefore should be viewed with caution. However, evidence from this case study points to interesting and salient findings and, while they cannot be generalised, we can acknowledge the paradox of case study, where if "acknowledged and explored in depth, yield both unique and universal understanding" (Simons 1996, p. 225).

Ideally, further studies would look at parents' lived experiences of beginning teachers. Moreover, researching children's experiences would complete the circle. Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests seeking multiple perspectives or views in order to achieve as much understanding as possible about that which we study. Also, as researcher, I must, once again, declare my own personal bias of being a beginning teacher, being a parent of a child with SEN and being a teacher educator in ITE. However, it is also important to acknowledge that every research study has limitations and explicitly acknowledging these limitations is an essential part of research integrity and trustworthiness.

6.3 SO WHAT? - LESSONS LEARNED

Using Borton's (1970) *So what?* I now turn to a summary of the findings and the interpretation of those findings. I am conceptualising this section as lessons learned. In other words, what is now known that was not known before, as a result of undertaking this research that explored eight beginning teachers' lived experiences of engaging with parents during their first two years of teaching? For me, as researcher, the lessons learned are the story of the data. Lessons learned emerged under three themes: *beliefs, influences* and *realisations*.

6.3.1 THEME ONE: BELIEFS

Two beliefs emerged from analysis of the data. All eight beginning teachers believed that when home and school engage children benefit. In particular, all of the beginning teachers spoke of the benefit to children of being happy when the teacher engaged with parents about positive things that had happened in school. This belief was evident both within and across all cases throughout the research study. In addition, almost all of the beginning teachers held the belief that engaging with parents is challenging. However, there was one discrepant case and this participant displayed no evidence of finding parents challenging during her first year and second year of teaching. In terms of understanding this discrepant case, this participant is older than the other seven beginning teachers and is a parent herself. Another discrepant case emerged in Phase One of the study, where the beginning teacher was teaching in his local community. Engagement with these parents was not challenging because he knew them and was an active member of the community himself. However, this changed in his second year when he taught in a different school in a different community.

6.3.2 THEME TWO: INFLUENCES

Five distinct influences on beginning teachers' engagement with parents emerged from analysis of the data. Not surprisingly, each individual school culture influenced the nature and frequency of participants' engagement with parents. Moreover, these beginning teachers reported that they had more engagement with parents of children with SEN than any other parents. All of these beginning teachers articulated their own personal philosophy of education and how these philosophies impacted their engagement with parents. Some of the beginning teachers recalled memories of how their own parents had engaged with their teachers in primary school and this too exerted an influence on their own engagement with parents. Finally, all of the participants reported that they were influenced by their ITE programme, particularly an elective module on parent professional partnership that they had undertaken in the final semester of their B.Ed. programme.

6.3.3 THEME THREE: REALISATIONS

In theme three, realisations, it emerged that for these eight beginning teachers, learning to engage with parents happened on the job. This learning came about in a number of ways, mostly from colleagues and especially from very supportive principals. In addi-

tion to learning from their colleagues, all of the beginning teachers told stories of how much they learned from actually engaging with parents. When asked to reflect on a memorable experience with parents, the beginning teachers told stories about both positive and negative encounters. Almost all of these encounters were with parents of children with SEN. When these beginning teachers reflected on their engagement with parents, it became very evident that this engagement proved emotional. All participants reported having positive feelings towards parents and being satisfied in their relationships with parents, despite the range of experiences they had during their first two years teaching. Through the use of artefacts and telling stories of memorable experiences of engagement with parents, participants identified communication as central to successful engagement between beginning teachers and parents.

6.4   NOW WHAT? - RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research study was to make a contribution to the knowledge-gap in the area of parent-teacher engagement and, specifically, how beginning teachers in Ireland engage with parents. The evidence from this research study suggests some considerations and guidance for theory, policy, research and ITE.

6.4.1 THEORY-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this research study, I would like to make two theory-level recommendations for consideration. Firstly, I respectfully recommend that a greater awareness of lifewide learning and its implications for teacher education at all levels of the continuum be considered. The findings from this study highlighted that these beginning teachers drew on and were influenced by learning from a number of different places in order to engage with parents. In addition to the learning from their ITE programme, participants also drew on learning from past experiences. Consequently, I would like to argue for a lifewide concept of professional learning in teacher education and particularly in ITE when preparing student teachers to work with parents. This concept of lifewide learning is ecological in nature, which is in keeping with the conceptual framework underpinning this research study, and encompasses learning that occurs across a person's life, not across time as lifelong learning does. This type of learning involves many learning spaces (Barnett 2010) and includes learning from all human experiences such as study, family, work, volunteering, travelling, relationships etc. (Jackson 2011). Lifewide learning is very much related to the personal development of individuals,

something that is "a desirable feature for today's graduates … it enables people to improve themselves cognitively, socially and personally" (Soylu et al. 2016, p.134).

My second theory-level recommendation is that the thinking around teacher agency be extended to include parent-teacher engagement. One of the standout moments of this research process for me was corresponding with Professor Gert Biesta via email (April 2019). I enquired of him if he saw teacher agency as having a role in teachers' engagement with parents. I was very pleased to receive a reply, where Biesta (April 2019) wrote that for him "teacher agency has to do with making sense of how teachers come to judgements about what to do and how they turn their judgements into action". He went on to comment that, for him, "this can over any aspect of their work … includ[ing] interaction with parents". This research study established that context matters when it comes to teacher agency. This is in keeping with the seminal work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998), who posit that teachers' professional agency is constructed situationally and that there are "constraining and enabling contexts of action" (p.964). Considering context is not new. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000), almost twenty years ago, highlighted how context influences what goes on in schools and claimed that all that happens in teaching "is shaped by the contexts in which they occur" (p. 524). Ultimately, I believe, as teacher educators, we need to push the boundaries of teacher agency and I argue that there is a place at all levels of the teacher education continuum to present the concept of teacher agency as being concerned, not only with personal capacity but also with the need to develop school cultures that support teachers, including beginning teachers, to develop their agency.

This could be implemented through:

- The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- FÉILTE The Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence (FÉILTE)
- Online platform for Teachers' Research Exchange(T-REX)
- Online CPD courses

6.4.2 POLICY-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

At policy level, it is very timely to be making recommendations for ITE. The DES just recently announced that a policy statement on ITE is to be formulated. With this in

mind, I make a recommendation for a specific and intentional focus on preparing student teachers to work with parents. This recommendation is made with the intention *all* student teachers being prepared to engage with parents.

This could be done through:

- Review of the B.Ed. now that first four years are completed, map what is already happening and including more discreet and permeated input with emphasis on joined-up thinking
- Liaison with the NPC and create a joint booklet

It is important, however, to acknowledge that what happens at ITE level can only be the beginning of what is to come. ITE programmes can only provide a foundation on which to build teachers' lifelong learning of teacher-parent partnership (Epstein 2013). There is a need to support teachers throughout their career in terms of professional development for parental involvement (Green et al. 2007) and according to Fandell (2011), if "teachers are better trained to involve parents, it is likely that children will become better educated" (Fandell 2011, p. 72). Therefore, I recommend that there is a specific and intention focus on supporting all teachers to engage with parents across all stages of the teacher education continuum.

This could be done through:

- The development of online CPD courses
- Development of support through PDST, NCSE, NIPT etc.
- Development of support as part of the wellbeing agenda
- School Self-Evaluation
- Partnership Schools' Project -developed by NPC and Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)

6.4.3 PRACTICE-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this research study of beginning teachers' lived experiences of engagement with parents, there are implications and guidance for practice across the teacher education continuum. At ITE level, a specific focus on supporting student teachers to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions for family-school partnership is warranted. This could be based on the idea of family-centred practice that is promoted in the health

sector. This needs to be core for all students and not offered as an elective or optional extra. In particular, inviting parents to be part of this delivery is desirable as borne out by this research study, where participants reported the most memorable aspect of their module on parent-professional partnership was meeting with parents.

At induction teacher education level, communities of practice that allow beginning teachers unpack their experiences of engagement with parents would be instrumental in developing their confidence and teacher agency. These communities of practice could include practising teachers, principals, and, dare I say it, parents. Furthermore, including the voice of the child in these fora would be a radical, but meaningful move. When I work with student teachers, I ask them to consider the perspective of the child when it comes to parent-teacher meetings and writing reports and suggest that nothing said or written about a child should come as a surprise to the child. Creatively including the child in such a way might be worth considering, as part of the Parent and Student Charter.

As teachers continue in the profession of teaching, I recommend using the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020 (DES 2016) to support teachers at CPD level to continue to reflect on their experiences of engagement with parents. In particular, supporting teachers to engage in perspective-taking would certainly contribute to developing positive parent-teacher engagement, where the ultimate goal is to support best possible outcomes for children in terms of their learning and wellbeing. Erle and Topolinski (2017) posit that perspective-taking helps us to understand other people and is important for positive social relationships.

6.4.4 RESEARCH-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Part of the conclusion to this research study, is the call for further research. Much was beyond the scope of this research study, particularly an exploration of parents' experiences of engagement with beginning teachers. It would be very worthwhile to find out what parents think of beginning teachers and what, if any, from a parent's perspective contribute to positive engagement. Specifically, I would like to find out if a teacher being a parent makes a difference to parents, as highlighted by one discrepant case in this research study.

Another recommendation is the exploration of what children think about their parents and teachers engaging with each other. There is such a dearth of information on chil-

dren's voices about parent-teacher engagement that further research is certainly warranted. Recently, a student teacher told me how her sixth-class teacher in primary school invited the children to attend the parent-teacher meetings when they were in the final year of primary school. She spoke about the many benefits of this and how it was something she would like to do herself as a class teacher, based on her own positive experience.

Throughout this research study, there was one discrepant case when it came to finding engagement with parents challenging. Bernadette, spoke of her very positive experience with parents and the fact that she "actually didn't have any issues with parents". This discrepant case might be explained by the fact that Bernadette is herself a parent and brings an empathy and understanding to her engagements with parents. As Bernadette was the only participant who was a parent, all we can conclude is that the one participant who was a parent reported not having "any issues with parents". An extensive trawl of the literature did not unearth any research on teachers as parents and the impact of this on parent-teacher engagement. That is not to say such a phenomenon does not exist and perhaps points to the need for research exploring whether or not beginning teachers who are parents themselves contribute to better parent-teacher engagement. This leads to a recommendation about researching if a teacher being a parent impacts on parent-teacher engagement.

It would also be useful to do a large-scale study with beginning teachers on the topic of their engagement with parents to see trends in this group. This would enable more targeted modules and CPD courses to be developed. Ideally, this would involve a mixed-methods study which would produce both qualitative and quantitative data at national level. This could be done through the National Induction Programme for teachers (NIPT) to ensure a high level of response. It is possible that in the near future the Teaching Council will be tendering for a longitudinal study of teachers in the first ten years of their teaching and a focus in that study on engagement with parents would be worthwhile (see Appendix K).

In terms of research methodology, I found marrying case study with IPA worked very well. Case study is a bounded phenomenon and a case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of human experiences. I found that IPA, which has at its core "concern with lived experience, hermeneutic inquiry, idiographic focus" (Smith *et al.* 2009, p. 204), provided rigor when it came to analysing the rich data I had collected. At

the end of data analysis, I still had each individual story coming through because of the idiographic nature of IPA. I also found that case study and IPA were both congruent with the ontological and epistemological positions of the research questions. As a recommendation, I suggest that a marrying case study and IPA make for a rich and rigorous approach to research.

Table 6.2 provides a summary of the all of the recommendations presented above.

Table 6.2 Recommendations for Theory, Policy, Practice and Research

Theory	Policy	Practice	Research
Extend the thinking around teacher agency to include parent-teacher engagement	In initial teacher education programmes, include a specific and intentional focus on preparing all student teachers to engage with parents	At initial teacher education level, include a specific focus on supporting student teacher develop knowledge, skills and dispositions for family-school partnership	How do parents engage with beginning teachers?
Develop a greater awareness of lifewide learning and its implications for teacher education at all levels of the continuum	Support all teachers to engage with parents across all stages of the teacher education continuum.	At induction level, develop communities of practice that will allow beginning teachers unpack their experiences of engagement with parents and develop their own teacher agency	What do children think about home-school engagement?
		At CPD level, support practising teachers to continue to reflect on their experiences of engagement with parents, with an emphasis on perspective-taking	Does being a parent impact on how beginning teachers engage with parents?

6.4.5 DISSEMINATION

Dissemination of the findings from this research study is something I intend approaching in a multi-pronged way, through national and international journals and national and international conferences. I believe there is scope to disseminate findings by targeting journals and conferences concerned with:

- teacher education, particularly ITE
- special educational needs
- home-school partnership
- teacher agency

To this end, in Table 6.3, I have identified the following journals and conferences for consideration.

Table 6.3 Journals and Conferences for Dissemination of Research Findings

Journals	Conferences
European Journal of Teacher Education	Association of Teacher Education Europe (ATEE) Annual Conference
Teaching and Teacher Education	British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference
Journal of Teacher Education	Teacher Education Division of Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference
Educational Researcher	Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI)
Journal of Special Education	International Association of Special Education (IASE) Conference
Teacher Education and Special Education	International Conference on Education, Research and Innovation (ICERI)
REACH: Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland	Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE) Conference
InTouch: Magazine of Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)	Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA) Annual Conference

In addition to journals and conferences, I also believe there is the possibility of seeking an alliance with the National Parents Council of Ireland (NPC). The NPC is concerned with supporting parents to support their children and I believe this research is worth sharing with this group. More locally, I will endeavour to disseminate this research within the Faculty of Education and my own Department in the institution in which I teach. In particular, the findings and learnings from this research study, will, and indeed already have, informed how student teachers are prepared for working with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. I am delighted to say that just this last semester, two beginning teachers from the study came back to College and met with a cohort of student teachers who were undertaking the elective on parent-professional partnership. These beginning teachers were able to speak with such authenticity and credibility about their experiences of working with parents, particularly parents of SEN over the last two years. Students on the module expressed huge satisfaction with this visit and were able

to ask so many questions, which the two beginning teachers were more than delighted to answer. The main messages they gave were not to be afraid of engaging with parents, the importance of two-way communication and that they would not be on their own when they started teaching as colleagues and especially principals would support them. They also gave some lovely practical ideas like making an effort to communicate with at least two parents every week, sending home an introductory letter about yourself at the beginning of the school year and, in terms of children with SEN, the importance of a communication diary. They also reminded the students of not taking things too personally and that, at the end of the day, teacher and parent want what is best for the child.

There is also a potential opportunity in the near future to become involved in tendering for a national longitudinal research study with the Teaching Council of Ireland. In April of this year the Teaching Council issued a *Pre Tender Market Sounding for Longitudinal Research Exploring the Professional Journeys of Teachers in Ireland over the first 10 years* (see Appendix K). I was part of a group of four initial teacher educators from my institution who responded to this sounding in recent weeks. The Teaching Council is considering "a significant longitudinal research study into the experiences of teachers in Ireland during the first 10 years of their career, as they transition from ITE, through induction and into the early professional development phases". The pre-tender market sounding "is part of a suite of research projects, exploring student and beginning teachers' experiences across the continuum of teacher education through to early professional development". It is possible that the findings from this research study can offer some guidance into a case study approach to working with the intended cohort and that the learnings outlined in previous sections could contribute to research questions, data collection and analysis.

6.5   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Although this research study involved a small number of beginning teachers, the findings provide an insight into parent-teacher engagement which has implications for teacher education more generally and in particularly, ITE. Yin (2016) highlights the need for researchers to determine the "empirical highlight of your study" (p.283). In this research study of eight beginning teachers' experiences of engagement with parents, I believe the highlight is that, while participants found engagement with parents challenging, which is in keeping with the extant literature in this research field, all eight participants felt their ITE programme had prepared them as well as they could have been pre-

pared for engaging with parents. In addition, the findings have challenged the stereotypical notion of teachers and parents being adversaries. My conclusion, in the main, is that beginning teachers like and enjoy working with parents and see the benefits for children, particularly children with SEN, when they do. Thus, this case study has added a richness and depth of understanding to what we already know about beginning teachers' engagement with parents, particularly parents of children with special educational needs.

As a result of this research study, we have empirical evidence that when student teachers in ITE programmes have focussed input on engaging with parents and families before they leave college, it pays dividends for them as beginning teachers. In light of such findings, it is timely that the DES has advised that a policy statement on ITE is to be formulated in the near future. This follows on from the recent publication of *The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform (Sahlberg II) Report (DES 2019). C*onsultation with Teacher Educator providers will be part of this process and I consider the findings of this research study to have relevance in this regard. Moreover, the DES has indicated an intention to hold a conference, most likely in November 2019, so perhaps there will be an opportunity to highlight the need to have a more specific and intentional focus on preparing student teachers in Ireland to engage with parents.

I would like to leave the last words to the beginning teachers, to whom I am so grateful, and who so kindly and graciously gave of their time to meet with me over the course of two years. At the end of the data gathering process, I asked what it meant to them to be involved in this research study across the first two years of their teaching career. Their responses were unanimously positive. Each one, in their own words, spoke about how supportive it was to have an opportunity to reflect and speak about their experiences in schools at the end of their first and second years as beginning primary school teachers. They spoke of feelings of being reassured, of liking being in touch with the college where they did their ITE and being grateful for the opportunity to reflect, as beginning teachers, on their experiences of engaging with parents, particularly parents of children with SEN. One participant summed it up by saying "it was brilliant [to take part in the research study] ... to see the difference in ourselves. It is not until you speak about it that you realise, I can do this! I'm actually alright".

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Wilder, S. (2014) 'Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: a meta-synthesis', *Educational Review,* 66(3), 377-397.

Yin, R.K. (2014) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods-Applied Social Research Methods, 5th ed.*, London: Sage.

Yin R.K. (2016) *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish,* 2nd ed., London: The Guilford Press.

Zablotsky, B., Boswell, K. and Smith, C. (2012) 'An Evaluation of School Involvement and Satisfaction of Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders', *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 117(4), 316-330.

APPENDICES

EDE451

Parent-Professional Partnership:
supporting the learning and wellbeing of children
with special educational needs (SEN)

Spring Semester 2016-2017

Bachelor of Education 4

This 6-credit module provides an opportunity for students to critically examine evidence-based research on parent-professional partnership in order to support the learning and wellbeing of children with special educational needs (SEN). Opportunities will be provided to explore, reflect and critically evaluate students' own values, beliefs and, in particular, assumptions as they impact on partnerships with parents of children with SEN and other professionals. Students will engage with parents and other professionals with a view to benefiting from their first-hand experiences of children with special educational needs. Becoming a reflective teacher is a central theme throughout the module, as is teacher as researcher.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Challenge and question personal beliefs and assumptions about parent-professional partnership
- Value and appreciate the experience of parenting a child with SEN
- Understand models of parent-professional partnerships with particular reference to special education
- Value the importance of membership in the larger team of parents and professionals responsible for educational planning and health interventions for children with special educational needs
- Research special educational needs and develop an appropriate educational response, with particular emphasis on partnership with parents and other professionals
- Demonstrate critical reflection and engagement with contemporary issues pertaining to parent-professional partnership in special education

MODULE CONTENT:

This module will be delivered in the form of one two-hour lecture each week and six two-hour tutorials. The module content will include the following:

- Parent-professional partnership: what does the research say?
- 'Hunting assumptions' and implications for parent-professional partnership
- Family-centred practice and implications for parent-professional partnership
- Models of parent-professional partnership
- The Reflective Teacher
- The Wellbeing of the Teacher

- The Teacher as Researcher
- The child with disability: implications for parent-professional partnership
- Understanding the role of the NEPS Psychologist
- Understanding the role of Health Professionals (OT, SLT, Physio)
- Practical strategies to develop positive parent-teacher partnerships
- Practical strategies to develop positive in-school professional-professional partnerships
- Practical strategies to develop positive external professional-professional partnerships
- The Inclusive Learning Profile: promoting the wellbeing of the child
- The Parent Voice: first-hand experiences of parents of children with SEN

MODULE ASSESSMENT:

Assessment is a **Portfolio** to be submitted in Week 14. Please see *Assessment Guidelines* on Moodle.

The format of the **Repeat Exam** is a Portfolio.

Grade Descriptors

A1   Exceptional - consistently and notably meets criteria

A2   Excellent, but not exceptional–usually and extensively meets criteria

B1   Very good analysis and understanding–regularly and competently meets criteria

B2   Good analysis and understanding–regularly and competently meets criteria

B3   Satisfactory analysis and understanding–frequently and adequately meets criteria

C1   Knowledgeable, but generally un-analytical–adequately meets criteria

C2   Reasonably knowledge and understanding–occasionally meets criteria

C3   Limited knowledge and understanding–minimally meets criteria

D1   Without most of the above

D2   Without any of the above

F   Severely incomplete or plagiarised

Attendance will be taken in class throughout the semester. Up to 10% of marks available may be deducted at the discretion of the course tutor for poor attendance/participation.

All students are required to familiarise themselves with **Appendix Three** (Coursework Guidelines) of the Student Handbook, particularly the section concerning honesty.

Students will be invited to give feedback mid-way through the course and at the end. Support and feedback will be available to students on their portfolio throughout the semester. Students will be invited to submit a draft of an element of the portfolio and receive individual and group feedback before final draft is submitted. Feedback will also be available on final submissions.

Students with queries on any aspect of the course are encouraged to email course co-ordinator, Anne O'Byrne at anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie Appointments can be made by email.

READING LIST:

- Bassot, B. (2016) *The Reflective Practice Guide: An interdisciplinary approach to critical reflection,* London: Routledge.
- Bonfield, T and Horgan, K. (2016) *Learning to Teach: Teaching to Learn*, Dublin: Gill and MacMillian.
- Coady, M. (2011) Collaboration and Teamwork. In Doherty, U., Egan, M., Daly, P., Coady, M., Holland, M., Kelleher, D., Long, S., McCarthy, E., and O'Sullivan, S. *STRANDS: Strategies for Teachers to Respond Actively to the Needs of Children with Down Syndrome-Meeting the Special Educational Needs of Children with General Learning Disabilities in Primary Schools,* Limerick: Curriculum Development Unit-Mary Immaculate College, pp. 245-257.
- Dardig, J. (2008) *Involving Parents of Students with Special Educational Needs,* London: Corwin Press.
- Goldfarb, F.D., Devine, K., Yingling, J. T., Hill, A., Moss, J., Shurie Ogburn, E., Roberts, R.J., Smith, M. A., and Pariseau, C. (2010) Partnering with professionals: Family-centred care from the parent perspective. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 13, pp. 91-100.
- Keen, D. (2007) Parents, families and partnerships: Issues and considerations. *International Journal of Disability*, Development and Education, 54(3), pp. 339-349.
- Murray, M., Curran, E., and Zellers, D. (2008) Building parent/professional partnerships: An innovative approach for teacher education. *The Teacher Educator*, 43(2), pp. 87-108.

Supplementary readings will be posted on Moodle in the ***Supplementary Reading Folder.***

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 1
PARENTING
Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Sample Practices

- Suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.
- Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade level.
- Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy.)
- Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
- Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school. Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

Challenges

- Provide information to *all* families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building.
- Enable families to share information with schools about culture, background, children's talents and needs.
- Make sure that all information for and from families is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school.

Redefinitions

- *"Workshop" to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time. "Workshop" may also mean making information about a topic available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard, or read any where, any time, in varied forms.*

Results for Students

- Awareness of family supervision; respect for parents.
- Positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs, and values, as taught by family.
- Balance between time spent on chores, on other activities, and on homework.
- Good or improved attendance.
- Awareness of importance of school.

Results for Parents

- Understanding of and confidence about parenting, child and adolescent development, and changes in home conditions for learning as children proceed through school.
- Awareness of own and others' challenges in parents.
- Feeling of support from school and other parents.

Results for Teachers

- Understanding families' background, cultures, concerns, goals, needs, and views of their children.
- Respect for families' strengths and efforts.
- Understanding of student diversity.
- Awareness of own skills to share information on child development.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 2
COMMUNICATING
Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

Sample Practices

- Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.
- Language translators to assist families as needed.
- Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments.
- Parent/student pickup of report card, with conferences on improving grades.
- Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.
- Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools.
- Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions.

Challenges

- Review the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications.
- Consider parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type.
- Review the quality of major communications (newsletters, report cards, conference schedules, and so on).
- Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home.

Redefinitions

- *"Communications about school programs and student progress" to mean two-way, three-way, and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students, and the community.*

Results for Students

- Awareness of own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades.
- Understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance, and other areas of student conduct.
- Informed decisions about courses and programs.
- Awareness of own role in partnerships, serving as courier and communicator.

Results for Parents

- Understanding school programs and policies.
- Monitoring and awareness of child's progress.
- Responding effectively to students' problems.
- Interactions with teachers and ease of communication with school and teachers.

Results for Teachers

- Increased diversity and use of communications with families and awareness of own ability to communicate clearly
- Appreciation for and use of parent network for communications.
- Increased ability to elicit and understand family views on children's programs and progress.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 3   **VOLUNTEERING**   Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Sample Practices
- School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
- Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
- Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.
- Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information.
- Parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs.

Challenges
- Recruit volunteers widely so that *all* families know that their time and talents are welcome.
- Make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable parents who work to participate.
- Organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school, teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so that participants are productive.

Redefinitions
- *"Volunteer" to mean anyone who supports school goals and children's learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time -- not just during the school day and at the school building.*

Results for Students
- Skill in communicating with adults.
- Increased learning of skills that receive tutoring or targeted attention from volunteers.
- Awareness of many skills, talents, occupations, and contributions of parent and other volunteers.

Results for Parents
- Understanding teacher's job, increased comfort in school, and carry-over of school activities at home.
- Self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children or to take steps to improve own education.
- Awareness that families are welcome and valued at school.
- Gains in specific skills of volunteer work.

Results for Teachers
- Readiness to involve families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school.
- Awareness of parents' talents and interests in school and children.
- Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 4
LEARNING AT HOME
Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

Sample Practices
- Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments.
- Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.
- Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.
- Family math, science, and reading activities at school.
- Summer learning packets or activities.
- Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Challenges
- Design and organize a regular schedule of interactive homework (e.g., weekly or bimonthly) that gives *students* responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork.
- Coordinate family linked homework activities, if students have several teachers.
- Involve families and their children in all-important curriculum-related decisions.

Redefinitions
- *"Homework" to mean not only work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking schoolwork to real life.*
- *"Help" at home to mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing -- not "teaching" school subjects.*

Results for Students
- Gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork.
- Homework completion.
- Positive attitude toward schoolwork.
- View of parents as more similar to teacher and of home as more similar to school.
- Self-concept of ability as learner.

Results for Parents
- Know how to support, encourage, and help student at home each year.
- Discussions of school, classwork, and homework.
- Understanding of instructional program each year and of what child is learning in each subject.
- Appreciation of teaching skills.
- Awareness of child as a learner.

Results for Teachers
- Better design of homework assignments.
- Respect for family time.
- Recognition of equal helpfulness of single-parent, dual-income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning.
- Satisfaction with family involvement and support.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 5
DECISION MAKING
Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Sample Practices
- Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation.
- Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.
- Information on school or local elections for school representatives.
- Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Challenges
- Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school.
- Offer training to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other families, with input from and return of information to all parents.
- Include students (along with parents) in decision-making groups.

Redefinitions
- *"Decision making" to mean a process of partnership, of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas.*
- *Parent "leader" to mean a real representative, with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families.*

Results for Students
- Awareness of representation of families in school decisions.
- Understanding that student rights are protected.
- Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and experienced by students.

Results for Parents
- Input into policies that affect child's education.
- Feeling of ownership of school.
- Awareness of parents' voices in school decisions.
- Shared experiences and connections with other families.
- Awareness of school, district, and state policies.

Results for Teachers
- Awareness of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions.
- View of equal status of family representatives on committees and in leadership roles.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement
(Including: Sample Practices, Challenges, Redefinitions, and Expected Results)

TYPE 6
COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNTY
Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Sample Practices
- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services
- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.
- Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organizations; and businesses.
- Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others).
- Participation of alumni in school programs for students.

Challenges
- Solve turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities.
- Inform families of community programs for students, such as mentoring, tutoring, business partnerships.
- Assure equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services.
- Match community contributions with school goals, integrate child and family services with education.

Redefinitions
- *"Community" to mean not only the neighborhoods where students' homes and schools are located but also any neighborhoods that influence their learning and development.*
- *"Community" rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, families, and schools.*
- *"Community" means all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education, not just those with children in the schools.*

Results for Students
- Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences.
- Awareness of careers and of options for future education and work.
- Specific benefits linked to programs, services, resources, and opportunities that connect students with community.

Results for Parents
- Knowledge and use of local resources by family and child to increase skills and talents or to obtain needed services
- Interactions with other families in community activities.
- Awareness of school's role in the community and of community's contributions to the school.

Results for Teachers
- Awareness of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction.
- Openness to and skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and augment teaching practices.
- Knowledgeable, helpful referrals of children and families to needed services.

APPENDIX C: LITERATURE INPUT TABLE

Beginning Teachers and Parents (with particular emphasis on parents of children with special educational needs)

WHO	WHERE	WHAT	WHY (GAP)	QUOTES
author/s & year	full bibliographic reference	three key points/findings/recommendations	why is this relevant & meaningful for my research study? what other piece of research is conceptually close to this piece of research?	
(Hudson 2012)	Hudson, P. B. (2012) 'Beginning teachers' achievements and challenges: implications for induction and mentoring' in Aspland, T. & Simons, M., eds., PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2012 ANNUAL AUSTRALIAN TEACHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (ATEA) CONFERENCE, Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA), Australia.	It is recognised worldwide that beginning teachers require more support as reasons for high attrition rates (e.g., lack of appreciation from colleagues, unsatisfying working conditions, inadequate teacher preparation) indicate current systems are failing them. This qualitative study tracks 10 beginning primary teachers' achievements and challenges at two points (April and September) during their first year of teaching in Australian public schools. Induction into the school culture and infrastructure continued to be important, especially developing skills on handling difficult parents and creating a life-work balance.	One way of addressing the specific needs of NQTs is to understand their achievements and challenges during their first year of teaching. Challenges included behaviour management, learning differentiation, working with parents, and negotiating a life-work balance. AOB: This gives **international context** to my research.	
(Hudson et al. 2008)	Hudson, S. M., Beutel, D. A., & Hudson, P. B. (2008) Beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction into teaching. In PEPE (PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008, 23-25 January 2008, Edinburgh.	The quality of the experience in the early years of teaching has long-term implications for teacher efficacy, job satisfaction and career length. The aim of this qualitative, year-long study was to explore and describe the induction experiences of eight beginning teachers as they negotiated their first year of teaching. Retaining teachers and developing quality teachers require government funding commitments to guarantee well-developed induction programs are available to all beginning teachers. This study highlights the sporadic nature of induction and presents the varied quality and frequency of such programs in Australia.	Comprehensive school-based induction programs are crucial for successful transitions into professional practice and for retaining beginning teachers in the profession. Retaining teachers and developing quality teachers require government funding commitments to guarantee well-developed induction programs are available to all beginning teachers. AOB: This gives **international context** to my research.	
(Love 1996)	Love, F. E. (1996) 'Communicating with parents: What beginning teachers can do', *College Student Journal*, 30(4), 440.	Parental involvement is no longer an option for school districts, but a requirement. The eighth item in Goals 2000 Education America Act implies that it is the school that must assume the leadership in reaching out to parents and communities: "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase paren-	Ninety-eight percent of beginning teachers say they need to be able to work well with parents (Metropolitan Life, 1991). AOB: This gives **context** to my re-	

tal involvement and participation in promoting social, emotional, and academic growth of children."

In this article, the author provides a variety of techniques designed to assist beginning and experienced teachers to reach out in positive ways to communicate with parents. Methods presented range from introductory letters sent home at the beginning of school to personalized conferences scheduled throughout the school year.

Good communication with parents means letting them know what their children are learning and how their children are doing in school. It also means listening carefully to what parents have to say about their child and their perceptions of the child's program. Successful teacher-parent communication can be accomplished by reaching out to parents in ways that show concern for the child and a genuine desire for cooperation with the parents.

search.

Prospective teachers need to be knowledgeable about the importance of parent involvement because studies show that when parents are involved in their children's education, the children are more successful.

Children whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school achieve more than children of similar attitude and family background whose parents are not involved

Information Sheet

A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Experiences of Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

My name is Anne O'Byrne and I am currently undertaking a PhD in Mary Immaculate College. For my research study I am looking to meet with beginning teachers to find out about your experiences of engaging with parents.

If you are willing to get involved in this research study, I will meet you, in a place that suits you, for three interviews/conversations. The first meeting will be one-to-one, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. The second will also be a one-to-one meeting, lasting a little longer, approximately 60-90 minutes. The third will be a focus group meeting of approximately 6/8 people, lasting 90-120 minutes.

It is hoped that the information gathered will:

- enhance our understanding of parent-professional partnership
- hear the *voice* of beginning teachers in Ireland
- contribute to the development of educational theory and practice
- inform teacher education across the continuum, particularly initial teacher education
- contribute to one of the Teaching Council of Ireland's Priority Research Areas, namely partnership in education
- in keeping with national policy, support the best possible outcomes for children and their families through positive parent-professional partnership in schools

All the information gathered will be maintained securely and anonymised so no individual will be identified and the data will be retained only for the duration of the project plus an additional three years.

Excerpts from the data collected during the research process may be referred to in my PhD thesis or in subsequent publications or conferences, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included.

If you are willing to become involved and would like to meet me to discuss your experiences of working with parents, please completed the attached Consent Form and return it by email to anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie; this indicates your agreement to participate in the research study. Please know that you have the right to refuse to participate and to withdraw at any stage of the research process without giving a reason.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering being part of the study. If you would like more information please contact me on 061-204389 or by email at anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you can contact: MIREC Administrator, Mary Immaculate College South Circular Road, Limerick; Tel: 061–204980; Email: mirec@mic.ul.ie

Consent Form
A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Experiences of Engagement with Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

Please read the following statements before signing the consent form:

I have read and understood the information sheet on the research project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving a reason.

I understand what the project is about and how the information will be used.

I am aware that my identity and that of others will be kept confidential.

I know how to contact the researcher or someone independent of the study should I need to do so.

For further information about this research project please contact:

Anne O'Byrne, Researcher, Tel: 061–204389, Email: **anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie**

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

MIREC Administrator, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, Tel: 061-204980, Email: **mirec@mic.ul.ie**

I consent to participate in the Research Project: A Case Study of Parent-Professional Partnership and Beginning Teachers	
Name:	
Date:	

Please complete this Consent Form and email to **Anne O'Byrne anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie**

APPENDIX F: EVIDENCE OF 853 ANNOTATIONS

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	1	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	64	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	3
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	10	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	65	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	30
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	11	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	66	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	31
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	12	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	67	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	32
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	13	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	68	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	33
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	14	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	69	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	34
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	15	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	7	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	35
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	16	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	70	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	36
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	17	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	71	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	37
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	18	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	72	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	38
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	19	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	73	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	39
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	2	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	74	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	4
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	20	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	75	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	40
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	21	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	76	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	41
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	22	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	77	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	42
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	23	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	78	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	43
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	3	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	79	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	44
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	4	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	8	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	45
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	5	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	80	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	46
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	6	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	81	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	47
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	7	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	82	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	48
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	8	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	83	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	49
Corrected F3 Transcript (30-6-17)	9	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	84	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	5
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	1	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	85	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	50
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	10	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	86	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	51
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	11	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	87	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	52
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	12	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	88	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	53
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	13	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	89	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	54
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	14	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	9	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	55
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	15	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	90	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	56

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	16	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	91	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	57
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	17	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	92	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	58
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	18	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	93	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	59
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	19	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	94	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	6
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	2	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	95	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	60
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	20	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	96	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	61
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	21	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	97	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	62
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	22	F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	98	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	63
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	23	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	1	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	64
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	24	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	10	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	65
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	25	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	11	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	66
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	26	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	12	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	67
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	27	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	13	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	68
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	28	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	14	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	69
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	29	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	15	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	7
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	3	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	16	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	70
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	30	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	17	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	71
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	31	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	18	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	72
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	32	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	19	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	73
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	4	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	2	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	74
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	5	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	20	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	75
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	6	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	21	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	76
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	7	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	22	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	77
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	8	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	23	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	78
Corrected F4 Transcript (30-6-17)	9	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	24	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	79
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	1	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	25	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	8
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	10	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	26	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	80
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	11	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	27	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	81
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	12	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	28	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	82
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	13	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	29	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	83
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	14	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	3	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	9

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	15	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	30	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	1
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	16	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	31	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	10
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	17	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	32	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	11
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	18	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	33	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	12
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	19	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	34	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	13
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	2	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	35	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	14
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	20	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	36	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	15
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	21	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	37	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	16
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	22	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	38	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	17
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	23	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	39	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	18
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	24	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	4	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	19
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	25	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	40	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	2
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	26	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	41	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	20
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	27	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	42	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	21
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	28	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	43	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	22
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	29	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	44	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	23
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	3	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	45	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	24
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	30	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	46	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	25
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	31	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	47	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	26
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	32	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	48	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	27
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	33	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	49	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	28
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	34	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	5	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	29
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	35	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	50	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	3
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	36	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	51	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	30
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	37	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	52	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	31
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	38	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	53	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	32
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	39	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	54	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	33
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	4	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	55	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	34
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	40	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	56	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	35
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	41	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	57	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	36
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	42	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	58	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	37

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	43	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	59	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	38
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	44	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	6	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	39
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	45	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	60	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	4
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	46	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	61	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	40
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	47	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	62	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	41
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	48	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	63	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	42
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	5	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	64	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	43
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	6	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	65	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	44
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	7	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	7	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	45
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	8	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	8	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	46
Corrected F5 Transcript (3-7-17)	9	F2 Phase 2 Transcript (3-4-18)	9	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	47
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	1	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	1	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	48
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	10	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	10	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	49
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	11	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	11	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	5
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	12	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	12	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	50
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	13	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	13	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	51
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	14	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	14	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	52
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	15	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	15	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	53
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	16	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	16	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	54
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	17	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	17	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	55
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	18	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	18	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	56
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	19	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	19	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	57
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	2	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	2	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	58
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	20	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	20	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	59
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	21	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	21	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	6
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	22	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	22	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	60
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	23	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	23	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	61
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	24	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	24	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	7
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	25	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	25	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	8
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	26	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	26	F7 Phase 2 Transcript (10-4-18)	9
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	27	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	27	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	1

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	28	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	28	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	10
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	29	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	29	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	11
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	3	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	3	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	12
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	30	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	30	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	13
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	31	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	31	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	14
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	32	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	32	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	15
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	33	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	33	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	16
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	34	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	34	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	17
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	35	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	35	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	18
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	36	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	36	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	19
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	37	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	37	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	2
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	38	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	38	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	20
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	39	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	39	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	21
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	4	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	4	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	22
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	40	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	40	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	23
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	41	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	41	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	24
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	42	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	42	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	25
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	43	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	43	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	26
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	44	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	44	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	27
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	45	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	45	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	28
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	46	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	46	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	29
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	47	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	47	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	3
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	5	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	48	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	30
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	6	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	49	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	31
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	7	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	5	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	32
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	8	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	50	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	33
Corrected F6 Transcript (4-7-17)	9	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	51	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	34
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	1	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	52	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	35
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	10	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	53	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	36
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	11	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	54	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	37
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	12	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	55	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	38

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	13	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	56	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	39
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	14	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	57	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	4
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	15	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	58	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	40
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	16	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	59	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	41
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	17	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	6	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	42
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	18	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	60	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	43
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	19	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	61	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	44
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	2	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	62	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	45
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	20	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	63	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	46
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	21	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	64	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	47
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	22	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	65	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	48
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	23	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	66	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	49
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	24	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	67	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	5
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	25	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	68	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	50
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	26	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	69	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	51
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	27	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	7	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	52
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	28	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	70	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	53
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	29	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	71	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	54
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	3	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	72	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	55
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	30	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	73	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	56
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	31	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	74	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	57
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	32	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	75	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	58
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	33	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	76	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	59
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	34	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	77	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	6
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	35	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	78	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	60
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	36	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	79	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	61
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	37	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	8	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	62
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	38	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	80	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	63
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	39	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	81	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	64
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	4	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	82	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	65
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	40	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	83	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	66

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	41	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	84	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	7
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	42	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	85	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	8
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	43	F3 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	9	M1 Phase 2 Transcript (12-4-18)	9
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	44	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	1	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	10
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	45	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	10	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	11
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	46	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	11	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	12
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	47	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	12	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	13
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	48	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	13	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	14
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	49	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	14	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	15
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	5	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	15	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	16
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	50	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	16	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	17
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	51	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	17	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	18
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	52	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	18	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	19
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	53	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	19	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	2
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	54	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	2	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	20
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	55	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	20	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	21
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	56	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	21	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	22
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	57	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	22	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	23
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	58	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	23	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	24
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	59	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	24	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	25
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	6	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	25	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	26
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	60	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	26	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	27
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	61	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	27	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	28
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	62	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	28	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	29
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	63	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	29	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	3
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	64	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	3	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	30
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	65	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	30	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	31
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	66	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	31	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	32
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	67	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	32	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	33
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	68	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	33	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	34
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	69	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	34	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	35

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	7	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	35	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	36
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	70	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	36	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	37
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	71	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	37	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	38
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	72	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	38	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	39
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	73	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	39	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	4
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	8	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	4	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	40
Corrected F7 Transcript (12-7-17)	9	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	40	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	41
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	1	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	41	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	42
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	10	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	42	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	43
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	11	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	43	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	44
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	12	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	44	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	45
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	13	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	45	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	46
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	14	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	46	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	47
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	15	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	47	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	48
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	16	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	48	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	49
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	17	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	49	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	5
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	18	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	5	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	50
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	19	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	50	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	51
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	2	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	51	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	52
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	20	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	52	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	53
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	21	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	53	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	54
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	22	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	54	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	55
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	23	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	55	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	56
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	24	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	56	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	57
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	25	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	57	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	58
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	26	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	58	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	59
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	27	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	59	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	6
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	28	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	6	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	60
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	29	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	60	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	61
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	3	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	61	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	62
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	30	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	62	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	63

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	31	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	63	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	64
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	32	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	64	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	65
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	33	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	65	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	66
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	34	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	66	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	67
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	35	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	67	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	68
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	36	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	68	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	69
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	37	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	69	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	70
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	38	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	70	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	71
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	39	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	71	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	72
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	4	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	72	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	73
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	40	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	73	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	74
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	41	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	74	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	75
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	42	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	75	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	76
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	43	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	76	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	77
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	44	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	77	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	78
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	45	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	78	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	79
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	46	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	79	F6 Phase 1 Interview (4-7-17)	1
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	47	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	80	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	1
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	48	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	81	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	10
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	49	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	82	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	11
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	5	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	83	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	12
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	50	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	84	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	13
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	51	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	85	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	14
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	52	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	86	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	15
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	53	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	87	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	16
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	54	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	88	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	17
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	55	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	89	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	18
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	56	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	90	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	19
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	57			F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	20
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	58				
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	59				

Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number	Interviews	Annotation Number
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	6	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	91	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	21
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	60	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	92	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	22
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	61	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	93	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	23
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	62	F4 Phase 2 Transcript (13-4-18)	94	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	24
F1 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	63	F5 Phase 2 Transcript (9-4-18)	1	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	25
F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	28	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	27	F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	26
				F6 Phase 2 Transcript (10-5-18)	29

APPENDIX G: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear _____,

Greetings from Mary Immaculate College! I hope this email finds you well.

I am currently undertaking a PhD in Mary Immaculate College looking at beginning teachers' experiences of engaging with parents and I am writing to ask if you would be willing to take part in this research study.

If you are willing to get involved, I will meet you, in a place that suits you, for three interviews/conversations. The first meeting will be one-to-one, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes in June/July. The second will also be a one-to-one meeting, lasting a little longer, approximately 60-90 minutes in September/October. The third will be a focus group meeting of approximately 6/8 people, lasting 90-120 minutes in December/January.

I attach an *Information Sheet* with more information on the research study and a *Consent Form* should you agree to become involved.

If you would like more information on the research study, please contact me on 061-204389 or by email at anne.obyrne@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you can contact: MIREC Administrator, Mary Immaculate College South Circular Road, Limerick; Tel: 061–204980; Email: mirec@mic.ul.ie

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request and looking forward to hearing from you.

Le gach dea-ghuí,
Anne

Anne O'Byrne
Lecturer in Inclusive Education (SEN)
Education Faculty
Mary Immaculate College
Limerick

Phase One Interview Schedule (June 2017)

A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Lived Experiences of Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

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This interview/conversation schedule has been designed from the themes that emerged from my Literature Review on **Parent-Teacher Partnership and Beginning Teachers**:

Opening: Beginning Teachers

- ➢ Where have you been teaching this last year?
- ➢ What have been the challenges?
- ➢ Where does engaging with parents rank in terms of these challenges?

Theme: Nature of Parent-Teacher Partnership

- ➢ What do you think is the role of parents/what are your expectations?
- ➢ How much engagement have you had with parents?
- ➢ What was the nature of the engagement?
- ➢ Do you think the engagement benefitted the children?/In what way?
- ➢ Was there any help/support for you as a beginning teacher to engage with parents?

Theme: Schools, Families and Technology

- ➢ Have you used any form of technology to engage with parents this last year?
- ➢ Have you found anything particularly useful?

Theme: Parent-Professional Partnership and Implications for Initial teacher Education

- ➢ Did your B.Ed. programme prepare you for engaging with parents?
- ➢ What advice would you give to beginning teachers about engaging with parents?
- ➢ Any other comments on your experience of engaging with parents?

Phase Two Interview Schedule (June 2018)

A Case Study of Beginning Teachers' Lived Experiences of Parents, particularly Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

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Briefing:

Thank you so much for meeting with me for the second time.

As you know, I am doing my PhD on Parent-Professional Partnership and Beginning Teachers.

As stated in our correspondence, I am going to record this interview and take some notes. Are you ok to proceed with this interview?

Interview:

- Please tell me about a memorable experience with parents you have had over the last 18 months.
- Have you had a negative/positive experience?
- Does your artefact tie in to these experiences in any way?

Debriefing:

Thank you so much.
I will transcribe the interview and your contribution will be anonymised.
Just to remind you that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without consequence.
All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party
Would you like a copy of the transcript before we meet again?
In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all research data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years.
Do you want to ask me anything?

Initial Codes from First Interview

1   Assumptions about parents

2   Attitude to children

3   Attitude to parents

4   Challenges

5   College

6   Conflict

7   Difficulties with parents

8   Grandparents

9   Homework

10   Influence of own educational experiences

11   Influence of being parented

12   Learnings

13   Nature of parental involvement

14   Outside SEN support

15   Outside-the-gate parents

16   Overwhelmed

17   Parents' Council

18   Parent-Teacher Meetings

19   Participant suggestions for interviews

20   Policies

21   Positive experiences with parents

22   Principal

23   Relationship with children

24   Relationship with parents

25   Research

26   Response to challenges

Appendix K: Teaching Council Pre Tender

149292 - - Pre Tender Market Sounding for Longitudinal Research Exploring the Professional Journeys of Teachers in Ireland over the first 10 years

Publication date: 11-04-2019
Response deadline: 17-05-2019 17:00 Irish time
Procedure: 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU)
Description: The intention of this market sounding by the Teaching Council is to determine the level of knowledge, experience and interest amongst researchers in this subject area and in designing and delivering longitudinal research. Feedback on potential research design options and estimated costs are particularly invited. The Teaching Council wishes to commission a significant longitudinal research study into the experiences of teachers in Ireland during the first 10 years of their career, as they transition from initial teacher education, through induction and into the early professional development phases. The research is being commissioned at a time when new processes and a framework for teachers' professional learning are being implemented in Ireland. It is part of a suite of research projects, exploring student and beginning teachers' experiences across the continuum of teacher education through to early professional development. This is NOT a tender process and no contracts will be awarded at this stage. This is not a call for competition, and participation or non-participation in this exercise will not prejudice or influence participation in any future tender competition nor guarantee or influence pre-qualification for any future competition. A formal tender process may or may not arise in due course following this exercise. All information / material provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence by the Teaching Council.
Buyer: The Teaching Council